

# EUAA

## Surveys with Arriving Migrants from Ukraine

### EMPLOYMENT – EDUCATION

Thematic Fact Sheet – Issue 2, October 2023

Date of issue: 9 October 2023

## Key points



### Demographics

This issue is based on 4 265 participations to the SAM-UKR survey from 9 February until 19 September 2023.

Some 71 % of respondents were aged between 18 and 44 years old, in great majority women (four in five), and Ukrainians. Half of the respondents was reportedly married, and more than half had children with them. Three in five children were aged below 11 years old, while one in five respondents cared for dependent adults (Pg. 2).



### Most respondents were highly educated

More than two thirds reported having completed tertiary education. The main languages spoken were Ukrainian, Russian, and English, followed at some distance by German and Polish. The language spoken was a determining factor in choosing a host country, with one in three being proficient in the host country's language. Languages courses were nonetheless still identified as a pressing need (Pg. 2-3).



### Three in five respondents who are eligible to work are employed

Employment outcomes varied considerably by language ability, education, and previous field of work. People in technical fields or with higher degrees were more likely to be employed, while older respondents who did not speak the local language nor English or had worked in low skilled sectors before displacement were at increased risk of unemployment (Pg. 4-5).



### Lack of local language skills indicated as the most common reason for being unemployed

Language skills (53 % of respondents), insufficient access to childcare (20 %) and qualification recognition (16 %) were most frequently mentioned by respondents as barriers to employment (Pg. 4).



If you were living in Ukraine before the onset of the war, you can participate in this survey:

[\*\*Tell us your story\*\*](#)

## Introduction

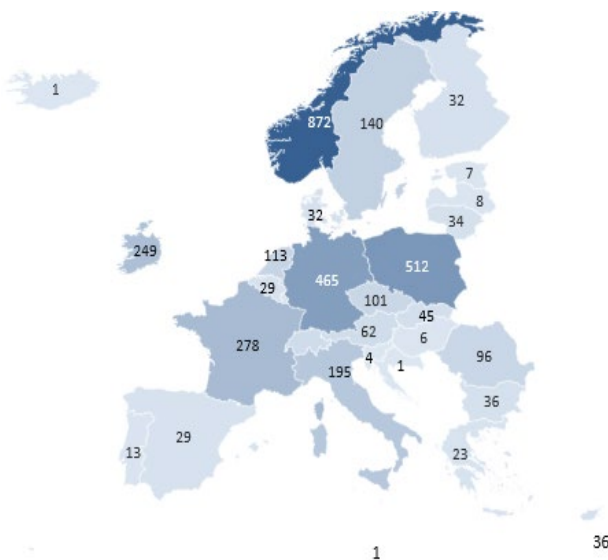
The SAM-UKR project, jointly conducted by the EUAA and OECD, aims to collect policy valuable data directly from displaced individuals from Ukraine for the purpose of deeper situational awareness. The SAM-UKR surveys are conducted anonymously, on a voluntary basis and according to language-sensitive methodologies. This second thematic fact sheet focuses on the education and employment of forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine into the EU.

## Demographics

### Respondents were mainly Ukrainians, mostly female, and aged between 18 and 44

Between 9 February and 19 September 2023, the SAM-UKR revised survey gathered 4 265 eligible responses, of which 85 % were provided for the first time. Respondents were predominantly aged between 18 to 44 years (71 %), female (79 %), with a mean age of 40 years, of Ukrainian citizenship (98 %) and living in Ukraine before the onset of the war (93 %). Other than Ukrainian, the most reported nationalities among respondents were Russian, Belarusian, Algerian, and Syrian.

While about 50 % of respondents were married, in 65 % of cases the spouses have joined the household in the EU. More than half of the respondents were accompanied by children (55 %), who were mostly aged 11 to 17 (43 %). About a third of the children were aged 6 to 10 (32 %), while very young children, aged 0 to 5, accounted for quarter (24 %).



