

# Voices in Europe

Experiences, hopes, and aspirations of  
forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine





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Cover Photo: Worried Ukrainian mother holding her child in front of a destroyed window [by Marko, Adobe Stock].

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	6
Results	10
2.1. People / family	10
2.2. War experiences	19
2.3. The journey to the EU	29
2.4. Protection status	35
2.5. Experiences and needs in the host country	40
2.6. Future intentions	59
Conclusions	66
Annex: Methodological approach	68
Endnotes	74

# Executive Summary

Since the onset of Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine, millions of people have been forced to flee their homes in search of a safe haven. This report brings together the results of the Survey of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine (SAM-UKR), conducted by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to investigate the prevailing themes of forced displacement from Ukraine, discerned through first-hand testimonies of the affected populations. The Gradus Research company provides an indispensable perspective from Ukraine and enhanced this analysis through a thorough review and insights garnered from own surveys.

## State of Play

At the end of August 2023, close to 4.3 million displaced people from Ukraine, primarily Ukrainians, but also including third-country nationals residing in Ukraine before the war, benefited from temporary protection in the 29 EU+ countries (European Union Member States plus Norway and Switzerland). In addition, over 10,000 Ukrainian asylum applicants, some of whom may have migrated before February 2022, were awaiting a decision on international protection and an undetermined number of Ukrainians, who left after February 2022, were granted a residence permit on other grounds. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there were still 3.6 million internally displaced people in Ukraine in September 2023. While the volume of new registrations has reduced, European and international organisations continue to mobilise resources to address the needs of the displaced population.

To follow these developments, the EUAA and the OECD jointly launched the SAM-UKR project to collect data directly from displaced people from Ukraine. The survey encompasses questions pertaining to demographics, reasons for departure and experiences along the journey, return intentions, life in the host country and future intentions. In addition, an open-ended question allowed respondents to elaborate on aspects that they felt may not have been adequately addressed by the questionnaire, thereby adding nuanced personal perspectives to the survey findings.

The narratives shared by persons compelled to leave Ukraine reflected various themes which ranged from people and family, the experiences of war, life in the host country, legal status considerations, to the journey itself and future intentions. The sentiments expressed spanned from negative or adverse, notably in the context to war-related experiences to positive, particularly regarding the support from volunteers and the European Union (EU).

## Results

### People and family

The predominant demographic profile of respondents revealed that the vast majority were Ukrainian citizens (98%), female (81%) and more than half travelled with children. Only one third of the adults were accompanied by their spouse, a phenomenon attributed in part to the Martial Law imposing restrictions on most adult men for leaving Ukraine. A third travelled without any dependents. A significant proportion of Ukrainian refugees<sup>1</sup> in the receiving countries indicated a notably high level of education, as evidenced by two thirds having completed tertiary education. The main languages spoken by respondents include Ukrainian, Russian, and English, followed at a distance by Polish and German.

Examination of the testimonies revealed a recurring thematic focus on people and family among respondents. This theme frequently intersected with other overarching narratives, such as accounts of war, traumatic travel experiences, access to reception services, and a diverse array of life events and considerations for future intentions. Notably, one in five testimonies specifically highlighted children, shedding light on the extreme hardships and traumas experienced by this group. The testimonies also reflected a significant impact on decision-making with respondents often basing their next steps on the well-being of their children. Other family members, comprising adults, children or parents of the respondents, as well as friends, were often cited as offering support while in displacement, but also as representing a source of anxiety when they were not with the respondents. The responsibility of caring for vulnerable and elderly people emerged as important considerations for the respondents, with the support required for these dependents often acting as a constraining factor in their mobility.

## War experiences

People were forced to undergo displacement for multiple reasons. Direct military attacks and the apprehension of potential military attacks were identified as the main reasons prompting the decision to flee Ukraine. Most respondents departed from Ukraine in the first quarter of 2022, with 38% having left in March 2022, while a quarter had previously experienced internal displacement within Ukraine before seeking entry into the EU.

More than one third of respondents provided extensive narratives detailing their experiences from the war in their testimonies. These accounts delved into the trauma and psychological repercussions associated with the war, elaborating on the reasons that compelled them to leave Ukraine. Additionally, vivid descriptions of bombardments, shelling, property destruction and other military actions were put forward. Respondents also reported the deprivation of necessities, such as food, fuel and electricity. The prevailing sentiments expressed prominently featured intense feelings of hopelessness and sadness over the loss of their homes, coupled with trauma resulting from witnessing first-hand despicable acts of war.

## The journey to the EU

Ukraine shares its borders with four EU Member States: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Poland has served as the primary point of entry for half of the SAM-UKR respondents. Two thirds of respondents had already reached their preferred destination at the time of participating in the survey and had no intentions of further travel, while one in five expressed uncertainties about their stay, and one in eight were certain they would eventually leave their current host country. The most important factors influencing the choice of host country were safety considerations and employment opportunities, followed by the presence of friends and family as well as educational opportunities for their children.

References to the journey to the EU were present in one fifth of testimonies, with most accounts describing the harsh conditions of evacuating from their homes in Ukraine to the EU border. These accounts highlighted prolonged waits at border crossing points, frequent roadblocks, and journeys marked by a lack of access to water and food. The already arduous circumstance was further aggravated by fear and stress induced by frequent explosions and reported military activities as detailed in the testimonies. In stark contrast, the initial reception upon entering the EU was positive, marked by the assistance of volunteers and offers of complimentary transportation and accommodation. The onwards journey within the EU was also described in positive terms, with ongoing support from both friends and strangers, fostering feelings of safety and appreciation toward the EU.



## Protection status

Most respondents had received some form of legal protection status in their current country of residence, predominantly in the form of temporary protection, though one in five had not yet obtained this status at the time of the survey. Those who arrived in 2022 were more likely to have been registered for temporary protection, while regional variations were evident in registration rates. Respondents who had not registered were more likely to reside in Central and Eastern European countries and reported higher hope to return to Ukraine.

The legal status of forcibly displaced people from Ukraine emerged as a significant concern for many respondents who shared their experiences with registration processes and discussed the evolution and understanding of the policy environment and its implications on their lives. Some expressed feelings of anxiety stemming from the broader impact of the war in Ukraine on their future, particularly concerning their rights and the duration of their legal status in the host country. Concurrently, others emphasised the lack of available information in their language regarding policies and regulations.

## Experiences and needs in the host country

The survey also studied the experiences and needs of respondents in their host countries, including housing and employment. Initially, most displaced people resided in reception centres or with local families on a temporary basis before transitioning to government-provided housing or renting their own apartments. Government support and wages, along with personal savings constituted the primary sources of income. While half of the respondents indicated being employed, the employment landscape was characterised by a concentration in low-skilled positions, revealing widespread skills mismatches. The primary reasons for not being in employment included language barriers and childcare responsibilities. Most children were enrolled in local schools, while a minority continued remote learning from Ukraine, especially among those with intentions to return to Ukraine. The most pressing needs identified included learning the host country's language, financial support, employment and education for children. Satisfaction with provided services tended to be more positive when respondents were already situated in their preferred destination.

The most prevalent theme addressed by respondents in their testimonies pertained to their experiences in the host country. Within this narrative, expressions of gratitude and appreciation toward the EU, volunteers and charitable organisations, as well as local residents in the host countries were reported. Many testimonies often included a nuanced blend of both positive and negative sentiments. Specifically, respondents often provided feedback on how certain services related to accommodation, employment language learning, health and education could be enhanced to provide better support. Finding longer-term affordable accommodation was a salient issue, frequently intersecting with the difficulty of securing employment when not proficient in the local language, or when job opportunities within the respondent's respective field were scarce. Factors such as a lack of childcare, or the duty to care for elderly or disabled family members, and the prevalence of low-skilled jobs were additional considerations raised in relation to employment challenges. Language training and its potential to improve employment and integration prospects was frequently and positively mentioned. However, a subset of respondents questioned the appropriateness of the level or mode of training.

The availability and extent of financial support were described in detail, expressing both appreciation and occasional frustration over administrative burdens or the absence of services offered in their own native language. Medical care emerged as a significant concern, especially



for those with urgent health needs. Some respondents reported inadequate medical coverage or having different expectations of these processes, while others appreciated the high-quality treatment received for chronic diseases or emergency situations. Access to education was sometimes constrained by administrative burdens or a limited number of places, and sentiments regarding inclusiveness of displaced people varied.

The experiences of war had a detrimental impact on the mental well-being of respondents, with many disclosing feelings of stress, anxiety, hopelessness, panic attacks, and depression. These challenges were compounded by the uncertainty in their lives in the host country, due to difficulties in adapting, securing employment, and finding affordable accommodation, in addition to constant concerns for families still affected by the conflict in Ukraine. The significance of psychological support was underscored, with respondents explicitly mentioning the importance of having a support network and a local community in the host country, as well as the value of safety and shelter towards regaining psychological well-being.

## Future intentions

While the conflict persists, most respondents mentioned not having been back to Ukraine since their departure, while some have made one or more visits, mostly to visit other family and friends, including partners who stayed behind, or check on their properties and belongings. The evidence suggests that those who left accompanied by their partner are less inclined to return after the war, and almost half of respondents expressed plans for family members to join them in their current country. There was a geographical disparity in intentions to return after the war, with those in countries neighbouring Ukraine more likely to return than those elsewhere, for example in Scandinavia. The primary reasons cited for intending to return included family reunification, resuming their previous way of life and contributing to the reconstruction of their home country. Conversely, those who did not intend to return mentioned concerns about safety, the deteriorating economic situation in Ukraine and the presence of better opportunities in their current host country as the main reasons influencing their decisions to stay.

The desire to return to Ukraine to actively contribute to the country's reconstruction was elaborated upon in the testimonies. However, this sentiment was not always unanimous within families. Dissatisfaction with life in the EU, including challenges in accessing employment due to language barriers or perceived lower quality of life compared to Ukraine, and a strong desire to contribute to the war effort against Russia were among the main reasons cited for considering a return.

Some respondents mentioned an intention to move onwards from their current host country due to bureaucratic hurdles as well as uncertainty about their longer term legal status. The perceived prospects of increased employment opportunities, better integration schemes, and the presence of friends and family or the diaspora were indicated as reasons to contemplate a move to another EU country.

Reasons to avoid returning to Ukraine included the fear that their homes and lives in Ukraine have been destroyed, anxiety stemming from war experiences, and a reluctance to undergo repeated displacement. The desire to stay in the EU was underpinned by perceived better employment opportunities for the respondents and education for their children, along with the hope for a better future.

# 1

## Introduction

### Forced migration from Ukraine

#### Close to 4.3 million beneficiaries of temporary protection in the EU+

On 4 March 2022, the Council of the EU adopted an implementing decision activating the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD or 2001/55/EC).<sup>2</sup> Since then, EU+ countries have adopted the necessary national legislation to ensure adequate implementation of this Directive. In terms of eligibility, the Council Decision envisages temporary protection for Ukrainian nationals that were residing in Ukraine and have been displaced on or after 24 February 2022, as well as for third country nationals and stateless persons and their families, who benefitted from international protection or a similar status in Ukraine on 24 February 2022.<sup>3</sup>

Following the Russian Federation's large-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, millions of people were swiftly displaced to the EU. At the end of August 2023, almost 4.3 million persons were benefitting from temporary protection in the 29 EU+ countries).<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, over 10,000 Ukrainian asylum applicants were awaiting a decision at first instance in EU+ countries, some of whom may have migrated before February 2022.<sup>5</sup>

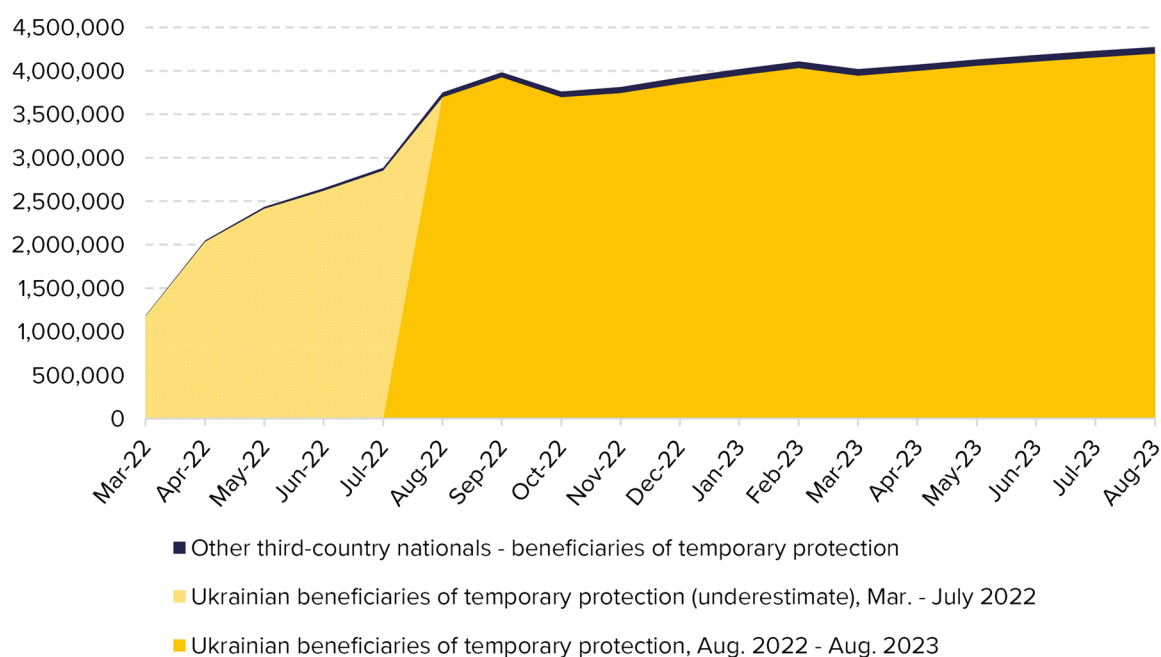
According to the UNHCR, there were around 2 million persons fleeing from Ukraine (both Ukrainians and other third country nationals) who have applied for asylum, temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in the four neighbouring EU countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) as of the third week of October 2023.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the IOM estimates that about 3.6 million persons were internally displaced in Ukraine as of September 2023.<sup>7</sup>

#### Persistent increase in registrations since the breakout of war

According to Eurostat, the number of beneficiaries of temporary protection has grown from 3.9 million at the end of 2022 to 4.3 million by the end of August 2023. This represented the most beneficiaries since the beginning of the war (Fig. 1).

Since February 2022, almost all persons benefiting from temporary protection have been Ukrainians. By the end of August 2023, Ukrainians represented 98% of the total (Fig. 1). Furthermore, nearly two thirds of all persons benefiting from temporary protection were female (64%).

At the end of August 2023, Germany (1.2 million) and Poland (961,000) were the main receiving countries for beneficiaries of temporary protection in the EU+. They were followed at some distance by Czechia (365,000), Spain (185,000), Bulgaria (165,000), Italy (160,000), Romania (138,000) and the Netherlands (132,000). At the same time, Czechia was the EU+ country accounting for the



**Figure 1.** Total number of beneficiaries of temporary protection in the EU+ by Ukrainian and other third-country nationals, Feb. 2022 – Aug. 2023 (Source: Eurostat [[migr\\_asytpsm](#)] as of 18 October 2023)

**Note:** Due to missing data from Austria (Mar. – June 2022), Germany (Mar. – July 2022), Hungary (Mar. – Apr. 2022), and Slovakia (Mar. 2022), data for the period Mar. – July 2022 should be considered underestimates.

most beneficiaries of temporary protection per capita, followed at a distance by Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia.<sup>8</sup> All 29 EU+ countries have received beneficiaries of temporary protection albeit to a vastly different extent, with for example, fewer than 10,000 beneficiaries of temporary protection in Slovenia (8,900) and Luxembourg (4,200).

In Germany, the top receiving country, there has been a gradual rise in beneficiaries of temporary protection over the past five months (+108,000 or +10% from March 2023). Among the top receiving countries, increases took place also in Czechia (+40,000 or +12%), Romania (+14,000 or +11%), the Netherlands (+13,000 or +11%), Spain (+12,000 or +7%) and Bulgaria (+11,000 or +7%).<sup>9</sup> At lower levels in absolute terms, there were significantly more beneficiaries of temporary protection in Sweden (+16,000 or +67%) and Ireland (+13,000 or +17%) than at the end of March 2023. Conversely, the trend of the last five months went slightly downward only in Poland, even though the total number of beneficiaries of temporary protections remained stable (-39,000 or -4% from March 2023).

## The SAM Project – survey to collect data

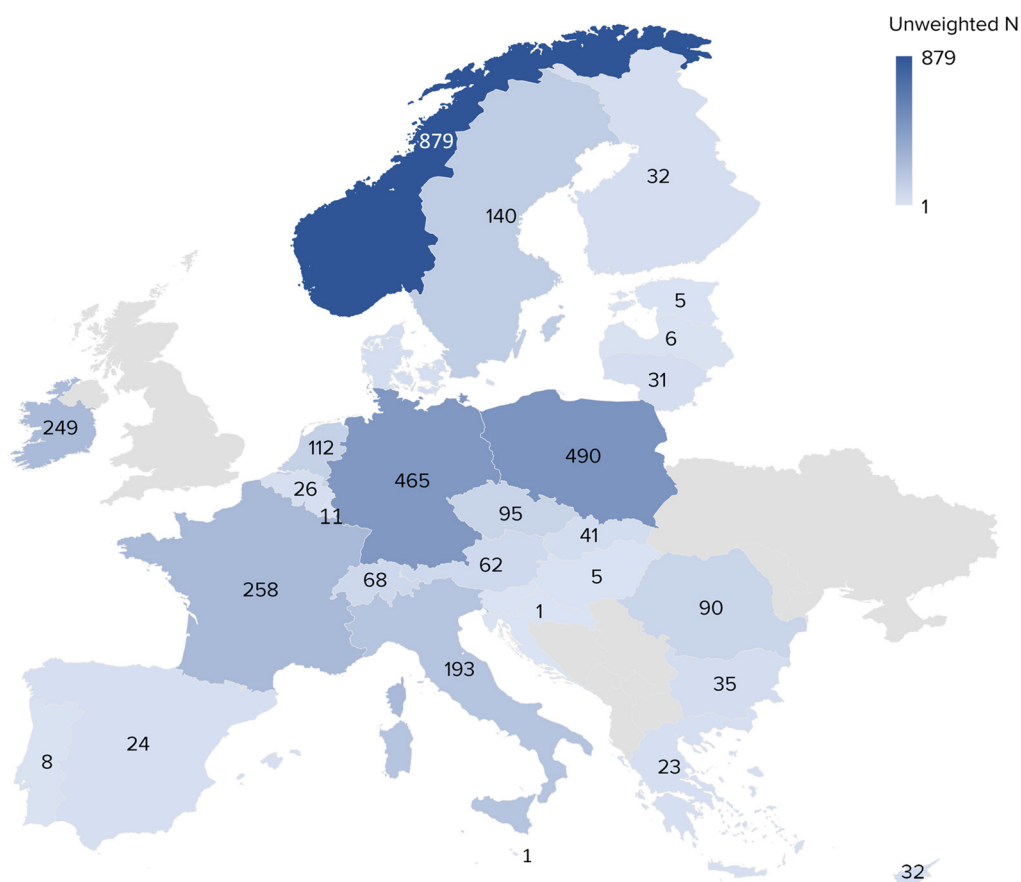
The Survey of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine (SAM-UKR) was launched by the EUAA in collaboration with the OECD to collect data from forcibly displaced adults from Ukraine following Russian Federation's invasion in February 2022. The survey is voluntary, anonymous, available online in English, Ukrainian and Russian and self-administered using a device with internet access. The questionnaire includes 38 questions, organised in five sections. The themes covered in the questionnaire include demographics, reasons for departure and experiences along the journey, return intentions, life in the host country and future intentions.

The use of surveys renders possible a direct insight in the situation, choices and motivations of each respondent and can thus usefully complement other forms of data collection, which often rely on the recording of various occurrences over the course of administrative processes, such as the process of registering for temporary protection. Online self-administered surveys allow for the target population to be reached wherever they are and contribute to the depiction of a pan-European situational awareness. Policy makers and practitioners in national authorities can use the survey results to identify potential gaps in the support provided by EU Member States to the displaced population and provide avenues for improvement.

## Quantitative data

The quantitative analysis in this publication reports findings from SAM-UKR survey responses provided between 9 February and 13 September 2023, following up on an earlier joint report (released in October 2022) that presented results from the 2022 round of data collection<sup>10</sup>. The final sample used for the quantitative analysis in this report comprises of responses from 3,418 adults who were residing in Ukraine at the time of the invasion and who subsequently fled – directly or indirectly – to an EU+ country in which they were residing at the time of participating in the survey.

Most SAM-UKR respondents were in Norway, Poland, Germany, France, and Ireland (Fig. 2). To adjust for potential regional biases resulting from the sample's geographical distribution (vs. the actual prevalence of displaced Ukrainians across Europe), some corrective regional weights were applied in the calculation of results in topics sensitive to the host country context (Note: this weighting procedure is explained in more detail in [Annex: Methodological approach](#)). In this report, survey figures shared are weighted unless otherwise noted (e.g. in the case of data presented by regional breakdowns, in which case the use of regional weights is irrelevant).



**Figure 2.** The current location of respondents of the SAM-UKR survey (unweighted, n=3,418) (Source: SAM-UKR)

## The importance of qualitative data and personal narratives

To capture nuances that cannot be ascertained through closed-ended questions, an open free-text question included at the end of the SAM-UKR survey enabled respondents to provide any further information on the topics of the questionnaire or beyond. From the launch of the survey on 8 April 2022 to 31 August 2023, more than 1,500 respondents answered and provided personal testimonies of their displacement to Europe through which a variety of themes emerged. This qualitative data gives valuable information in the context of the forced displacement following the start of Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine. It enables a direct insight into the decision-making process and emotional state of displaced persons, as well as their struggles, anxieties, hopes and aspirations.

The themes which emerged from the narratives told by persons forcibly displaced from Ukraine ranged from people and family, experiences of war, life in the host country, legal status, to journey and future intentions. The sentiments expressed ranged from negative, especially in relation to experiences of war, to positive, particularly regarding the support from volunteers and the EU.

The analysis of testimonies does not come without challenges. The respect of the respondents' data privacy was ensured through the communication of appropriate notices, the voluntary nature of the data collection and a rigorous data anonymisation procedure ensuring the cleansing of any personal identifiers or other personal information. The same testimonies frequently included both negative and positive elements. The negative aspects mentioned experiences or suggestions for process improvements, while the positive aspects expressed appreciation for the assistance received in the EU. For this reason, the overall sentiments on certain themes may appear more negative than they actually are, while no scale can adequately capture the horrors of the war experienced by some of the respondents.

The EUAA and the OECD have developed a comprehensive analytical framework by combining the voices of displaced persons from Ukraine with closed-ended questionnaire responses. This framework allows us to see how quantitative data aligns with the actual experiences of displaced persons, enriching quantitative results with a human dimension. The participation of Gradus in this report offers the much-needed cultural and social perspective of a Ukrainian research company that has continuously analysed the situation in Ukraine since before the war.

# 2

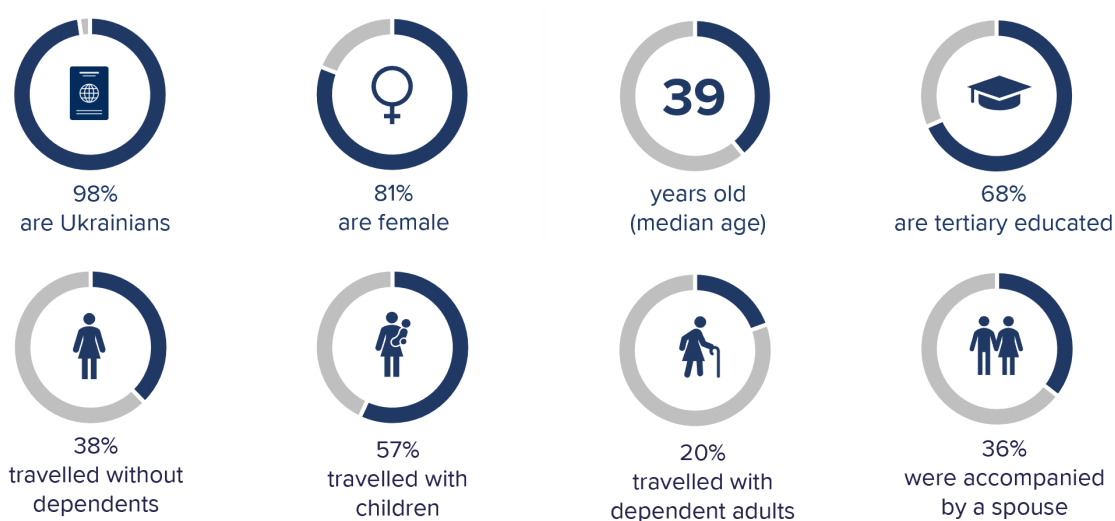
## Results

### 2.1. People / family

#### Overview of 2023 survey results

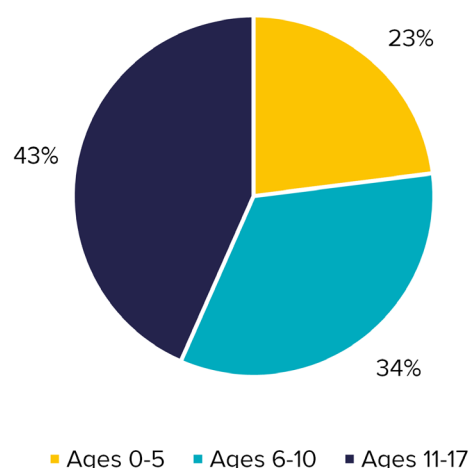
While most asylum applicants arriving in the EU+ are typically young men traveling alone, the Ukrainian refugee crisis has stood out from the beginning due to its distinctive pattern of arrivals, predominantly comprising women and children. This unique demographic characteristic is also evident in the SAM-UKR survey. The quantitative analysis presented in this report is based on data collected from 3,418 eligible adult respondents who participated in the revised SAM-UKR survey conducted between 9 February and 13 September 2023<sup>11</sup>. Among these respondents, 81% were female, with an average age of 39.7 (median age of 39). The vast majority were Ukrainian citizens (98%), followed by 0.7% Russians (Fig. 3).

Most respondents fled with children and adult dependents. Of all the respondents, more than half (57%) had minors in their care, totalling 3,013 children, which averages to approximately 1.68 children per respondent among those travelling with minors. Accompanying children had an average age of 9.4 (with a median age of 10). Among them, 43% were aged 11 to 17, 33% were between 6 and 11, and 24% were under 5 years old (Fig. 4). A smaller but still notable group of respondents left Ukraine with adult dependents, comprising 20% of the total. Among these, 24% were accompanied by two or more dependent adults. In certain instances, individuals fled in extended and multi-generational groups, with approximately 12 % of all respondents reporting that they travelled with both children and dependent adults. At the same time, 38% of respondents reported having no accompanying dependents – neither adult nor underage.



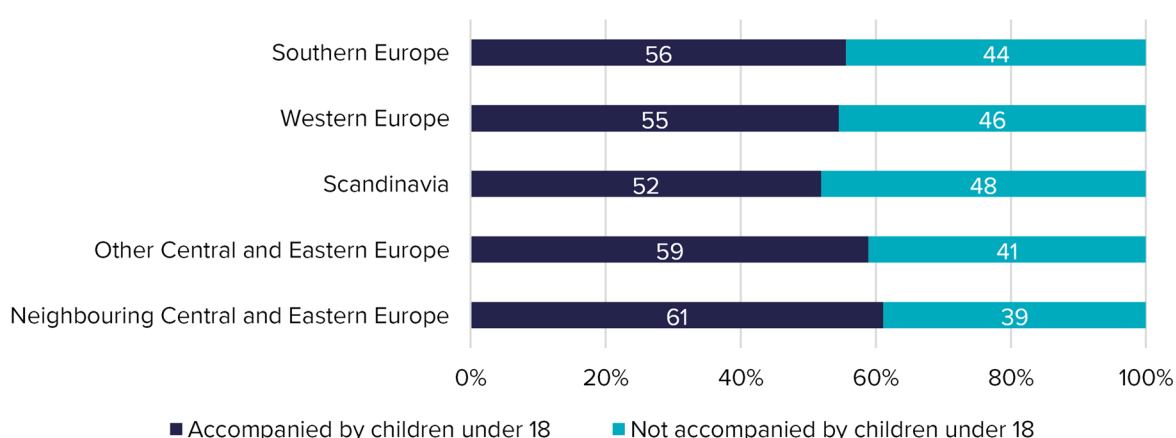
**Figure 3.** Main characteristics of SAM-UKR respondents (Source: SAM-UKR)

Despite the Martial Law imposing restrictions on most adult men between the ages of 18 to 60 from leaving Ukraine, about 30% of all female respondents indicated having their husbands or civil partners with them<sup>12</sup>. In terms of civil status, more than half of respondents indicated being in a legal union, either marriage (50%) or a civil partnership (8%), over a fifth (22%) were single, 15% were divorced, and 5% widowed. Half (55%) of the married or partnered female respondents in the SAM-UKR survey were accompanied by their husband or partner, and nearly all (94%) of the married or partnered men in the survey were accompanying their wife or partner. Overall, nearly two-thirds (64%) of SAM-UKR respondents in a legal union had their partners with them at the time of participating in the survey.



**Figure 4.** Age breakdown of accompanying children (n=3,013) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Data reveals family patterns and structure vary based on respondents' current region of residence. This distinction was particularly evident among respondents with children. The percentage of respondents accompanied by children was highest in neighbouring Central and Eastern European countries (61%) and lowest in Scandinavian countries (52%, Fig. 5). Some variations were observed also in terms of accompanying spouses, with family units appearing more intact in non-neighbouring Central and Eastern European, as well as Scandinavian countries. In these regions, 74% and 73% of respondents, respectively, were accompanied by their spouse or partner. In contrast, only 58% of respondents with partners reported being with them in Southern European countries.



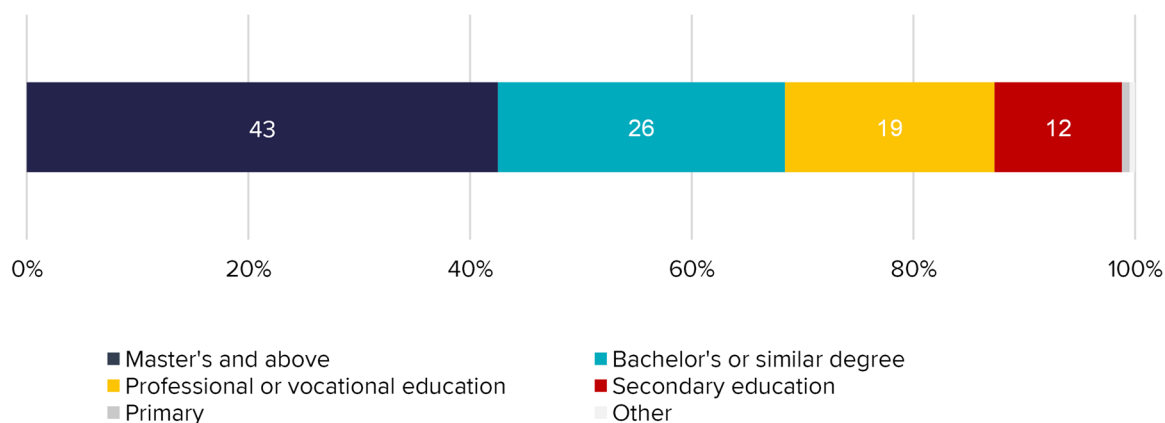
**Figure 5.** The share of respondents travelling with children by current region (unweighted data, n=3,401) (Source: SAM-UKR)

The inflows from Ukraine are atypical not only in terms of their demographic composition but also their socio-economic characteristics. Notably, a significant proportion of Ukrainian refugees in the receiving countries are highly educated,<sup>13</sup> and this trend is evident in the SAM-UKR sample as well. Roughly two thirds of all respondents reported having completed tertiary education, with 43% holding a Master's degree or higher and 26% holding a Bachelor's or other similar higher



education degree (including a Specialist Degree) (Fig. 6). These figures are similar to the profile of respondents in the SAM-UKR survey conducted in 2022.<sup>14</sup>

The main languages spoken by the SAM-UKR respondents were Ukrainian (98%), Russian (89%), and English (48%), followed by Polish (16%) and German (11%).<sup>15</sup> In total, 37% of respondents reported being able to communicate in the language of their host country to some extent.



**Figure 6.** Highest qualification levels of respondents (n=3,325) (Source: SAM-UKR)

## Qualitative Analysis

About 685 testimonies mentioned close and extended family members or friends, and expressed feelings, attitudes, experiences, preoccupations, frustrations, and sometimes hopes. These statements often overlapped with various themes such as war and traumatic travel experiences, access to services in reception, and a wide range of other life events before or in the immediate aftermath of their displacement, in addition to future-related considerations. We grouped these reflections based on the relationship with the respondent, therefore developing the following typology:

- Children (all minors, below 18) (317 testimonies),
- Other family members (adult children or whose age was unknown or impossible to determine, or other members of family networks) (280 testimonies),
- Partners (160 testimonies),
- Vulnerable people (150 testimonies),
- Elders (50 testimonies),
- Friends (66 testimonies).

Within each group, we discussed reflections clustered by related theme, such as hardships and traumatic experiences, barriers in access to services, etc.

## Children

Approximately one out of five respondents mentioned children in the testimonies, making it the largest share of testimonies discussing elements affecting the lives of family members. This first cluster pertaining to children discusses the various hardships, challenges, and perceived responsibilities towards them.

Feelings of extreme hardships and trauma experienced with or by children during the pre-displacement period in Ukraine emerged starkly, although they were also connected to themes discussed elsewhere in this report. Several testimonies, mostly addressing the initial phases of the conflict elaborated on the fears, traumas, and persistent anxieties resulting from the direct experiences of war and its impact on their children.

*“ [My] son shouted – Mom! Let’s go far, far from here!!! Promise me [...] I have never seen him like that [...] I frantically write SOS in the only group to help Ukrainians on Facebook I found at that time. The country where to go is not important. But how will we leave and where? It does not matter. Nothing matters. A voice in my head instinctively yells: Run! Far, far away! We must save the child! ”*

- Female, 44 years old, North region

*“ It was very scary, the children were crying, the food was running out. [We] were leaving the occupied village with [our] children through mined areas. When [we] got to the evacuation buses, the shelling began. My husband stayed to protect our native land, and I decided to save [our] children from the war. ”*

- Female, 38 years old, East region

The experience of protracted and multiple displacement patterns was also present, albeit less frequently. It can explain the fragility in which some families were forced to live and the shared preoccupations about the conditions of family members and children. Multiple displacements within Ukraine and/or the EU generated serious concerns in the minds of the respondents regarding coping mechanisms, both in terms of financial resources and psychological distress.