**Figure 1:** Location of SAM-UKR respondents upon participation in the survey (Feb. - Sep. 2023)

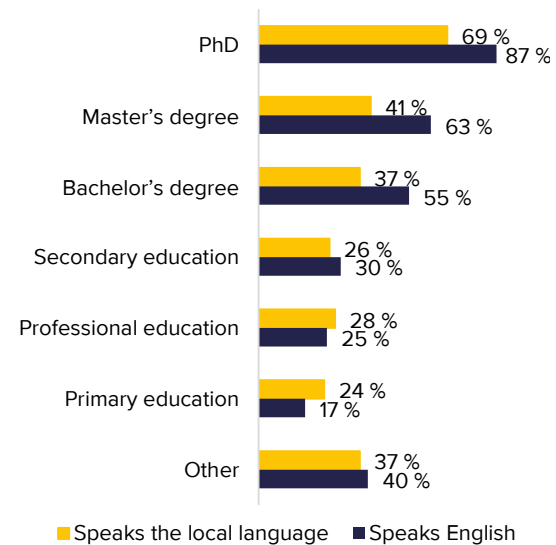
In addition, some 17 % of the respondents cared for dependent adults, such as elderly or persons with disabilities and/or serious health conditions.

Similarly to the previous SAM-UKR reports, few elderly people (65+) answered the survey (3 %). Figure 1 captures the geographical distribution of respondents in the EU+ countries. For more details, see [Methodological note](#).

## Education

### Respondents were highly educated, and some spoke the language of the host country

Most survey respondents who participated in the survey were highly educated. More than two fifths held a master's degree or equivalent, followed by one fifth with a bachelor's degree in hand and 4 % holding a PhD. Around a third have lower levels of education, from secondary (10 %) to vocational (18 %) or primary education (1 %). These numbers contrast with other asylum-related migrants in the EU who tend to have lower levels of education in general, and with non-EU citizens currently living in the EU who reported a tertiary educational attainment of 26 %<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 2:** Proportion of respondents that speak the local country's language and speak English by educational level

A correlation was found between higher education levels and proficiency the host country's language. Indeed, 69 % of the respondents with a PhD, 41 % of those with a master's degree, and 37 % of those with a bachelor's degree could communicate in the host country's language, while this share was much lower for those with lower education levels, ranging from 24 % to 28 % (Figure 2).

### Languages skills played a key role in the host country choice

The main languages spoken by the respondents were Ukrainian (98 %), Russian (88 %), and English (50 %), followed at a large distance by German (16 %) and Polish (15 %). In fact, the languages spoken by the respondents weighed heavily in the respondents' choice of a host country in the EU. More than a third of all respondents (37 %) stated that they could speak the host country's language and 25 % indicated language skills as one of the reasons to choose a host country. For instance, among Norwegian speakers, 82 % were in Norway and similar pattern was noticeable for Czechia (81%), Germany (79 %), Bulgaria (76 %), Portugal (75 %), and Poland (65 %). Furthermore, education opportunities for children, adults or language were ranked fourth in the reasons to choose a host country and were indicated by a third (34 %) of the respondents.

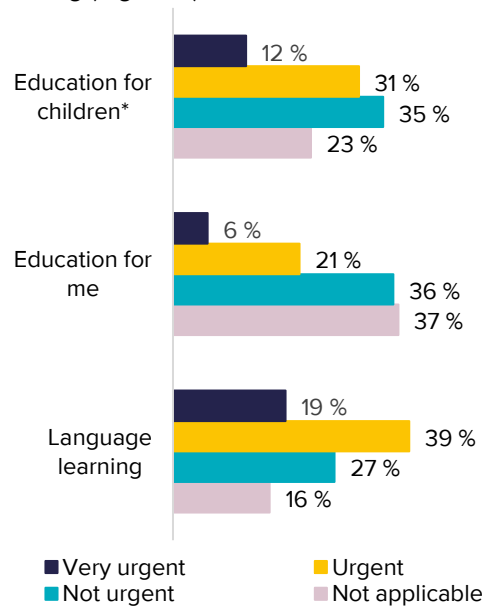
### Host country language trainings were in high demand to alleviate day-to-day challenges

The ability to communicate and speak the host country's language represented a significant challenge for more than two thirds of the respondents who require it to meet their basic needs, as well as to facilitate access to employment, education, and services in the host country. Accordingly, language training courses were identified as a pressing need, with close to one fifth deeming it a 'very urgent' need and two fifths an 'urgent' one. Among those enrolled or having participated in language courses in the host country, satisfaction levels varied from 'being satisfied' (50 %), to 'neither satisfied nor unsatisfied' (27 %), with the rest (23 %) being 'unsatisfied'.