Recalling family’s traumatic ordeal through their journey to EU Member States was another prevalent theme associated with the presence of children.

*“ I had to leave my country for the safety and future of my child. So that my child is not afraid to go out. So that he does not see and does not know how cruel war can be. Protect your and your child’s psychological and emotional health. Having lived for 1 month under shelling and food shortages. I decided to leave Ukraine. I went anywhere [I could]. ”*

- Female, 28, East region

The journey could take the form of travels by car from war zones, crossing occupied areas, or boarding evacuation trains organised by the authorities.

*“ The evacuation trains were full, just crowded. I had a ticket for this train, but I hardly squeezed in the train with my 1-y.o. toddler. That was a terrific experience. There were 12 people in a cabin, including a 1-month-old baby. ”*

Female, 34 years old, Kyiv city

*“ Before leaving Ukraine, I lived with my children in a bomb shelter for 3 days [...]. My daughters were afraid. I was afraid for myself and for my daughters. We left the city without things, took only passports with us. Very terrible conditions, by train to Lviv, without toilet, food and water. People sat back-to-back on the floor, it was very crowded, hot, scary, dark. There were so many people that it was not possible to change the position of the body. ”*

- Female, 50 years old, East region

Alternatively, several testimonies from displaced families with children focused on their reception experience in the EU. For many, multiple challenges related to housing, schooling, and access to medical care for themselves or their children emerged in this context. Adequate housing solutions were clearly a key challenge for the life of displaced persons. Several accounts highlighted issues such as the shortage of beds or accommodations in collective housing, the challenges of living together (sometimes with extended families, including elders) in common areas with no privacy, as well as the challenge of loneliness and the absence of former social networks for support. Housing challenges were also discussed in terms of the difficulty in accessing or affording single-household accommodations or apartments, as well as the need of sharing such private housing solutions with other households, due to lack of availability or pricing constraints.

*“ We live in a small town in [EU country]. The apartment was provided to us for temporary use by a family of [EU country] citizens. We, a family of six comprising myself, my husband, three children, and my elderly mother, live in a small apartment where there are no separate rooms. It is very difficult morally, physically, psychologically. At the same time, we cannot afford to rent separate other housing. ”*

- Female, 41 years old, Kyiv city

Furthermore, concerns related to schooling were also frequently reported, with respondents asking information about schooling rights and facilities, the struggle of finding suitable schooling options, or the lack of access to specialised schooling services.

The responsibility for the well-being of children with special medical needs and the challenges of finding and accessing appropriate medical services also emerged. Several accounts described special medical conditions affecting displaced children, often linked to either the perceived lack of services availability, financial resources to cover related expenses, or the emotional burden of maintaining family's well-being during displacement.

*“ We are in [EU country], me, with my wife and son [...]. Our son has autism. In Ukraine where we lived, we had classes with a psychologist, speech therapist, neuropsychologist, and now we do not have access to these services anymore. And as time passes, my son gets older, and the doctors say that up to 7 years you can promote development with the appropriate support, but now we are wasting time, and this is our main problem. ”*

- Male, 40 years old, location not available

Fewer accounts also reflected the sense of responsibility towards their children concerning the need for language assistance or information provision. Assistance in learning the host country's language was considered particularly important. In addition, some sought legal counselling to gain a better understanding of their rights, obligations, and the necessary procedural steps to facilitate their integration in Europe.

*“ I need legal help!! I don't even have enough information... I can't understand what to do next and how to act. I am lost in a foreign country, alone with a child!!! ”*

- Female, 35 years old, West region

*“ How do I get medical help, where do my children go to school. None of the people of the state service communicates with the Ukrainians, no one came and explained what to do to us. We ourselves are trying to get information from the Internet, and the help of volunteers. ”*

- Female, 28 years old, East region

## Other family members

In about 280 of the testimonies, references to the roles played by the extended family's social network, consisting of brothers, sisters, parents, and other relatives, and also overage sons and daughters, both during the displacement phases to the EU and in their aftermath, were found.

Similarly to previous sections, around 160 of them referred to the displacement experience, in which a significant number of respondents reflected on family members primarily as a source of assistance in coping with the hardships of the daily life. These family members could be either already established in the EU or residing in Ukraine, and they provided respondents with financial or other type of support. Several respondents mentioned that their capacity to move safely within Ukraine or to the EU was mostly attributable to the support provided via (extended) family networks. In the EU, respondents looked at moral and economic support from their family members as the primary means to sustain themselves, especially when they faced hurdles in accessing reception or social benefits or struggled to cover the costs of living with the received social assistance benefits.

*“ I have to use the support of the family that remained in Ukraine. [...] If it becomes safe, I will go home. If I lose the support of my family, I will seek refuge in countries with higher wages. ”*

- Female, 40 years old, East region

Conversely, fewer testimonies indicated family members as the target of their assistance during displacement. They expressed concerns about the presence of family members with them in displacement, and the emotional burden of being responsible for their well-being while lacking stable employment, economic security, or facing challenges in accessing basic needs such as shelter, medical care, and education. A less common theme focused on the presence of respondents and their families in the EU, reflecting on their ability to adapt and adjust to their new environment.

*“ When my mother and I managed to escape [...] despite the difficult emotional state that accompanies me to this day, I immediately started looking for opportunities here to continue my development more quickly and to socialise in the society I am in. I am grateful for [EU country]’s warm welcome and opportunities for students and young academics. I will never give up, I will work and learn, try again and again. ”*

- Female, 25 years old, Kyiv city

The remaining testimonies related to a broad range of difficulties connected to experiences in reception, and the emotional hardships faced by the respondents and/or their family members. For instance, they mentioned the struggle of finding suitable housing solutions for themselves and their family members, compounded by the challenge of securing enough space for all family members with limited financial resources.

Additionally, some testimonies also focused on family members with special medical needs, either in the EU or in Ukraine, who encountered barriers in accessing the necessary medical care, or simply dealt with the mental strain of supporting their family members under the difficult circumstances of displacement. Another dimension of reflections pertained to family ties representing a crucial support network in organising the logistics of transportation to the EU Member States countries and their initial accommodation.

## Partners

Some 160 testimonies were connected to the partners of the respondents, of which around 60 related to various considerations regarding the impact of displacement and separation on their relationship. These responses primarily focused on the anxiety expressed by female participants due to their partner staying in Ukraine for military service or economic reasons, sometimes indicating their will to return and reunite.

*“ My husband, the father of my children, is forced to work in Ukraine with a threat to his life in order to somehow support us financially. ”*

- Female, 46 years old, East region

*“ My husband is now in Ukraine, I am very worried about him, every day he is in danger. Our child has not seen her father for more than a year, she misses him a lot and is depressed because of this. I haven't seen my husband for a year, and at my own risk and fear I had to go to Ukraine for 10 days to at least see my husband. ”*

- Female, 39 years old, Kyiv city

In addition, although the number of cases was limited, another topic of concern related to legal considerations involving the respondents' partners, including, but not limited to, reflections on Ukrainian partners stranded in Ukraine due to movement limitations imposed on men. Firstly, some testimonies indicated worries about the legal status of their partners in the EU attributable to either a lack of knowledge of the procedures, or for having registered for temporary protection in multiple EU member countries due to changes in migratory trajectories. In addition, there were also testimonies from presumably non-Ukrainian nationals who were afraid they might not qualify for temporary protection given their nationality. Lastly, a smaller thread, discussed in about 20 cases, mentioned special needs, primarily medical, of their partners. Generally, these statements were meant to be disclosed with the intention of either asking for ad hoc support for treatment or to illustrate the challenges of displacement and reception for particularly vulnerable people and providing for their basic needs.

*“ The situation is difficult, only I work, my husband has a gunshot wound and is unable to work, we have two children and it is very, very difficult for a family of four to survive on my salary alone. ”*

- Female, 34 years old, North region

The last subgroup of partners reflected on the situation of displaced pregnant women. Although some testimonies were provided by the respondents recalling the challenges their pregnant partner faced during displacement, a greater group consisted of reflections made by pregnant women themselves. In these cases, the testimonies presented a distinction between the recollection of hardships experienced during their displacement in Ukraine, the journey towards the EU, and the obstacles associated with life in the country, where housing and financial assistance take the lead.

## Vulnerable People

Reflections about individuals with special needs were found in about 150 testimonies. Nearly two-thirds of them related to challenges compounded by the additional burden of a medical disease, disability, or other forms of special needs affecting the displaced individual or those

travelling with them. Many claims in this area underscored the inadequacy of temporary reception measures to address their situation. As mentioned before, some testimonies also talked about pregnant women and wounded individuals as a result from the war, who need special care due to their current situation, and also about elderly people.

*“ Please help with paying for housing, we are being evicted [...], we have nowhere to go, a family of three, my son is 10 years old, I suffer from multiple sclerosis, I am now being treated, thanks to volunteers, they helped with medicines, my wife is looking for a job. ”*

- Male, 31 years old, location not available

*“ When we arrived in the [EU country.], we were given free housing, but only for 3 months. I was looking for work and housing, but housing prices are prohibitive for three. You can find a job in another city, but without children. Tell me, what should we do next, if my son is disabled and my daughter is 13 years old? ”*

- Female, 48 years old, East region

## Elderly People

About 50 testimonies followed reflections provided by respondents concerning elders who have either travelled to the EU or remained in Ukraine, including instances where the head of the household cared for their elders during their displacement to the EU. This experience was especially taxing on this specific vulnerable group, as it placed extreme strain on both their physical and psychological conditions, sometimes becoming gradually unbearable.

*“ In July, we went to another region of Ukraine, but it turned out to be not very safe there either, which is why my mother, grandfather and I went abroad. [...] The move was very difficult for my grandfather (who had been wounded and hospitalised for a month). The consequences of his nervousness during the occupation were apparent. On September 1, he committed suicide. ”*

- Female, 19 years old, East region

About one in three testimonies in this subtheme focused on concerns related to their caregiving role for their elders. They discussed the difficulties this additional burden imposed, such as balancing their basic needs with their income, the need for special assistance that is frequently unavailable, the precarious health conditions affecting some of the displaced elders, and the challenges of housing extended families in small dwellings, sometimes with more than one household together. In some other cases, testimonies written by elderly people emphasised their personal difficulties in adapting to new circumstances, both materially and psychologically.

*“ We are confronted with the fact that people of retirement age, unable to work for health reasons, are not needed anywhere. ”*

- Female, 61 years old, Kyiv city

## Friends

Experiences lived with friends emerged from references in 66 testimonies and were mainly discussed from four perspectives. The most prominent perspective revolved around the traumatic and psychologically distressing experiences faced by the respondents along with their social

network of friends. Some testimonies recalled the anguish of traversing military battlefields and places where civilians were killed trying to flee, and the loss of friends as a result of battles.

*“ My children and I are constantly depressed. We do not plan to return to Ukraine, [also because] my wife and I consider it inappropriate to return to where everything will remind us of the fears of war experienced, [such as] to see the ruins of [our] home, to remember whose friends were killed by the Russian military (they were civilian citizens, not soldiers), and many other, equally important things that will remind of [our] fears. ”*

- Male, 42 years old, North region

Alternatively, respondents described the sudden disruption of their relationships with friends and families as a result being uprooted from their social setting due to the conflict.

*“ Due to the constant hostilities taking place in the territory where I lived, I lost contact with my family and friends, I want to leave [this EU country] because of the hope of finding my children, grandchildren, relatives. ”*

- Male, 55 years old, location not available

Thirdly, respondents discussed how their friends represented a safety network in terms of support during the journey within or outside Ukraine to the EU. Finally, respondents' social network played an important role in the selection of a host country, likely due to the perception that the existence of an established social network would facilitate reception experiences and, possibly, integration abroad. The testimonies include multiple references that explicitly mentioned the Ukrainian diaspora in other EU countries, or pre-existing connections with EU nationals.

*“ My friend has lived in [EU country] for more than 10 years. She invited me and my children to come to her. My husband and dog stayed in Ukraine. ”*

- Female, 45 years old, South region



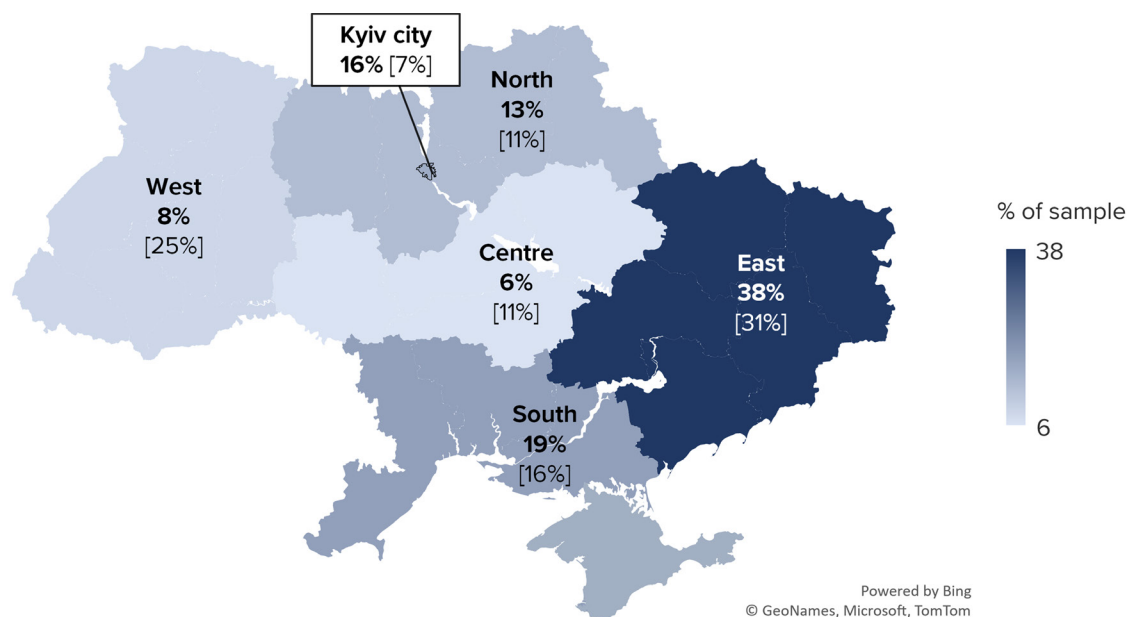
# Results

## 2.2. War experiences

### Overview of 2023 survey results

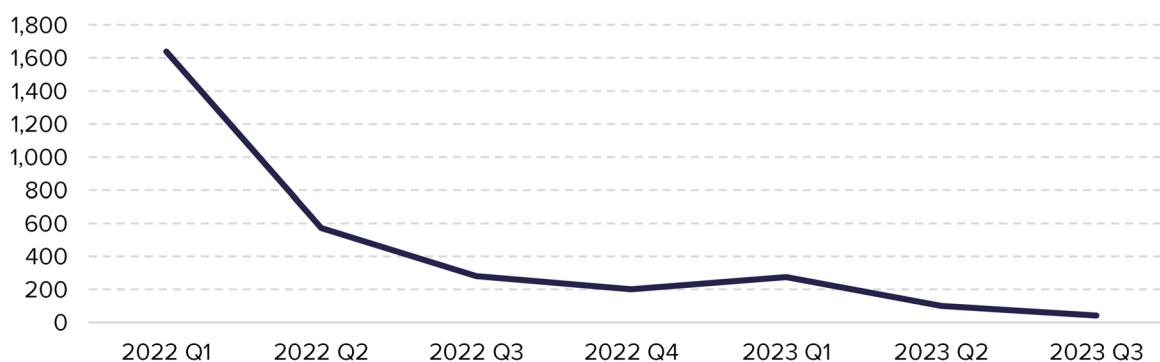
Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted in significant civilian casualties and widespread damage to essential infrastructure. This has forced people from various regions of Ukraine to abandon their homes in search of safety. Ukraine comprises 24 oblasts (first level administrative division), one autonomous republic (Crimea), plus the cities of Kyiv and Sevastopol. To facilitate analysis, these regions have been categorised into macro-regions (please refer to the [Annex: Methodological approach](#)). Respondents of SAM-UKR survey come from all these diverse areas, but nearly two out of five originate from the East macro-region (38%), followed by the South (19%) and Kyiv city (16%) (Fig. 7). These patterns reflect general displacement trends in Ukraine, with the East and South macro-regions experiencing notably intense fighting during the war, coupled with substantial areas falling under the occupation of the Russian Federation.

Most respondents departed Ukraine in the first quarter of 2022 (Fig. 8), with 38% having left in March 2022. This aligns with the reported border crossings from Ukraine<sup>16</sup> and the trend reported in the first SAM-UKR report in 2022<sup>17</sup>. For many respondents, their experience of displacement did not commence upon leaving Ukraine. A quarter of respondents (25%) had already been internally displaced within Ukraine before seeking entry into the EU. Comparing respondents from this wave



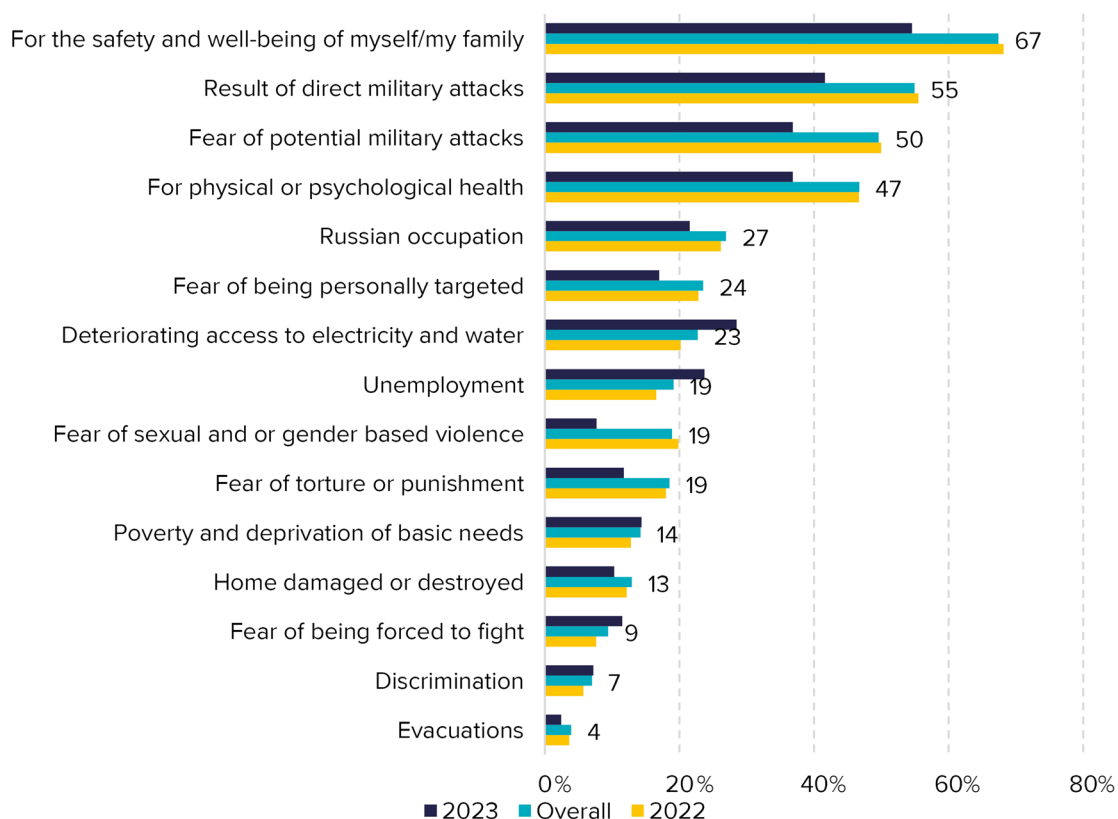
**Figure 7.** The macro-regions of origin of the SAM-UKR respondents in Ukraine (n=3,240), with the share of the general population of Ukraine in the corresponding regions on 1 January 2022 enclosed in brackets (Sources: SAM-UKR, UNFPA, [Ukraine - Subnational Population Statistics](#), accessed October 30, 2023)

of the SAM-UKR survey who left in 2022 versus 2023, the share of those who reported being internally displaced before entering the EU increased from 25% to 27%, respectively. Internally displaced people (IDPs) might not have crossed an international border, but they constitute a highly vulnerable group facing an elevated risk of violence, persecution, and the deprivation of essential necessities.



**Figure 8.** Date of departure from Ukraine (n=3,114) (Source: SAM-UKR)

In general, the most prevalent reason for leaving Ukraine, indicated by 67% of respondents, was comprised by concerns for the safety of themselves and their family members. Other significant factors included direct military attacks (55%) or the fear of potential military attacks (50%), as well as health-related reasons, encompassing both physical and psychological concerns (47%).



**Figure 9.** Reasons for leaving the country by year of fleeing Ukraine (percentages). Multiple answers possible (n=3,418) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Differences were found in the reasons for leaving Ukraine across different groups, mirroring their diverse experiences of the war. The distinct circumstances in various macro-regions played a significant role in shaping the motivations for departure. Notably, a higher percentage of respondents from the East and South macro-regions cited the influence of Russian occupation (46% in the South, 30% in the East, as opposed to 11% in the Centre) and the destruction or damage of their homes (22% in the East, compared to 1% in the Centre) as key reasons for leaving. Furthermore, the most important reasons for leaving Ukraine also evolved over time, as evidenced by responses based on the year of departure (Fig. 9). Although the top four reasons for leaving Ukraine remained consistent, when comparing those who left in 2023 to their counterparts who left in 2022, the latter group more frequently mentioned additional factors such as deteriorating access to electricity and water, unemployment, poverty and deprivation of basic needs, and a fear of being forced to fight. These differences reflect changing circumstances in Ukraine and the evolving nature of the war.

## Qualitative Analysis

### War experiences

In the context of the Russian Federation's large-scale invasion of Ukraine, the experiences of war were a central theme reported by more than a third of respondents (585 respondents). The testimonies, gathered mostly in the initial phase of the war, conveyed profoundly adverse and traumatic experiences of the war in Ukraine, which left an indelible mark on the respondents and their perceptions of the significance and effects of their experiences as war survivors. Eight sub-themes were identified within war experiences:

- Trauma and psychological effects related to the war (120 testimonies),
- Reasons to leave Ukraine (111 testimonies),
- Bombardments, shelling, ground assaults and other military actions (94 testimonies),
- Destruction of house or properties (67 testimonies),
- Deprivation of basic needs (45 testimonies),
- Displacement (39 testimonies),
- Life under occupation (38 testimonies),
- Ukrainian martial law prohibiting men to leave the country (27 testimonies).

The majority of respondents reported experiencing multiple instances of these sub-themes. Therefore, they are not independent of one another and were frequently interconnected. In particular, bombardments and shelling, and living under occupation triggered other experiences, such as the development of psychological trauma, the destruction of their properties, the deprivation of basic needs, or the displacement of respondents. Bombardments and shelling also represented one of the main reasons to leave Ukraine, along with the loss of personal properties and the occupation of their city. High levels of correlation between the eight sub-themes connected these experiences and reveals an intricate net of traumatic life circumstances brought on by the respondents' exposure to the conflict.

### Trauma and psychological effects

Trauma and psychological aspects dominated the topics mentioned by respondents when describing war experiences. This indicates the degree of severity of their experiences, which left deep and long-lasting emotional wounds. The strong relationship between war exposure and psychological disorders or trauma is undeniable and has been well documented by health

professionals treating war survivors.<sup>18</sup> Witnessing first-hand combined acts of war violence, such as bombing and shelling or the loss of close relatives, frequently have profound and compelling effects on a person's life that are difficult to overcome including severe stress, chronic anxiety, or persistent fear for one's life.

The descriptions from this sub-theme were exclusively intensely negative. They expressed personal experiences and their impacts as well as, their subjective interpretations. Sometimes, testimonies reflected coping mechanisms developed by the respondents to deal with war experiences, such being constantly in a state of high alert or being unable to fall asleep.

It is impossible to convey in these lines the degree of extreme and persistent fear, exhaustion, anxiety, stress, uncertainty, sleep disorders, displacement, depression, grief, feelings of loss, anger, starvation, despair and, in more general terms, the intense mental and emotional distress that resulted from exposure to the war. Respondents recounted going through these distressing events with their loved ones, hidden in basements or bomb shelters, praying for survival and mourning the lives of those who passed. The testimonies of displaced Ukrainians who participated in this survey were indeed rife with references to traumatic experiences including constant bombing and shelling, violent events, terror, panic, inability to sleep, fear for their life and the life of their family, extreme feelings of unsafety, constant hiding, life in basements with severe deprivation of basic needs such as water or food and the inability to see the sun for months, feelings of losing everything, depression, misery, description of constant crying and despair.

*“ Then, after air raid sirens blared every day and night, our children and my friend's son began leaping up in fear each night, crying and terrified at even the slightest sound. It was unbearable to witness their distress as they stopped speaking about it. My daughter was scared to go to a toilet without either me or my husband's presence; we couldn't go out to buy food, she was constantly crying. ”*

- Female, 45 years old, Kyiv City

*“ When the shelling stopped at night, we woke up and could not fall asleep in complete silence. There was terrible anxiety in my soul! ”*

- Female, 34 years old, North region

*“ I hope that no one will ever feel such helplessness, indescribably silent cries in your head, complete devastation, and at the same time this incredible rage that chokes your heart and consumes your mind. When you are waiting for your death and at the same time hoping for a miracle; when, after a bomb dropped nearby, you are thankful for staying alive, yet also mourning the death of your acquaintances. ”*

- Female, 33 years old, North region

*“ It is a horror when you have to repeat to young children every day that their main task is to survive, my 3-year-old son at that time knew the significance of this task, and still remembers it. ”*

- Female, 33 years old, North region

Most of the war experience sub-themes are closely tied to the trauma and psychological effects sub-theme. The highest overlap was found with bombardments, shelling and military actions, which were reported in two fifths of testimonies about trauma, followed at some distance by life under occupation and the other sub-themes.

## Reasons to leave

The reasons for leaving Ukraine were complex and interlinked. In the testimonies, respondents strongly linked their reasons to leave Ukraine with war experiences, with the highest overlap observed primarily with bombardments, shelling and military actions, followed by trauma and psychological effects. Many respondents clarified that they departed in order to 'save the children', citing the extremely precarious circumstances in which they found themselves - displaced from their homes, living in basements in cities under occupation, without access to water, food or electricity - as well as the violent military actions that included bombing and shelling among other threats to their lives. Some respondents described their struggle to stay in Ukraine after being uprooted or having their properties destroyed. Eventually, they felt compelled to leave due to the severe deterioration in their living conditions and the heightened risk to safety and that of their families. The sense of lack of safety and insecurity, as in the constant fear for their life and their loved ones, whether from military attacks or from living in extremely vulnerable conditions, or in many cases, from both was undoubtedly, the primary factor weighing decisions to leave.

*“ I never dreamed of living abroad, but I had to leave the country because I am from Kharkiv. With my own eyes, I saw explosions, shootings, and I had a daughter, and I was pregnant. There was no way to go to the doctor, so I needed to seek refuge in Europe. ”*

- Female, 33 years old, East region

*“ It was no longer possible to stay at home due to constant shelling, we lived for more than a month without electricity, gas, water to feed the children. We left the basement in which we lived for more than a month, trying to save the children from starvation and bombing. ”*

- Female, 39 years old, East region

*“ My family and I came under fire and bombing several times. However, we hoped that everything would work out and did not want to leave our home. But shelling of residential areas became more frequent. And then Russian military began to bomb the territory of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, as well as the city's electrical substations, and then was when we had to leave. ”*

- Male, 39 years old, East region

*“ Having survived the bombing, having been on the verge of death, looking down the muzzle of a machine gun aimed at me, having seen enough of the corpses of women, men, children, and having buried my family and relatives, I was forced to flee my home in an occupied city, mainly because they threatened my son. ”*

- Female, 53 years old, East region

## Bombardments, shelling and military actions

The testimonies depicted an extensive number of references to bombardments, shelling and military actions, which were connected to the most traumatic experiences described by respondents. These experiences ranged from living in continuous fear and shock due to the sound of bombardments and sirens, to feeling the ground shake with every missile attack, to being attacked directly in the streets, to having weapons pointed at them and their family, to knowing about and/ or witnessing the death of close ones, to burying their loved ones or looking for them among the dead, to being intimidated and threatened, to fearing kidnapping, imprisonment or

disappearance, to being robbed, humiliated, beaten, suffering or witnessing violent and offensive acts, to hiding in basements and spending days or weeks without access to the most basic necessities. Exposure to armed conflict and war experiences has shaped each respondent and their family's unique experiences, affected their psychological and emotional responses, and compounded on their decisions to hide in basements or shelters or, as a last resort, to flee their city or the country. These experiences were mostly described by respondents who also reported having lived under occupation and suffering from psychological trauma. Being displaced from their home and having lived without access to basic needs was another common association with bombing and shelling or other military actions.

Diverse layers and varying levels of violence were put forward in the testimonies, but these resulted from a single circumstance or reason. Most accounts detailed multiple encounters with war experiences, which intensified personal experiences and introduced several intricate layers of violence and vulnerability.

*“ When the war started, I was in Kherson with my daughter, the explosions started in the morning, we were very scared, but at first, we didn't understand what happened. Then it all started, the blackout, the occupation, constant explosions, living in the basement, lack of products. I really hoped it would get better, but it didn't. ”*

- Female, 46 years old, South region

*“ I was in the territory where direct combat operations of the Russian occupiers were taking place, and I experienced great stress and fear while hiding under shelling. ”*

- Female, 45 years old, North region

*“ But when you are sitting in the basement, tanks are passing by, shelling the schools. Everything is shaking, the ground is falling on your head and you are preparing for the fact that you will not survive. ”*

- Female, 34 years old, South region

*“ My hometown is currently under occupation. There are a lot of Russian soldiers and police on the streets - they check phones (...) and there have been repeated shelling in the city. It was very sad and scary to be in the city. We were able to leave after four attempts only. One time we spent the night in the field, and they were shooting all around, and at some point they took us back to the city. ”*

- Female, 46 years old, South region

## **Destruction of house or properties**

Most commonly descriptions pertaining to the destruction of house or properties destroyed were linked to bombardments, shelling and military actions, followed by trauma and psychological effects, reasons to leave and life under occupation.

Testimonies coded in this sub-theme mainly describe instances where respondents faced the complete or partial destruction of their properties, including their homes, but also other possessions such as farms, warehouses, business properties, or vehicles. Some described intense feelings of hopelessness and sadness over the loss of their homes, the product of hard work and long efforts. Moreover, the loss of their home was strongly associated with the urge to flee and the feeling that a return was no longer possible or that they had nowhere to go back to.

*“ I am from Ukraine, Luhansk region, my apartment was completely destroyed and my permanent job was lost. I am homeless.”*

- Female, 41 years old, East region

*“ My city of Bakhmut no longer exists, housing is bombed, there is nowhere to return.”*

- Female, 65 years old, East region

*“ A missile hit our house, today I am with two young children in a refugee shelter in [EU country], before that we lived in a container in a refugee camp for 3 weeks.”*

- Female, 43 years old, South region

*“ In September, when my village was liberated, there was another shelling in the house, and it caught fire. It burned down completely.”*

- Female, 19 years old, East region

*“ We are from a small town, our town was under occupation, and our house and all its contents were destroyed. Our car was also destroyed, and our business (a café) was completely destroyed.”*

- Female, 25 years old, East region

## Deprivation of basic needs

In their accounts of experiences of war, respondents also mentioned being deprived of basic necessities like water, food, fuel, electricity (light, heat), communication, and hygienic products. The deprivation of basic needs most strongly overlapped with testimonies mentioning bombardments, shelling and military actions and life under occupation, followed by displacement and psychological trauma.

Most descriptions reported specific instances where the respondents were denied access to essential products. Numerous testimonies discussed food scarcity highlighting precarious circumstances and describing how respondents managed to survive or overcome the situation. Respondents also described how supermarkets were closed or empty, and that cash was required to buy any items, as cards and other forms of digital payments were not working anywhere. Some testimonies reported methods to locate and source water, such as gathering it from rivers, boiling snow in pans on the streets, or collecting it from the rain. Relating to food and water scarcity, some participants described health issues resulting from malnutrition or the consumption of unsafe beverages.

Power outages also emerged frequently and were consistently mentioned in this sub-theme with an emphasis on the bitter cold weather and harsh conditions they endured, which in some cases was even cited as a reason to leave the city or country. Besides, respondents explained how the availability of electricity heavily affected communication systems and basements lighting. Respondents also reported the shortage of fuel, which impacted their mobility and the recurrent search for food and water. In this context, respondents stated the availability of fuel was an essential factor in the decision to take their car and leave, while many stated that they had to wait for evacuation or had to leave on foot due to the lack of fuel.

The communication barrier or lack of information also undermined the decision of respondents to leave. Respondents reported that they were unable to gather the necessary information on the state of the war to make an informed decision about their departure on a war situation, while



the lack of communication isolated respondents from the world and their families in other cities of Ukraine.

*“ Throughout the [first] nine months of the large-scale war in Ukraine, I remained in the country. However, due to Russia’s energy terrorism causing a shortage of electricity and heat, we had to leave. ”*

- Female, 35 years old, East region

*“ In the village where we lived, the next day, the Russian forces entered. Houses were destroyed, and they shot at cars on the road. They cut off the gas and electricity supply. Gas was restored after four months, and electricity after 10. ”*

- Female, 49 years old, East region

*“ When we realised that everything was very bad, leaving was no longer an option as our city was surrounded. On 2 March, we lost everything - electricity, water, gas, and communications. It’s difficult to explain what kind of hell we endured. At first, we lived in the corridor and cooked food over an open fire amidst shelling. When there was snow, we boiled it and washed the dishes with it. Then we fetched water from the river to drink. ”*

- Female, 45 years old, East region

*“ After Zhytomyr, not only did gas stations lack gasoline, but they also had no food. The child and I were very hungry and very thirsty. Only in Ternopil were we able to buy bread and water. ”*

- Female, 41 years old, Kyiv city

## Life under occupation

Some respondents reported having experienced life under occupation by Russian troops. Some reported being in this predicament for several months and described extremely trying situations. Indeed, life under occupation frequently overlapped with mentions of bombardments, shelling and military actions, followed by psychological trauma and deprivation of basic needs.