### Most children were already enrolled in education in the host country

Concerning life in the host country, nearly half of the respondents stated they were using language learning services. About three quarters of the respondents accompanied by children explained that their children were already enrolled in education and attending school in the host country (73 %). Language courses and education for children were widely perceived as services supporting integration in the host country and facilitating access to employment, particularly given the prominence of women among respondents and their responsibility as the main breadwinner in the household. Moreover, respondents were relatively satisfied with the education of their children in the host country. More than half (54 %) were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied',

while less than 3 in 10 (29 %) showed a neutral position. Even though most children were already enrolled in the national schooling system, education for children was still highlighted by 43 % of respondents with children as a pressing need, as education is seen as a permanent need, independently if they already have their children enrolled in education, while own education for adults was identified by 27 % of the respondents as pressing (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Urgent needs in the host country  
\* Only for those who have children

The majority of respondents (61 %) did not intend to pursue further education in the host country, as their studies were already completed, while around a third were studying or planning to study in the near future. From those who did not intend to pursue further studies, half explained that their priority is to look for employment in the host country to cover their family's expenses.

## Employment

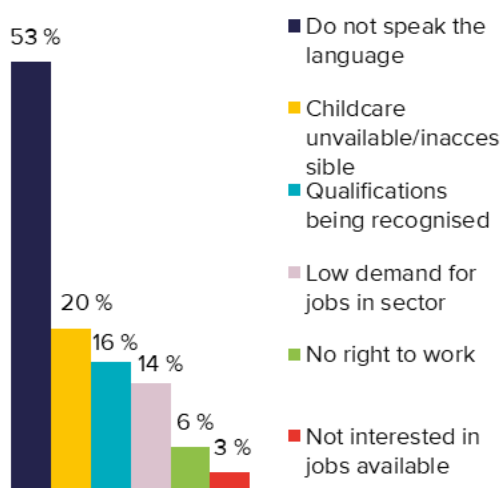
### Access to labour market was central to respondents' wellbeing

About three quarters (78 %) of the respondents were eligible to work and active on the labour market, whereas the remaining 22 % were deemed to be economically inactive. Respondents deemed economically inactive either awaited clarifications about their right to work and/or qualifications to be recognised (11 % of total respondents), were retired (5 %), students or homemakers (3 % each), or were not looking for a job at the time of the survey (1 %). Among eligible and active respondents, around 6 in 10 (58 %) were employed when answering

the questionnaire, as opposed to 9 in 10 (90 %) before the war. Furthermore, about 6 in 10 (58 %) unemployed respondents considered finding a job an 'urgent' or 'very urgent' priority, to *provide for their family, give back to the host country and to cope with the difficult situation*, as indicated in the survey responses.

### Language, lack of childcare and qualification recognition restrict access to the labour market

Respondents perceived several barriers to entering the labour market of the host country (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** Barriers to access to labour market.

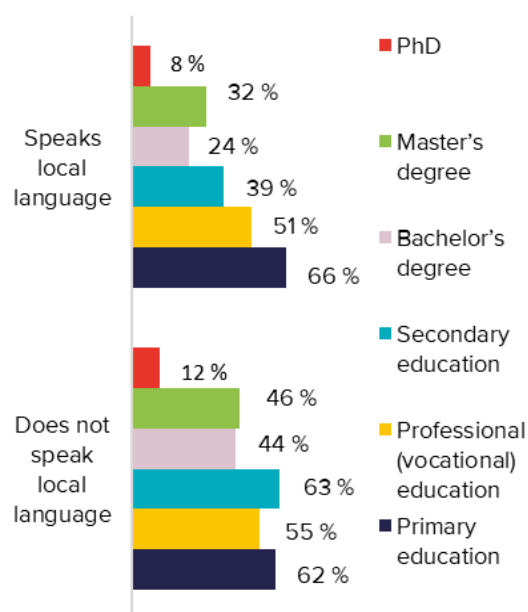
**Note:** Multiple answers were possible

Over half of unemployed respondents (53 %) highlighted limited knowledge of the local language as the most important reason for their unemployment. Caring responsibilities were the second most frequently mentioned barrier to employment (20 % of unemployed respondents). Most respondents indeed had children in their care and were often separated from their partners. Other commonly mentioned obstacles to entering the labour market included issues in the recognition of their qualifications by the host countries (16 %), mismatches between the available jobs and qualifications and work experiences (14 %) and delays with obtaining work permits (6 %). It is worth noting that 3 in 10 unemployed respondents (30 %) were simultaneously facing two or more of these challenges, further compounding their impact on employment opportunities.