Those respondents who lived in cities under occupation were more exposed to military attacks and direct armed conflicts. Some recounted dismal humanitarian situations and said they were held captive, interrogated, intimidated, prohibited from leaving and subjected to other violent acts. Others mentioned being threatened, beaten, humiliated, robbed, checked and searched. Some testimonies described living in occupied territories with no access to food, water and electricity and being displaced from their homes to live in basements and shelters which were considered safer places. Life under occupation was defined as being subjected to severe controls, exposed to extreme violent situations and living in continual terror.

*“ I was forcibly deported by soldiers from my home to the occupied territory. I survived humiliation, threats of physical violence and beatings. The soldiers kept me in the basement, then took me to prison, where they kept me for a couple of days, starved me and interrogated. ”*

- Male, 26 years old, East region

“ It was very difficult to live in Kherson during the occupation. It was impossible to stay there because of the constant threat to life. In the form of abduction, rape, searches, interrogations. Normal life became inaccessible. Grocery shopping [became inaccessible. (...) in general, it became dangerous to go out into the yard.”

- Female, 32 years old, South region

“ The occupiers entered our city, put everyone who expressed their opinion and love for Ukraine into basements, beat and abused them. People simply disappeared... it became scary to just go out into the city for shopping. Constant shelling around the city did not stop...”

- Female, 37 years old, East region

“ It is very dangerous in Kherson, people are kidnapped from the streets, apartments are broken into, looted. The city is blocked, so there are no supplies from Ukraine, a huge problem with medicines. Volunteers rarely manage to pass through the villages to bring medicines.”

- Female, 44 years old, South region

## Displacement

Most references to displacement included in the testimonies described instances where the respondents lived in basements or in shelters, due to either the destruction of their home, to bombardments, shelling and military actions, to life under occupation or for safety reasons. Displacement was most strongly associated with mentions of bombardments, shelling and military actions, followed by deprivation of basic needs, life under occupation and psychological trauma. Some testimonies also described circumstances in which the respondents were traveling through Ukraine with the intention of fleeing conflict zones or the country, and therefore, found themselves being displaced. A few respondents noted that they were experiencing their second displacement, indicating a life marred by forced displacement.

“ My husband and I are now in [EU country], having fled the war for the second time. The first time we left our home was in 2014, as a result of the occupation of the city of Donetsk. We worked in Odessa, opened our own business. But again, they are forced to drop everything and flee from the war.”

- Female, 59 years old, South region

“ We lived at home when we heard the explosion, in the beginning, we hid in the bathroom, the children slept in the bathtub and I slept on the floor nearby. Then, when there was an explosion in our area, we moved to a bomb shelter. We lived there for two months and slept on wooden pallets. But when the explosion happened there as well, we decided to go to another city, where it was calmer to visit relatives. There we lived for one month, and it seemed to us that it became calmer in our city and we returned, but it did not happen as expected.”

- Female, 35 years old, East region

“ In July, we went to another region of Ukraine, but it turned out to be not very safe there either, which is why I, my mother and grandfather went abroad.”

- Female, 19 years old, East region

*“ My daughter was born in the basement and did not see the sun for 2 months. The worst thing was at night, the terrible explosions around and how my mother cried. And when everything calmed down at night, we came out of the basement and extinguished the houses and garages burning not far from us. ”*

- Female, 35 years old, East region

## Martial law

To repel the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, martial law was declared in the country imposing specific restrictions on the freedom of movement for Ukrainians.<sup>19</sup> Families that were fleeing the country have been impacted by this situation, which has prevented numerous men, aged 18 to 60 from leaving. Some testimonies go into further details in this area, including broken families in which partners or fathers and children are unable to see each other for extended periods of time, as well as personal opinions of the impact of such separation on the well-being of family members.

*“ I can't complain, the men had to stay and fight. I should have stayed and joined the fight. I may go back to fight. I guess this is female privilege. ”*

- Female, 26 years old, South region

*“ I flew to Ukraine from [EU country] on February 20 to visit my parents for a few days. The war started and I still can't go back! I have a residence permit in [EU country], I lived and worked there for 2.5 years, I still have housing, work, things, documents, money in [EU country], my whole life has remained there! ”*

- Male, 37 years old, Centre region

*“ It is very difficult for me in a foreign country with children, my husband stayed close to the border so that we could see each other. Once a month I visited him for the children to see their father and we also grieve. ”*

- Female, 33 years old, East region

*“ Unfortunately, my husband is not with me because the borders of Ukraine are closed [for men aged 18 to 60] and my husband cannot leave the country. Psychologically this is very hard. ”*

- Female, 25 years old, East region

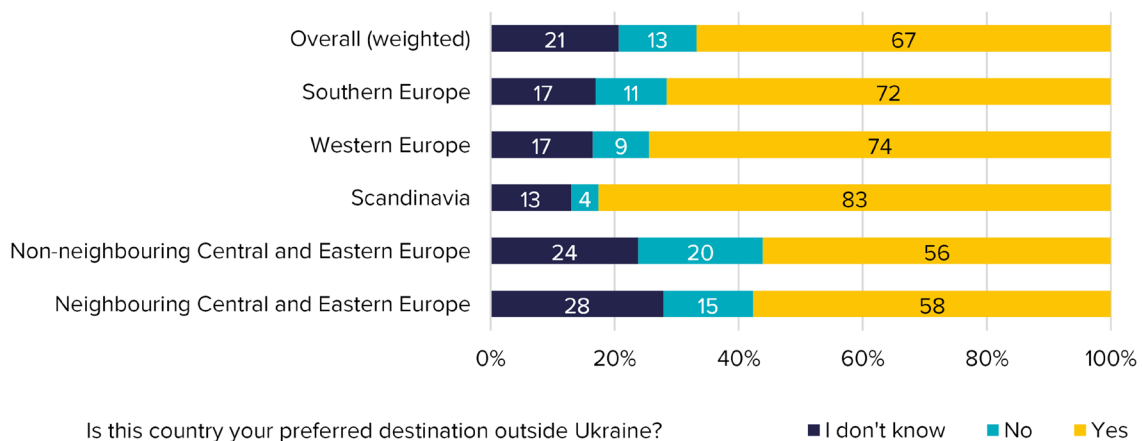
# Results

## 2.3. The journey to the EU

### Overview of 2023 survey results

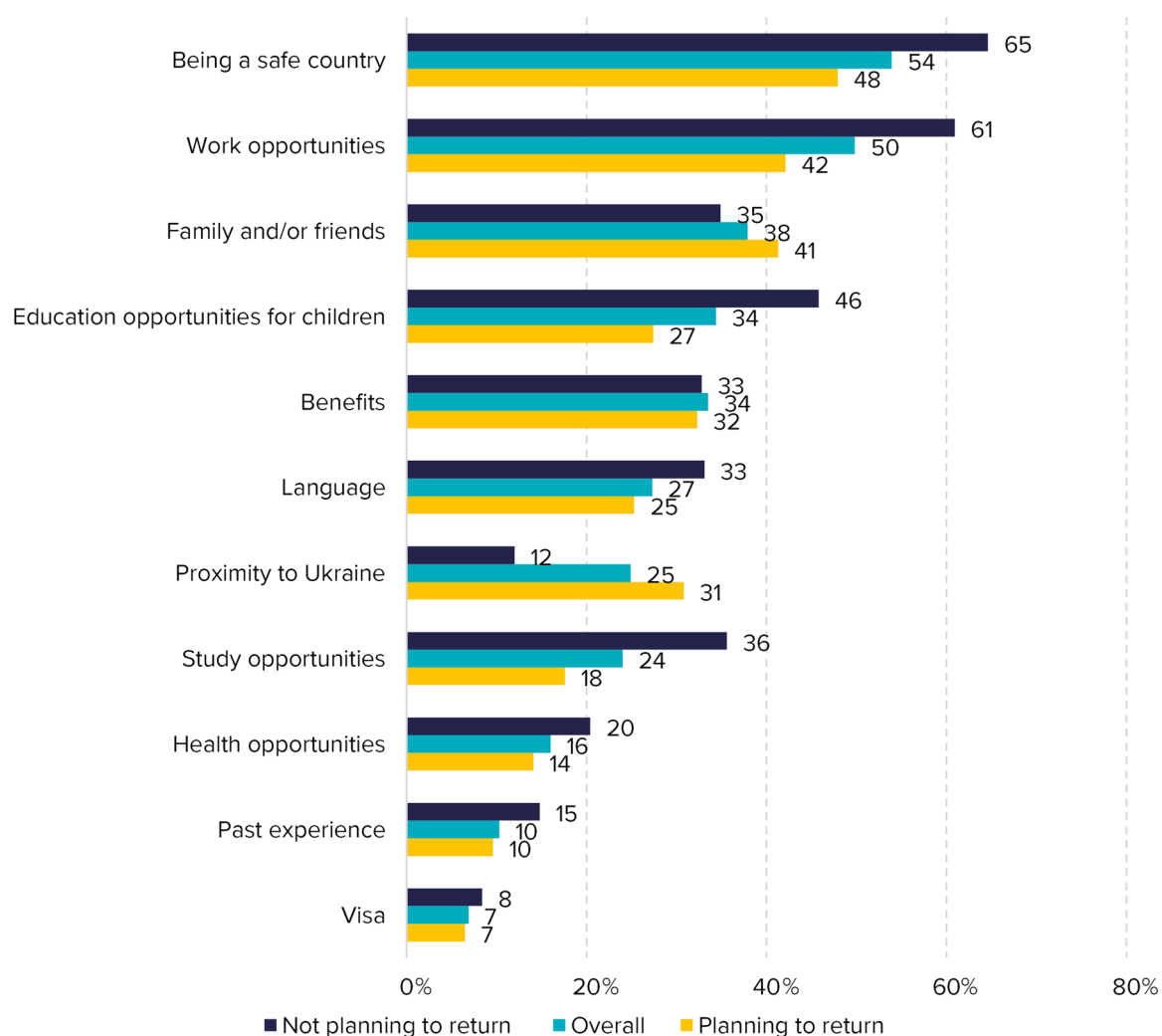
Ukraine shares its borders with four EU Member States: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Poland has served as the primary point of entry to and from Ukraine during the conflict, with over 15.8 million border crossings out of Ukraine and 13.3 million crossings into Ukraine since 24 February, 2022<sup>20</sup>. Most SAM-UKR survey respondents also entered the EU through Poland, accounting for 52 % of the respondents, followed by Romania (11%) and Hungary (6 %).

Pre-existing visa facilitations for Ukrainian nationals in Europe greatly promoted orderly cross-border movements and many Ukrainian refugees continued to travel towards other destination countries. Most SAM-UKR respondents were located in Norway (879), Poland (490), Germany (465), France (258), and Ireland (249) (see [Fig. 2](#)). The majority (67%) of respondents expressed that their current location was their preferred destination, and they had no intentions of traveling further. In contrast, 21% were unsure whether they will stay, while 13% were certain that it was not their final choice. Among those who had not reached their preferred country, almost half (49%) remained undecided on or had yet to determine their next destination. However, variations exist among respondents in different regions of the EU (Fig. 10). In Scandinavian countries, 83% reported that they had successfully reached their preferred destination, whereas in non-neighbouring Central Eastern European countries, only 56% of respondents felt they had arrived at their final destination outside of Ukraine.



**Figure 10.** The share of respondents in their preferred destination by region (n=3,199) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Overall, the most important factors in choosing a destination country were safety considerations (54%) and work opportunities (50%), followed by the location of friends and family members (38%) and education opportunities for children (34%) (Fig. 11).



**Figure 11.** Most important factors in choosing a destination country, overall and by return intentions (percentages). Multiple answers possible (overall n=3,286; 'not planning to return' n=1,400; 'planning to return' n=637) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Nonetheless, the reasons for choosing a destination country varied between different groups of refugees. For example, those who were travelling with children understandably placed much greater importance on educational opportunities for their children compared to those without children (48% vs. 17%). However, the most notable disparities were found on individuals' long-term plans and intentions to return. Respondents with plans to return to Ukraine prioritised factors such as family and friends (41%) and geographical proximity to Ukraine (31%) when choosing a destination country. In contrast, respondents with no plans to return to Ukraine placed greater importance on selecting a destination based on its safety (65%) and employment opportunities (61%), as well as its provision of educational opportunities for their children (46%) and for themselves (36%) as these factors are significant to their longer-term settlement objectives.

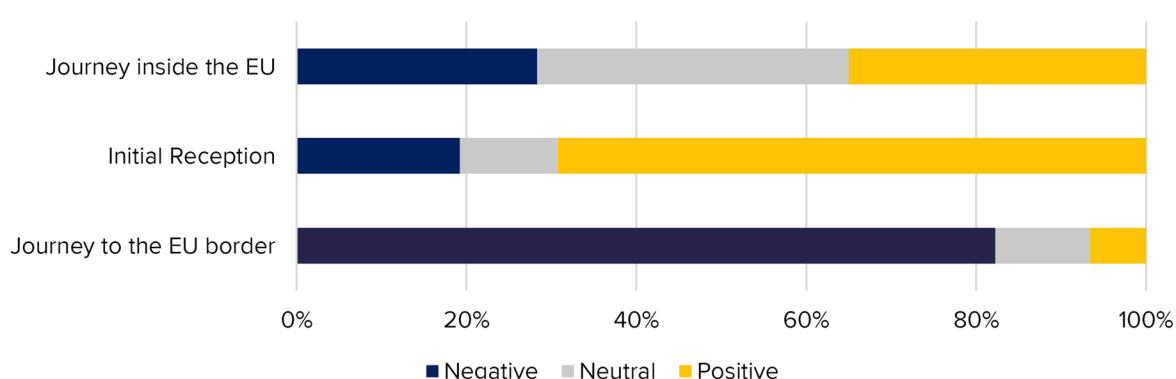
## Qualitative Analysis

The journey to the EU was a profound experience for forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine, mentioned in 212 testimonies. The main topics discussed under this theme covered the journey within Ukraine, from internal displacement of respondents until they reached the EU border, their initial reception after reaching the EU border, and their journey inside the EU. These experiences often recounted adverse events encountered during their journey, along with relief when the journey was eventually over, and gratitude towards the volunteers who provided support along the way.

The sub-themes mentioned for the journey theme comprised:

- Journey to the EU border (within Ukraine, 155 testimonies),
- Initial reception (after crossing the EU border, 26 testimonies),
- Journey inside the EU (60 testimonies).

The sentiment analysis showed overwhelmingly negative experiences during the journey to the EU border (82 % were negative). However, the opposite occurred for testimonies on initial reception in the EU which were mainly positive (70% were positive), while feelings about the journey within the EU were less intense with 37% of testimonies being neutral, more nuanced and to a certain extent polarised albeit leaning positive (35% were positive, 28% were negative) (Fig. 12).



**Figure 12.** Sentiment analysis of testimonies related to Journey to the EU by sub-theme (Source: EUAA analysis of SAM-UKR testimonies).

## Journey to the EU border

Respondents reported the harsh conditions of their evacuation from their homes in Ukraine through different means of transportation. Those who took public transportation reported standing in line for extended periods of time, crammed into crowded train carriages. Some other respondents had to walk great distances, endure hours of waiting at bus stops, were overcharged in taxis, or had their bags stolen in stations. Similarly, those who travelled by private car to the border encountered lengthy queues with frequent roadblocks and without access to water or food. Some drivers reported having to pay illegal fees for their car to be allowed to pass. The combination of long waits, crowded conditions, lack of necessities and fear of the unknown greatly contributed to negative experiences during the journey to the EU border.

In the first phase of the war, the fear and uncertainty felt during the evacuation was exacerbated by frequent explosions, missiles, and rocket fire, mostly reported in testimonies collected during

that first phase of the war. Violent events, including killings, were also reported. Roadblocks and interrogation by aggressive soldiers, as well as verbal or physical attacks were mentioned, which further escalated the feelings of stress and fear.

As a result, many people, including children, were crying, anxious, or unable to eat or sleep. In general, displaced people found it more challenging to travel with children or the elderly, due to their additional and harder needs to accommodate (such as medical, eating, including breastfeeding, or rest), and feared further delays in the journey or being injured before its completion. Most people with dangerous journeys had departed from the areas under the occupation and control of the Russian Federation.

On a rare positive note, the residents of local villages in Ukraine helped the respondents fleeing by providing temporary rest or food. All in all, the journey to the EU border was most often arduous and stressful, leading to a strong sense of relief once people eventually reached the EU and felt safe, for the first time in days.

*“It was a very difficult journey, there were a lot of people on the train, there were 14 people in one compartment and people slept right in the corridors, the children cried, they were afraid, the water quickly ran out, there was nowhere to take it, in Lviv we spent the night at the station with the children. We traveled by bus and took a long time to cross the border.”*

- Female, 36 years old, East region

*“Leaving the city was very dangerous; there were many Russian checkpoints, rockets flying over and battles taking place. We traveled for almost a day to reach the free territory of Ukraine. There was not enough food; our little child was always scared, and we prayed. Many people died trying to flee. A friend who was a volunteer and a father of four was brutally shot by Russian military while trying to evacuate his sister with children. My friends and acquaintances had to spend five days in the fields, trying to leave.”*

- Female, 25 years old, South region

*“Six days without sleep, six people in a small car, three cats, and a dog. Lack of food, sleep, hygiene procedures, etc. Forty kilometers in line at the border. Constant sirens while traveling, stress. I lost almost all the hair on my head, and I aged five years in those days. I have only one dream - to wake up on February 24 and that it was all a terrible dream.”*

- Female, 34 years old, East region

*“Seven days in a car with small children, enduring immense stress due to the fear of bombing and an uncertain future. Crossing the border into Romania and driving through it at 3am with a fever of +39, hoping to reach a safe place as quickly as possible.”*

- Female, 34 years old, East region

## Initial Reception

Having endured the arduous journey to the EU, the initial reception was experienced positively, with volunteers helping the displaced people orient themselves in the EU country of arrival, offering them free public transportation, food and water, as well as accommodation. Many refugees expressed their appreciation for the volunteers, national authorities, NGOs, the UN



and the EU for their welcoming stance. Mentions of family reunification and getting support from friends, or even strangers who became friends were very positive.

Services provided in Ukrainian or Russian, the languages most commonly spoken by displaced people, were mostly easily accessible, as well as free tickets to further destinations. The provision of SIM cards to use their mobile phones in the EU was also appreciated, underlining the importance of communication. Only few persons recounted having to vacate their temporary accommodation to make room for newcomers. Overall, the initial reception after crossing the EU border was perceived positively, though many people continued their journey onwards and further in the EU.

*“ We arrived in [EU country] with a bag of clothes and this country greeted us very well. We purposefully went to a family that accepted us as relatives. I will never forget in my life what these people did for us. My husband also came to us after training. I was very happy that our family was reunited! After two months, we moved to a refugee center. It was a beautiful place where we stayed for the next two months. ”*

- Female, 35 years old, East region

*“ We are very grateful to the charitable organisations of [EU country], when we crossed the border in March 2022, they welcomed us very warmly on the [EU country] territory (they fed us warm delicious food, gave us free SIM cards of mobile operators, were ready to take us for the night). ”*

- Female, 41 years old, North region

*“ Despite all official promises, they were not able to help me on the phone, because they didn't understand either Russian or Ukrainian. ”*

- Female, 62 years old, East region

## Journey within the EU

While the entry into the EU represented an important milestone in the displacement journey of the respondents, many continued to travel further into the EU. In this regard, many testimonies positively reflected on the support received from volunteers along the way. In addition, friends frequently provided housing and assistance, while even strangers helped with food and SIM cards or answered questions. Challenges related to knowing the local language were mentioned, but through the kindness of strangers, respondents felt welcome in the EU. Having young children or dependent adults added considerations during the journey, such as breastfeeding and taking care of mobility issues.

The search for a place to stay was a mixed experience. Many resorted to housing with friends, or social housing provided by national authorities, but some refugees found it difficult to afford rent without an income. Transportation within the EU was usually free and easy to use, though respondents sometimes faced problems finding tickets, or paying for tickets for connecting destinations within Europe. While displaced people continued to travel onwards within the EU, they felt safe and appreciated the support they received.

*“ Our later journey through [EU country] was ok, the only inconvenience was breastfeeding my baby and sleeping half of the night on the floor of [EU city] railway station, but the volunteers there were very nice and helpful, they did everything they could for us. ”*

- Female, 34 years old, Kyiv city

“ The guy [name] helped me the first time. He is [EU national], he drove me in his own car from the [EU country] border to my destination in [EU country]. Helped me with SIM card and gave me money. Answered all questions and even helped to find a job. ”

- Female, 21 years old, East region

“ In the middle of the night at a gas station [in EU country], strangers – a mother and daughter in a car - saw my Ukrainian car, heard the language, approached me, and invited us to spend the night. They welcomed us into their home, fed us, gave us food for the road, even washed the car, and bid us farewell. ”

- Male, 74 years old, Centre region

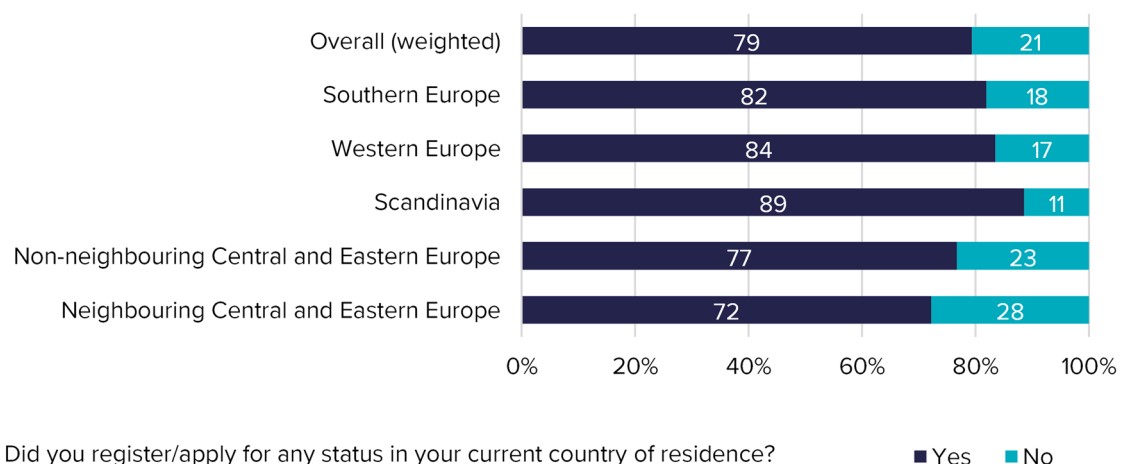
# Results

## 2.4. Protection status

### Overview of 2023 survey results

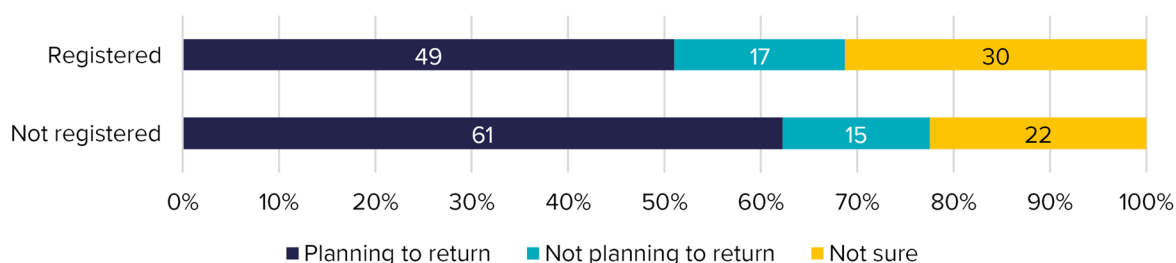
On 4 March 2022, the Council of the EU took a historic step by enacting the Temporary Protection Directive through the implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, designed to rapidly provide displaced persons with urgent services such as accommodation, access to healthcare, employment, and education. This Directive determines EU Member States to provide temporary protection status to Ukrainian nationals who were residing in Ukraine on or before 24 February 2022, as well as stateless individuals and foreign citizens who were recipients of international (or equivalent national) protection in Ukraine before that date. However, alongside temporary protection status, other statuses have also been granted to Ukrainians arriving in the EU+ region.

Among the respondents of the SAM-UKR survey, 79% had acquired some form of legal status in their current country, while 21% had not yet done so at the time of the survey.<sup>21</sup> The duration of their displacement played a role in registration rates. Among those who arrived in 2022, approximately 86% had registered for some form of legal status. Moreover, regional variations were also evident in the data (Fig. 13). In Scandinavian countries, a striking 89% had successfully applied for and obtained some type of legal status, whereas in Ukraine-neighbouring Central and Eastern European countries, this proportion was significantly lower, at 72%. This discrepancy could indicate that many of the individuals residing near Ukraine are still uncertain about their future or in the process of relocating to other destination countries and are thus less likely to seek legal status in these countries.



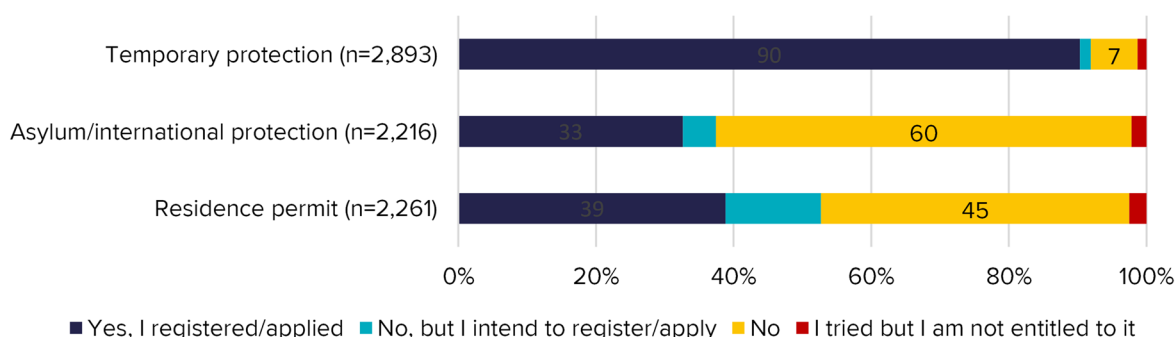
**Figure 13.** The share of respondents who had obtained a status in current country by region at the time of the survey (n=3,418) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Indeed, SAM-UKR survey results suggested a potential link between respondents' registration rates and their return intentions. Among those who had not registered, the share of respondents hoping to return was noticeably higher (61% vs. 49%) (Fig. 14). However, the cross-sectional nature of these survey results, along with a low response rate to both questions jointly (n=142), prevent us from establishing the direction (or even the presence) of a causal mechanism.



**Figure 14.** Registration status by return intentions (n=142) (Source: SAM-UKR)

The majority of respondents who applied for a status in the current country of residence sought to secure temporary protection, with a substantial 90% having registered for it (Fig. 15). Notably, about a third (33%) also applied for asylum or international protection, and nearly two out of five (39%) applied for a residence permit. Additionally, 14% of respondents mentioned that, while they had not yet applied for a residence permit, they were planning to do so. This indicates a potential inclination among some respondents to transition from temporary protection to a more permanent status.



**Figure 15.** The types of statuses respondents had sought to obtain (Source: SAM-UKR)

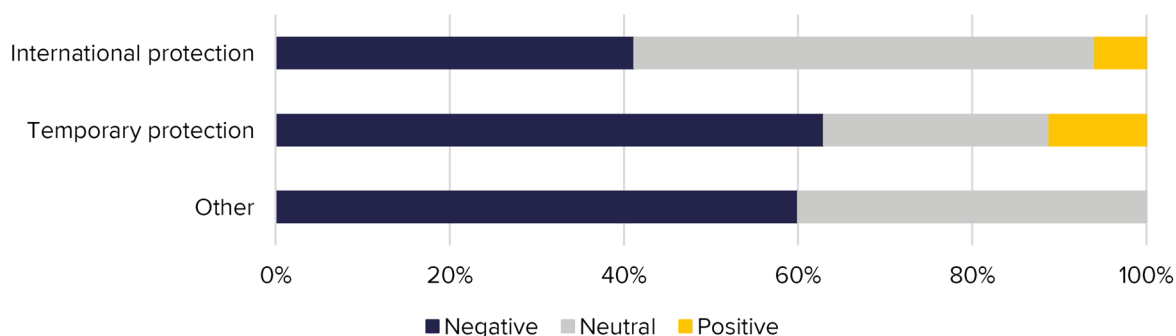
## Qualitative Analysis

The legal status of forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine was a topic of concern for many survey respondents (128 testimonies) who shared their experiences with registration processes and discussed the evolution and understanding of the policy environment and its impact on their lives. Some refugees criticised the lack of information on policies and regulations. Others revealed feelings of anxiety due to the uncertainty about the outcome of the war in Ukraine and their future in general and were concerned about their rights, as well as the duration of their legal status in the host country.

In detail, respondents discussed:

- Temporary protection (83 testimonies),
- International protection (17 testimonies),
- Other legal status (32 testimonies).

Overall, the legal status disclosed to some extent negative sentiments (59%), with at least a third of the testimonies being considered neutral and more descriptive, while a small proportion (8%) were positive (Fig. 16).



**Figure 16.** Sentiment analysis of testimonies related to Protection status by sub-theme (Source: EUAA analysis of SAM-UKR testimonies).

## Temporary protection

Overall, positive feelings were mainly related to the temporary protection status, for which many refugees showed gratitude. However, being a beneficiary of temporary protection also unveiled mixed feelings and concerns. People fleeing from Ukraine felt as if their life was put on hold, suspended in a temporary undetermined state and pending a resolution without any clear prospects. Not knowing what would happen to them once the temporary protection expires or the war would end caused fears and uncertainty.

Refugees experienced losing control over their own lives and felt helplessly dependent on future policy decisions. Some respondents perceived their stay in Europe like living in a legal limbo, with their lives grounded on a temporary regulation, not allowing them to plan and invest in future familial, educational, or economic undertakings. Many refugees, in fact, rebuilt their lives in different host countries and were successfully enrolled in the labour market, found a proper accommodation, and organised the education of their children, making a new life for themselves that they would like to uphold:

*“ I live, work and pay taxes in [EU country]. I have temporary protection. I really hope and dream to stay here and work. I have no desire to go to Ukraine at all. I really hope that those who want to stay here (...) will still be given such a chance (...) do not send us back after the war! I want to live here (...). ”*

- Male, 33 years old, Ukrainian

*“ I want to change my status, because here I started building my life, work, friends, and I began to understand the society, my child is happy, he likes to live here, he studies, he already has friends. ”*

- Male, 35 years old, Third-country national

Many refugees were concerned about how living in a temporary environment for an extended period of time and dealing with an uncertain future would affect their mental health, personal plans for the future, and investments in their current life. Accordingly, many displaced persons requested more information on their future and, in legal terms, on the possible expiration of temporary protection and post-war perspectives for Ukraine in general. Their most pressing question was whether Ukrainian refugees would have to leave the country where they are currently living, or whether they would be allowed to stay. Some respondents expressed their will to change their temporary status to a more permanent one, and considered currently available legal solutions:

*“ We would like to hear from the authorities of [EU country] how we can stay in the country, how to properly change our temporary protection to permanent residence. ”*

- Male, 36 years old, Ukrainian

*“ It is very difficult to be constantly in an unknown state, (...) in [EU country] we are building everything new, if the war ends and I do not have the opportunity to stay here, then for the third time I will have to rebuild all my life, look for housing, work and a place for children in school. I hope that the [EU country] leadership will be able to provide refugees from Ukraine with the right to switch from temporary protection to another form of residence in [EU country]. ”*

- Female, 40 years old, Ukrainian

A frequent topic related to legal status and forms of protection was the lack of information and awareness about rights, confusion about trusted sources of information and doubts that arose from various complex circumstances. Many refugees' experiences indicated that the information relevant to their needs was fragmented and unclear, and difficulties in accessing legal advice.

Pressing information gaps concerned rights to temporary protection for nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, and technical and procedural aspects like processing time, documents required, eligibility criteria, rights associated with medical care and leaves (sick leave, maternity leave), or the implications of changing the host country. In particular, doubts and concerns about traveling back to Ukraine and inside the EU were expressed, due to worries about the possible loss of temporary protection or facing any negative consequences from leaving a host country, revealing lack of information regarding legal aspects related to temporary protection.

Some Ukrainian job holders expressed that they had to travel within or outside the EU for professional reasons, in some cases even back-and-forth to Ukraine. Others had their properties destroyed in Ukraine and therefore wanted to temporarily return to undertake rebuilding work without losing temporary protection. In general, many refugees faced legal challenges in this regard.

*“ Please resolve the issue of leaving [EU country] and returning to [EU country] without losing the status of temporary protection, as my work involves traveling around the world. And I also ask that the limit of 90 days of stay in the Schengen area for Ukrainians be lifted, since there is a possibility that I will not be allowed to enter [EU country] when I return from a business trip to my family. ”*

- Male, 43 years old, Ukrainian

*“ We plan to return to Ukraine with our family. But we have destroyed housing, currently not suitable for living. Here we work and periodically go to restore. But 14 days are allowed, this is not enough time for restoration work. It is necessary to allow in such cases a longer period of absence while maintaining the place of residence and status of the person under protection. ”*

- Male, 62 years old, Ukrainian

Some mentioned problems with registration for temporary protection, and registration for accommodation or assistance. Some refugees received fines for breaching specific regulations they were not aware of. Difficulties arose from not speaking the host country's language or being unable to produce the necessary documents to fulfil administrative procedures in the host country.

Those who had left Ukraine few days before 24 February 2022, as they foresaw the conflict, were on a business trip, or on holidays outside Ukraine when the war started, expressed their frustration about not being granted temporary protection. Holders of Russian citizenship, even though they were born and lived in Ukraine their whole life, faced the same challenges as other third country nationals in proving their eligibility for temporary protection. Ukrainian citizens without passports were not able to register for temporary protection but were enrolled in the asylum procedure.

## International protection

Feelings regarding international protection were mainly negative as this form of protection was perceived as substandard compared with the more swiftly accessible temporary protection. Those who were not eligible for temporary protection for different reasons and were guided to the asylum procedure felt discriminated against and dissatisfied as they felt the asylum procedure would limit their rights and take much longer. In particular, the legal status of an asylum seeker was perceived as an obstacle to be enrolled in education, enter the labour market, or find support for accommodation.

*“ I don't want to be an asylum seeker - I left Ukraine on the 18 because I was able to foresee that the war is going to start. ”*

- Female, 37 years old, Ukrainian

*“ Where can I seek help to receive comprehensive guidance? Can I decline asylum in [EU country] and leave this country? Is it possible for me to seek asylum in another country? ”*

- Female, 38 years old, Ukrainian

In general, the uncertainty about the future and what it might uphold for refugees fleeing Ukraine in terms of legal status, as well as the perceived lack of information regarding the legal aspects related to protection and the differences between temporary protection and other forms of protection and legal stay constituted major concerns for displaced persons.