### Higher education and speaking the local language improved employment outcomes

The ability to **speak the local language** and/or English strongly impacted employment outcomes. Indeed, respondents who did not speak the local language were more likely to be

unemployed than those who did (49 % vs 31 %), this effect was even more pronounced for those who did not speak English either (58 % vs 33 %).<sup>2</sup> Knowledge of the local language was less impactful for respondents who spoke English (30 % vs 37 % being unemployed for those who spoke English or not, respectively) as the possibility to work remotely for Ukraine or other countries likely compensated for the lower rate of employment in the host country. Support with language acquisition therefore remains essential for access to the labour market. Educational qualifications and professional formation also shaped employment opportunities. Indeed, unemployment generally decreased with **educational qualification**, being highest for those who only attained primary education (63 %), and ranging between 37 % and 40 % for those holding a bachelor's and master's degree, and lowest for those with PhDs (9 %).<sup>3</sup> Differences in unemployment levels became even more pronounced when respondents spoke the local language (Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** Unemployment by education and ability to speak the local language

This may indicate a better utilisation of skills and specialisations once the language barrier disappears. At the same time, unemployment remained high for those having only primary and professional education even when the local language was spoken. Therefore, measures aimed at supporting access to the labour market for persons displaced from Ukraine should also take into account groups at the intersection of multiple precarities (e.g. low education, low

language skills, older age, etc.) and be adapted to their specific needs.

### Employment experiences in Ukraine conditioned employment outcomes after displacement

The prior **sector of employment** of respondents before leaving Ukraine also affected both their likelihood of being employed and their sector of employment after displacement (Figure 6). Respondents who previously worked in 'Engineering, science and technology' and 'Education, teaching' were the least likely to face unemployment (around 27 %) whereas respondents who were unemployed before they left Ukraine or worked as 'Beauty professionals' or 'Technical and construction workers' were more prone to be unemployed (around 52 %). For those who did not work before displacement, though, it is worth noting that almost half of them were now in employment, with 96 % of these working in the host countries. Respondents from highly specialised sectors also had the highest likelihood of remaining employed in the same sector after displacement: 57 % for 'Engineering, science and technology', 39 % for 'Education, teaching' and 33 % for 'Healthcare and life sciences'.

Changes in employment sectors most often involved switching to a sector requiring lower qualification, such as 'Cleaning, housekeeping', which became the most frequent field of work (other than their own specialisation) for 9 out of 16 prior professions back in Ukraine. This sector along with 'Technical and Construction workers' were the only ones to increase following displacement to the EU. Streamlining the recognition of professional qualifications along with language training and support in accessing jobs could improve the use of the skills and know-how provided by displaced persons from Ukraine.

Finally, among respondents currently in employment, most (79 %) worked in the host country, while the rest were employed remotely by Ukraine (16 %) or a third country (5 %). Here again, language abilities conditioned employment outcomes and those who spoke English were much more likely to work remotely (28 % vs 10 %) and the difference was slightly larger for those who also did not speak the local language as well (36 % vs 13 %).