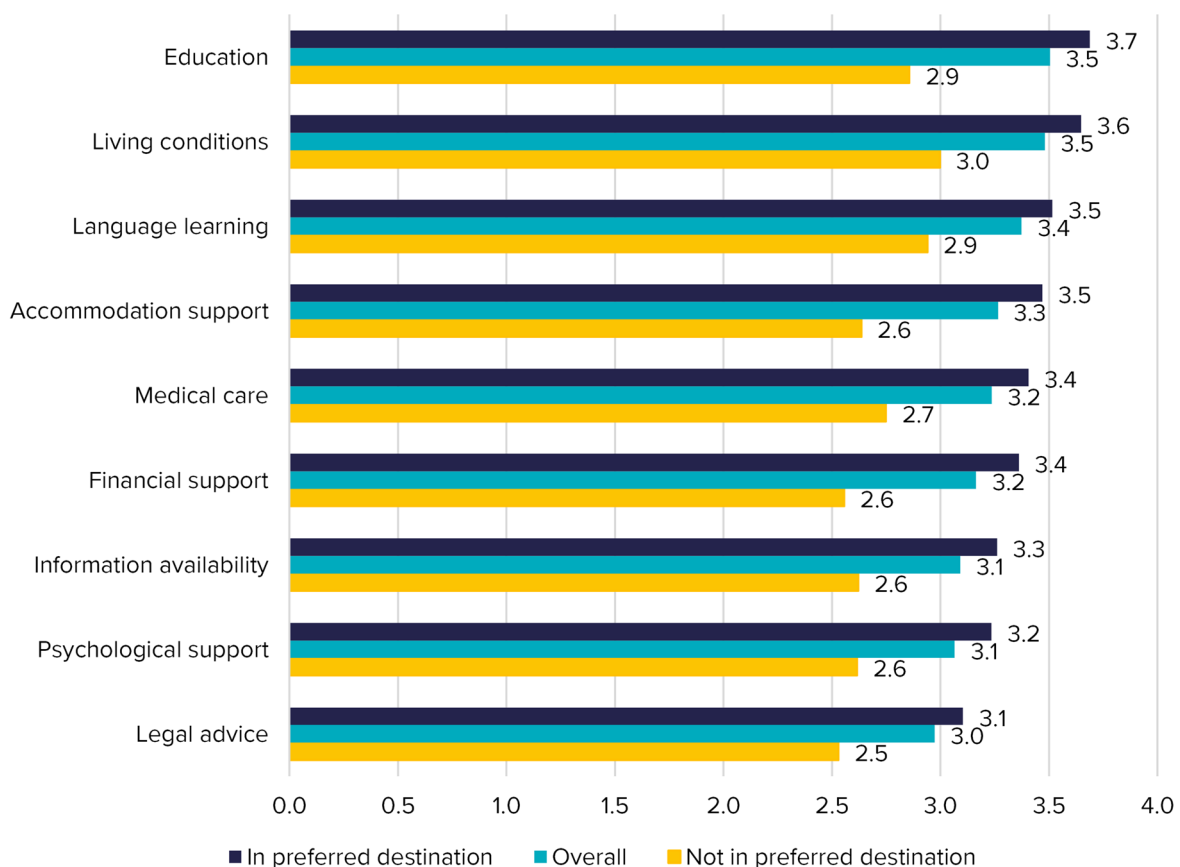


# Results

## 2.5. Experiences and needs in the host country

### Overview of 2023 survey results

The overwhelming majority of Ukrainian refugees, including SAM-UKR respondents, left Ukraine as early as the spring of 2022, indicating that many are now in the process of rebuilding their lives in host countries while facing an increasingly extended period of displacement. This underscores the growing importance for host countries to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and needs of displaced Ukrainians to facilitate the best possible outcomes for these communities.

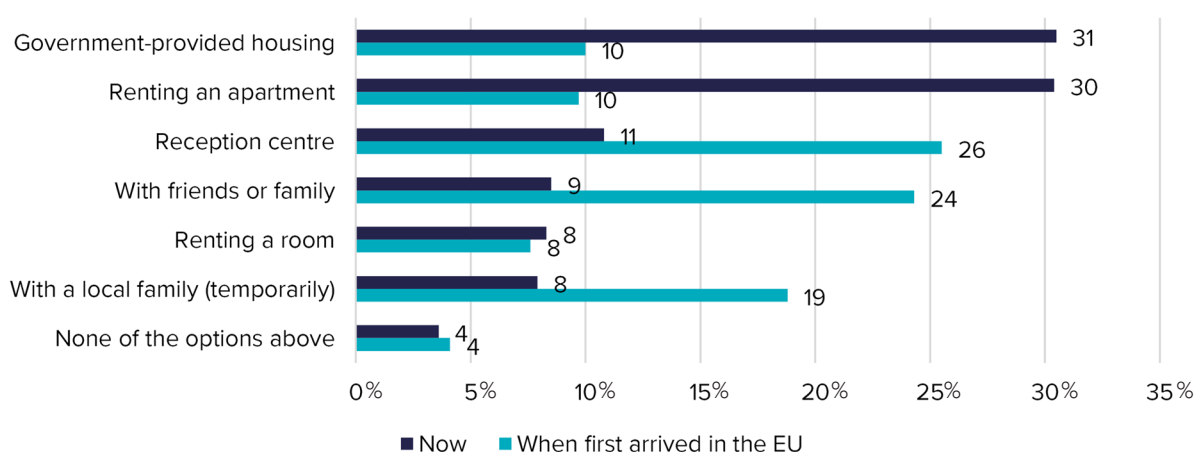


**Figure 17.** Average satisfaction levels with different aspects of support overall and by destination preference (scale of 1-5) (Living conditions n=2,754; Financial support n=2,512; Language learning n=2,460; Accommodation support n=2,419; Education n=1,996; Medical care n=2,551; Legal advice n=1,485; Psychological support n=1,554; Information availability n=2,429; In preferred destination overall n= 2,328; not in preferred destination overall n=299) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Figure 17 depicts the overall satisfaction levels regarding general living conditions and access to services in the host country. Consistent with the findings from the previous round of SAM-UKR responses in 2022,<sup>22</sup> satisfaction levels remain close to the neutral level, and in some cases, slightly positive. In comparison to the earlier round, respondents overall expressed higher satisfaction with education support, general living conditions, and language learning. However, they tended to be less contented with the quality of legal advice and psychological support. Similar to the previous year, notable disparities persist between respondents who are in their preferred destination country and those who are not. The most significant differences in satisfaction levels between these two groups pertain to accommodation, financial support, and education.

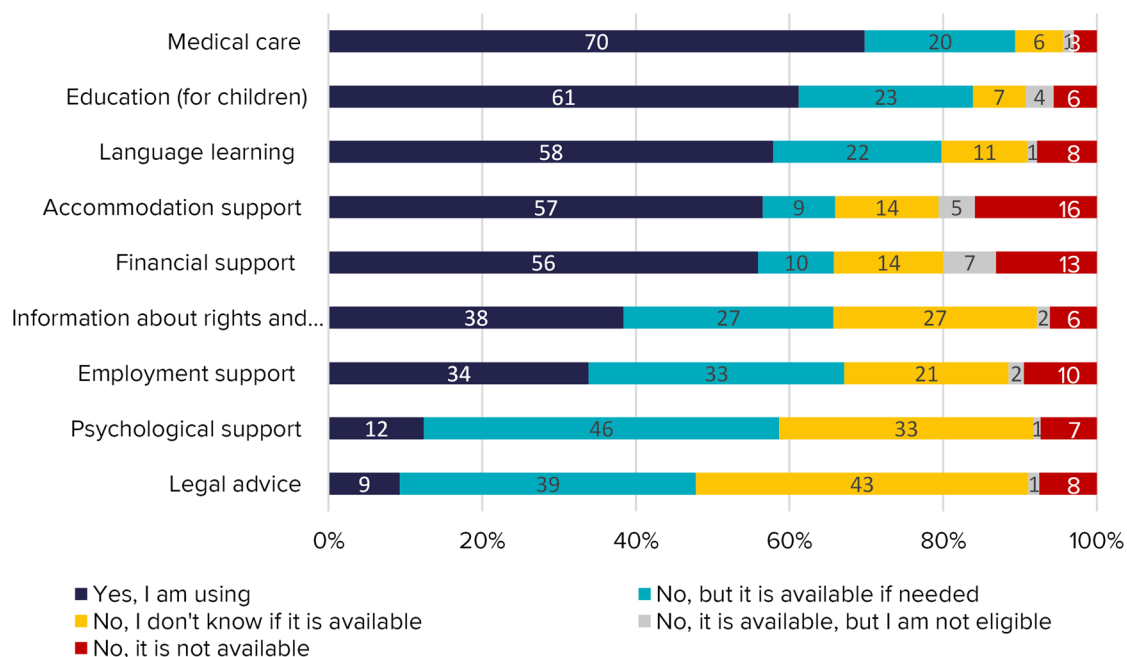
Housing has been a persistent concern for both host countries and Ukrainian refugees since the onset of the crisis. The extensive and rapid displacement witnessed in 2022 placed significant strains on available housing stock. To address the urgent need to shelter the large number of individuals escaping Ukraine, countries have adopted a variety of housing solutions. These measures encompassed the enlargement of existing reception centres, the creation of new emergency accommodations, and the implementation of programs designed to facilitate housing with private households.<sup>23</sup> In 2023, housing Ukrainian refugees continues to present challenges in many host countries, especially given the reduced reliance on private hosts.

There have been shifts in the primary types of accommodation reported by respondents of the SAM-UKR survey (Fig. 18). When they first arrived in the EU, the main types of accommodation where respondents stayed were reception centres (26%), friends or family (24%), and with local families (19%). However, at the time of participating in the survey, most were residing in government-provided housing (31%), with rented apartments (30%) being the second most common accommodation. Meanwhile, 11% are still accommodated in reception centres.



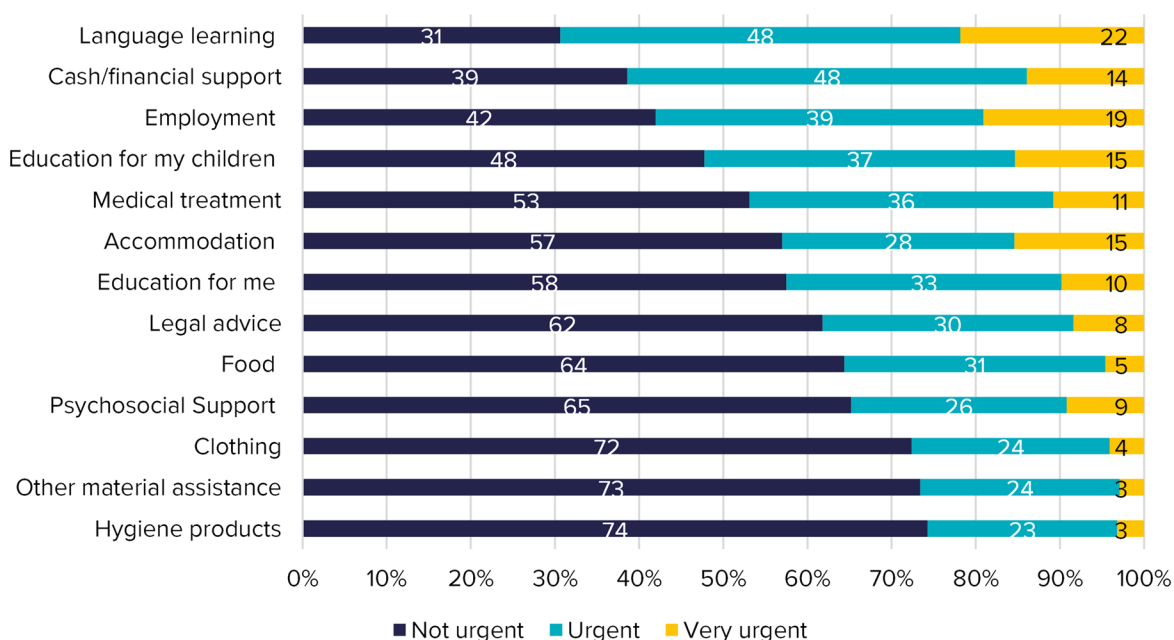
**Figure 18.** Main types of accommodation now and when first arriving in the host country (percentage of respondents) (Source: SAM-UKR)

EU+ countries have demonstrated remarkable support in response to the Ukrainian displacement crisis, offering a wide range of services to assist Ukrainian refugees. These services remain critically important to a significant portion of the arrivals. More than half of the survey respondents actively use the following services: medical care (70%), education support for children (61%), language training (58%), accommodation (57%), and financial support (56%), which are provided by the host countries (Fig. 19). However, data indicate an imbalance between the demand and the availability of accommodation and financial support, with 21% and 20% of respondents, respectively, stating that their inability to access these services is primarily due to lack of availability or due to eligibility requirements.



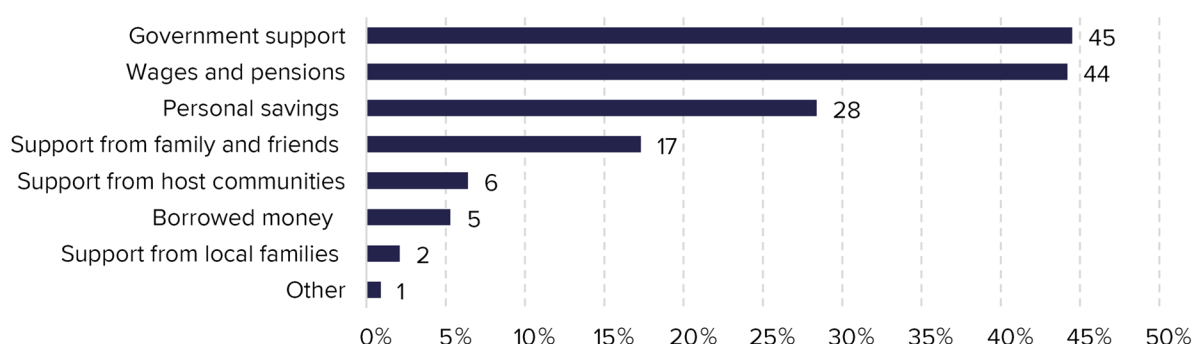
**Figure 19.** Different services used in host countries (Source: SAM-UKR)

The primary needs of Ukrainian refugees are progressively centred around preparing for long-term settlement (Fig. 20). These include language learning (which 69% of respondents view as an urgent or very urgent need), employment opportunities (58%), and education for their children (52%). The needs identified as most urgent needs were language learning (22%) and employment (19%).



**Figure 20.** Relative urgency of needs in host countries (Cash/financial support n=2,279; Clothing n=2,061; Food n=1,987; Hygiene products n=1,926; Other material assistance n=1,927; Employment n=2,196; Accommodation n=1,796; Education for me n=1,712; Education for my children n=1,375; Language learning n=2,319; Legal advice n=1,787; Medical treatment n=2,181; Psychosocial support n=1,691) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Yet access to cash or other financial assistance (61%) also remains a pressing need. In 2022, more than half of the respondents from the previous SAM-UKR survey primarily relied on their personal savings (54%) to meet their living expenses.<sup>24</sup> In 2023, this figure has dropped significantly, with less than 3 out of 10 individuals now being able to use their savings (28%). On the positive side, the percentage of those covering their living expenses with wages has increased (from 24% reported in the 2022 report<sup>25</sup> to 44% in 2023). Despite this, financial assistance from governments (45%) and support from family and friends (17%) continue to play a substantial role in respondents' ability to cover their living expenses (Fig. 21).

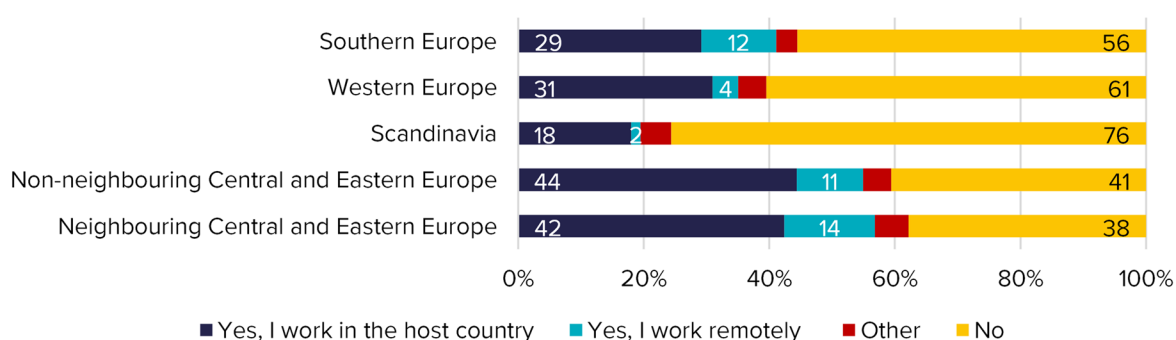


**Figure 21.** Main sources of income for covering living expenses in host countries (percentages of respondents who indicated a given source, multiple answers possible) (Source: SAM-UKR)

The integration of Ukrainian refugees into the labour market is becoming increasingly significant in host countries. In general, the labour market inclusion of Ukrainian refugees has happened more rapidly compared to other refugee groups in Europe. Notably, in some European countries such as the Netherlands, Lithuania, and Estonia, the proportion of working-age Ukrainian refugees already in employment exceeds 40%<sup>26</sup>. Much of the early employment uptake, however, has been concentrated in low-skilled jobs, with widespread skills mismatches. A swift, yet skills-appropriate entry into the labour market is critical, as it not only allows refugees to achieve self-sufficiency but also prevents skill deterioration. This approach alleviates the financial burden on public resources and helps maintain public support. Importantly, when executed effectively, it can also be advantageous for Ukraine, as the skills and work experience that refugees acquire abroad can be brought back to contribute to the reconstruction and development of Ukraine.<sup>xxviii</sup>

In the SAM-UKR survey, 44% of respondents indicated being employed. This included 35% working in their current host country and 9% engaged in remote work for Ukraine or another country (Fig. 22). Overall, employment rates in Central and Eastern European countries tend to be higher, with more than half of the respondents engaged in gainful employment, in contrast to respondents in Scandinavian countries who exhibited lower employment levels, with less than 20% reporting being employed. Remote work is most reported among respondents in Central and Eastern European countries, but it is also occurring at elevated levels among respondents in Southern Europe.