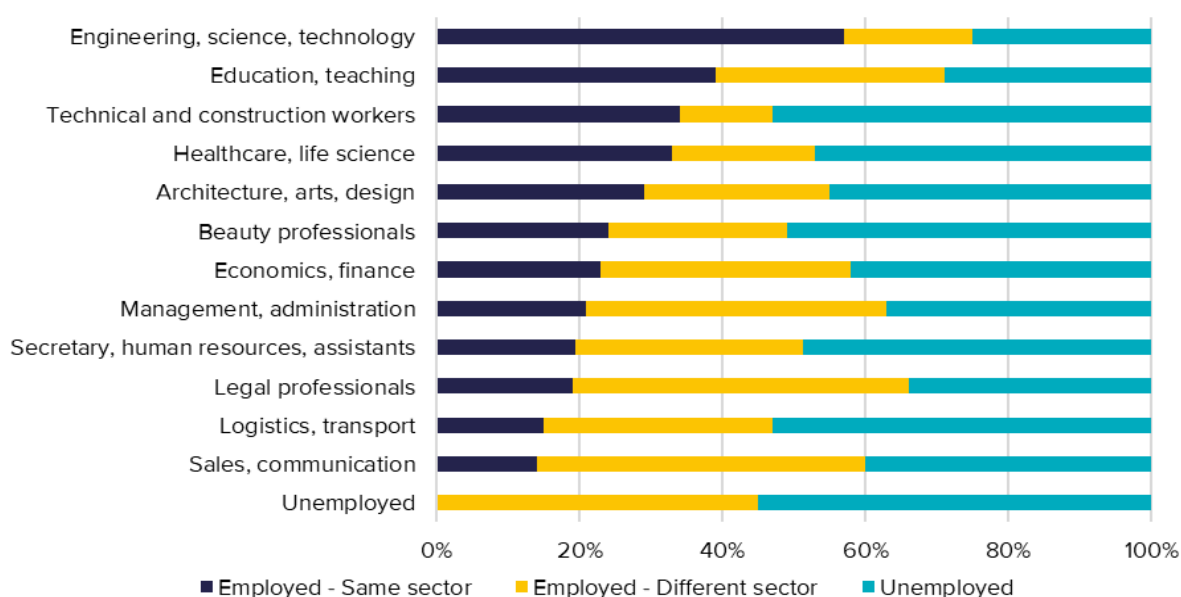


Figure 6: Selected employment outcomes by sector of activity in Ukraine

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat statistics explained. Migrant integration statistics – education, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The local language effect remained significant after controlling for educational qualifications, knowledge of English, age (two categories: 18 to 44 and 45 to 65) and selected host countries.

<sup>3</sup> The effect from educational qualification remained significant after controlling for language abilities (English and local language), age (two categories: 18 to 44 and 45 to 65) and selected host countries.

## Methodological note

The SAM-UKR survey collects data from forcibly displaced adults from Ukraine following Russia's invasion in February 2022, since 8 April 2022. The survey is voluntary, anonymous, available online in English, Ukrainian and Russian and self-administered using a device with internet access.

The questionnaire includes 38 questions, organised in five sections. A privacy policy and data protection notice are available for consultation on the survey platform, in English. An ethics self-assessment was conducted to ensure compliance with fundamental ethical principles of surveying vulnerable populations.

The dissemination strategy comprises a multi-channel approach including EUAA's professional networks with national authorities, international organisations, OECD's networks, the EUAA and OECD's websites and social media pages, sponsored campaigns on Facebook, organic posts on Facebook groups and pages, posters and flyers in national migration centres and reception places, and EUAA's operational staff deployed in the Member States where the EUAA provides operational support.

Considering the voluntary nature of the survey and the wide dissemination strategy, the sampling process originated a non-probabilistic sample, possibly biased towards persons with digital literacy and smartphone ownership, internet access and adequate reading literacy. Moreover, the sampling was influenced by the distinct levels of support from Member States at different times. Nonetheless, to offer insightful results an effort to reach a proportional sample was made along with the dissemination strategies, and post-stratification of data using weights was performed during the analysis when appropriate. Population data on Temporary Protection was collected from Member States and guided the weighting factors which were estimated per EU country. Data quality evaluation was established using eligibility criteria for sample inclusion/exclusion, internal validity and duplicate monitoring. The SAM-UKR survey delivers regular outputs – reports, factsheets and dashboards aiming to provide close-to-real time situational awareness to EU+ countries.

This thematic factsheet focuses on specific themes explored in the survey and is produced with intermediate results. The survey is still ongoing, and trends may change with additional responses and the evolution of the situation on the ground.

### SAM-UKR Thematic Fact Sheet, Issue 2 2023

This document is produced by the EUAA's Situational Awareness Unit (SAU) on the basis of data collected in the context of the Surveys with Arriving Migrants from Ukraine. This document is based on data from 9 February until 19 September 2023.

List of terms and abbreviations:

SAM-UKR	Surveys with Arriving Migrants from Ukraine
EU+	European Union Member States plus Norway and Switzerland