There is a significant potential for employment levels to increase further, especially when considering that before the war, 85% of all respondents were employed. The primary reasons cited by respondents for being out of employment included language barriers (51%), childcare demands (24%), limited job opportunities in their field of expertise (15%), and being in the process of credential recognition (14%).



**Figure 22.** Current employment levels by region (n=2,813) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Moreover, there have been notable shifts in the sectors where survey respondents are employed. Prior to the war, the main occupations of respondents were in education and teaching (13%), sales and communication (12%), and management and administration (10%). Presently, most employed individuals work in cleaning and housekeeping (15%) (Table 1). The best matches between individual respondents' previous and current occupations can be observed in engineering, science, and technology (with 61% of respondents working in this field both before the war and now), healthcare and life sciences (52%), and education and teaching (50%). Nonetheless, significant disparities persist, warranting further attention as we move forward, especially considering the high education levels of displaced persons from Ukraine in the EU (see [People/family](#)).

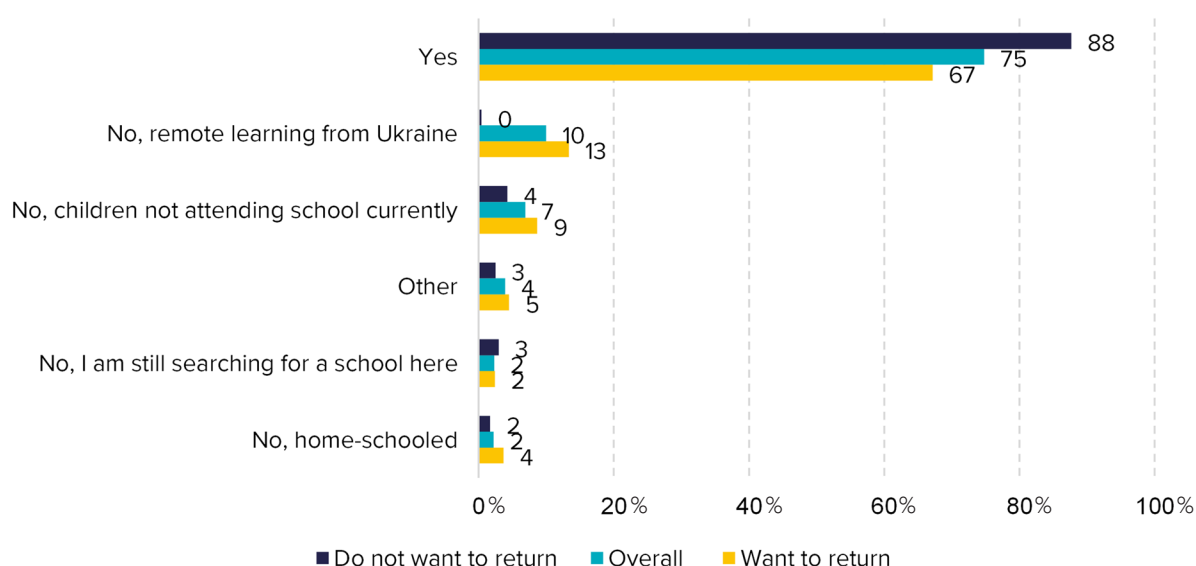
Top 7 main occupations prior the war		Top 7 main occupations now	
Education, teaching	13%	Cleaning, housekeeping	15%
Sales, communication	12%	Engineering, science, technology	9%
Management, administration	10%	Education, teaching	9%
Economics, finance	10%	Technical and construction workers	7%
Engineering, science, technology	9%	Sales, communication	7%
Healthcare, life science	7%	Management, administration	5%
Architecture, arts, design	4%	Healthcare, life science	4%

**Table 1.** Main occupations before the war and now (Source: SAM-UKR)

**Note:** Excluding the "Other" category.

In addition to the challenges related to employment, the enrolment of Ukrainian refugee children in schools continues to be a pressing issue in various European countries. Among SAM-UKR survey respondents who were parents with accompanying children with them, 75% reported that their children were attending host country schools, indicating that nearly a quarter of respondents had children who were not enrolled in education in the host country (although 10% of these indicated that their children were engaged in remote learning from Ukraine) (Fig. 23). Noteworthy,

variations emerged when considering parents' intentions to return to Ukraine. Among those not planning to return, the share of those with enrolled children increased to 88%, while decreasing to 67% for those with plans to return. Although the hope of return is understandable, due to the prolonged armed conflict in the country it remains an unfeasible option for many Ukrainians. In the meantime, the extended absence of children from schools can lead to enduring and significant consequences for their education and development. Furthermore, remote learning among Ukrainian children can also have a detrimental effect on their mothers' ability to engage in the labour market and integration activities in certain host countries<sup>27</sup>.



**Figure 23.** Percentage of children's enrolment overall and by return intentions (Overall n=1,569, Want to return n=1,400; Do not want to return n=637) (Source: SAM-UKR)

## Qualitative Analysis

### General attitudes towards support and experiences in host countries

Close to two in three testimonies talked about their experiences in the host country and the support that was offered to them. About 550 testimonies had a positive or neutral sentiment and conveyed gratitude for the support provided by:

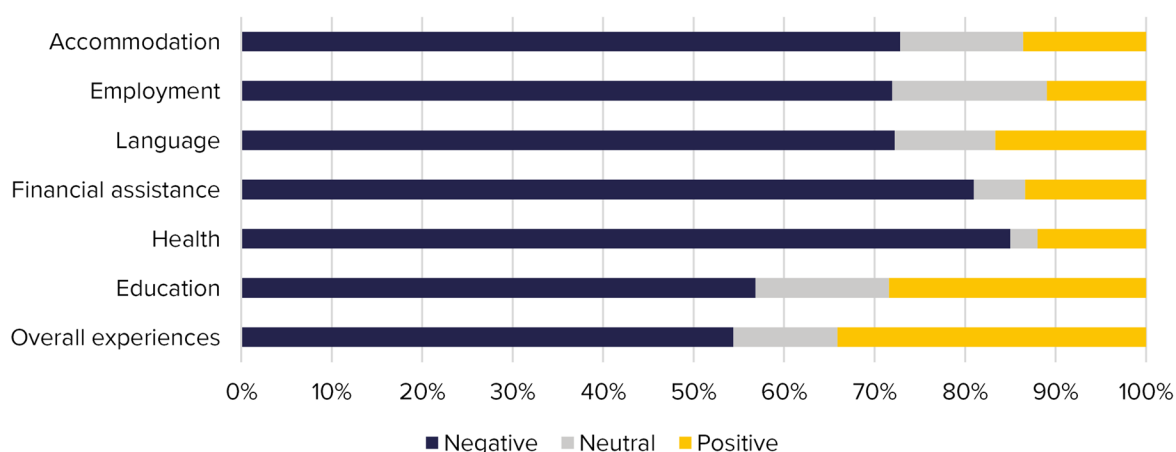
- the EU and/or Member States (about half of the positive testimonies), stemming from the temporary protection and beyond,
- the volunteers and charitable organisations, especially as first contact points when entering the EU and settling in the host countries,
- the private enterprises who ran support schemes for displaced persons,
- the people from the host countries for their warm welcome and their kindness.

Most of the testimonies expressing gratitude for support were short snippets of text that respondents felt important to add after completing the survey. These snippets did not necessarily specify the support received - typically, references were made about the respondents being safe and secure at the host destination. Such comments stood alone, or opened or closed longer discussions of other topics, sometimes being even accompanied by criticism of one or

another aspect of support. Indeed, close to 200 testimonies included at least one positive and at least one negative comment about experiences in the host country. By contrast, a minority of testimonies described in detail the support received with e.g. accommodation, language training, employment, financial support, etc and the positive impact it had on the wellbeing of respondents. These longer testimonies will be explored in more depth in the following sections.

Comments with a negative sentiment were typically longer as respondents went into details about some shortcomings in the support received and of their experiences in the host country. In total, about 650 testimonies included negative comments. These comments together with those positive comments that included some specifics were mined for insights in the sections below.

Finally, testimonies about experiences in the host country or expressing gratitude were more common in 2023 than in 2022, in absolute number and relative to the total number of testimonies in each year, which might be related to changes in the questionnaire, focussing more on life in the host country in 2023, than in 2022. Positive and neutral testimonies increased (relatively and in absolute numbers) over the same period showing the increasing salience of the topic and, possibly, better integration of refugees in the host countries (Fig. 24).



**Figure 24.** Sentiment analysis of testimonies related to Experiences and needs in the host country by sub-theme and overall (Source: EUAA analysis of SAM-UKR testimonies)

The sub-themes mentioned for the experiences and needs in the host country theme comprised:

- Accommodation (323 testimonies),
- Employment (304 testimonies),
- Language training (138 testimonies),
- Financial assistance (142 testimonies),
- Health (99 testimonies),
- Education (94 testimonies),
- Feelings, emotions and psychological support (258 testimonies)

## Accommodation

Just over 320 respondents referred to accommodation/housing in their free-text comments, making it the most discussed topic in the host country. Every three out of four of these comments expressed mainly negative sentiments about the enduring challenges with finding longer-term,



affordable accommodation whereas the remaining comments signalled a more stable housing situation. Very worryingly, for a distinct minority of respondents, the prospect of becoming homeless was still looming large at the time of the survey, either because support with accommodation from the state or private individuals was coming to an end or because personal funds were spent, and employment was not yet secured.

*“ At the end of May, I will be homeless... I have a child with me and my brother's wife with a child... They have already said that we have to look for housing ourselves... We don't have money to rent something... We don't receive financial support... I don't know, what shall I do... ”*

- Female, 42 years old, May 2022

*“ I am currently in [EU city], the situation is very difficult. No housing, no work. We live on our own savings, which are running out. From 20 May we will be on the streets, we cannot go north because of our health. We will be forced to return to Ukraine despite the war and shelling. ”*

- Female, 54 years old, May 2022

Affordability of renting private accommodation was another very salient issue as it complicated the transition to more long-term, individually-sourced accommodation, especially as it intersected ongoing challenges with finding employment or a job that was paid well enough to cover accommodation costs. Indeed, over a fifth of respondents voiced concerns about not being able to cover the expenses with accommodation or being required to pay so much for renting that not enough was left for other basic necessities. Access to private accommodation was further complicated by real estate agents or landlords being deemed to be less willing to let their properties to displaced persons from Ukraine, according to a minority (eleven testimonies). Finally, standard administrative requirements for renting – having a long-term employment contract, a bank account in the host country, a guarantor with a steady income – added further barriers to accessing housing and were deemed inappropriate for persons who needed to relocate to another country under short notice and in extreme circumstances.

*“ The main need is housing, 90% of my salary is spent on housing and utilities. We are forced to save on food. We do not have the opportunity to buy clothes at all. Please, make a program for buying a home with credit for refugees. ”*

- Female, 47 years old, July 2023

*“ In [EU country], the cost of rent equals my salary so I have to take extra workdays just to ensure that we can still afford to eat. My family doesn't see me. I live at work. It is very expensive to rent housing. ”*

- Female, 44 years old, April 2023

*“ We left for [EU country] because we had acquaintances who provided housing for 3 months. Then we had to look for it ourselves. [Citizens in this country] do not really want to rent out housing to mothers with children from Ukraine. And those who agree rent for a lot of money. ”*

- Female, 38 years old, August 2023

Support provided by EU+ countries with accommodation, such as housing in reception shelters, placement with local families and residents and accommodation with friends and family, was especially helpful in the early days and weeks after arriving in the host country. Indeed, most of the comments that had largely a positive sentiment referred to experiences of being hosted with local families, respondents being especially grateful for the warm welcome and the additional support with settling in more broadly. When negative opinions were voiced, this concerned the fact that this initial support with accommodation often was short-term or that it could sometimes be withdrawn at short notice. Some respondents thus mentioned being required to vacate their accommodation with very little notice, especially when housing assistance was contracted with private operators (hotels, resorts, etc) who after a time reclaimed the accommodation space for other purposes, but also when reception centres needed to make room to accommodate new arrivals.

*“ I live in the most beautiful family in [EU country]. This family has become my own, if it weren't for them, I don't know what would have happened to us. ”*

- Female, 32 years old, July 2022

*“ I have no income now. The money is running out. The period of stay at the hotel ends on 31.05. I have no opportunity to work or learn the language. There is no one to leave the children with (two school age children who study remotely in their room). I have a chronic disease (type 1 diabetes) for 20 years. ”*

- Female, 39 years old, April 2022

In addition, respondents found very difficult the lack of privacy and intimacy in state-provided accommodations, whether it involved living with strangers in collective reception centres or in privately sourced accommodation, as housing capacity had to be used to the fullest. When accommodation was in state-run facilities, difficulties were sometimes compounded by the fact that some of the reception centres lacked the necessary amenities for long-term stays (sufficient cooking and sanitary facilities, work or study spaces). Stays in such accommodation was especially difficult for displaced persons with special needs – those who needed to follow a strict diet for health reasons, had very young children or suffered from a disability that required special accommodation arrangements. When accommodation was sourced with local landlords, conditions of living depended on the state of (dis)repair of the property, respondents having recounted the efforts that they made to mend issues with e.g. roofing, heating, and the red tape they sometimes faced with doing these improvements.

*“ Housing conditions are not the best, my sister and I live in one room, we have been sleeping for more than a year in the same bed. I would like to have at least a separate room. ”*

- Female, 38 years old, June 2023

*“ We were offered an abandoned house in the village. But when we began to clean it, it turned out that the house was not suitable to live - there was no water, heating, wiring problems, holes in the roof. We tried to find other accommodation ourselves - on rental sites and in host families, but for all we were refused. After that, we decided to return to the abandoned house, as it was better than being homeless, but the owner no longer allowed us to live there. ”*

- Female, 31 years old, July 2022

Housing location was the last dimension that was mentioned with some frequency by respondents. As such, respondents were keen to emphasise how the location of housing impacted their search for a job due to the reduced economic opportunities in the areas where they were accommodated. Even access to medical treatment, education for children or integration courses required extensive commuting or adaption given restricted public transport offerings in rural areas. Conversely, jobs and schooling for children in their turn tied persons to a certain location which also made the search for affordable private housing even more complicated once temporary arrangements were coming to an end.

## Employment

Employment was referred to in just over 300 testimonies showing the high salience of employment-related issues among the experiences in the host country. Almost three out of every four of these testimonies (223) had a negative sentiment in the sense that respondents expressed the need for employment or issues with accessing it, whereas the remaining testimonies had a more neutral (53 testimonies) or positive sentiment (34) mainly describing the steps to getting employed or what secure employment meant for the individual.

The most common comment expressed in the testimonies was the urgent need for employment. When respondents delved into what employment meant for them, they explicitly referred to it as a way to provide for their family, pay taxes and be “useful to the country that helped me”, support family members in need back in Ukraine, or feel empowered by earning a living independently and moving away from social assistance and dependence on acquaintances.

*“It is psychologically very difficult for me. I realized that it is hard to find a job without speaking [the local language] or English. Having an income in the host country is the only possibility for me to support my parents and husband who are in Ukraine living in damaged homes with very little financial income.”*

- Female, 49 years old, May 2023

*“We do not need anything more than the authorities are providing us now. We would only like to start working full-time in this country as soon as possible, in order to be independent, pay taxes, and contribute to this country's development so that it can continue to help Ukrainians in need.”*

- Male, 25 years old, May 2023

Nevertheless, respondents underlined that different barriers to employment remained. For instance, not knowing the local language (cited in 37 testimonies), or not being proficient enough was found to make it exceedingly difficult to secure a job or to restrict employment opportunities to low-skilled, low-paid manual labour. Childcare and other caring responsibilities (29 testimonies) were also identified as a limiting factor to finding employment, with respondents referring to the challenges of finding a job with a flexible enough schedule that would allow for parents (most commonly single mothers) to care for their small children while, oftentimes, also attending language or integration courses. Issues with establishing the recognition of foreign qualifications (24 testimonies) constrained the possibilities for employment in the respondents' own specialty, language further limiting such opportunities when degrees and previous work experience were recognised. Finally, a lack of information about employment opportunities (15 testimonies), issues with work permits or right to work and discrimination against Ukrainian applicants (14 respondents) were also found to negatively impact employment opportunities. Frequently, respondents perceived themselves as being affected by more than one of these constraints.

“ Without knowledge of [local language] or English, it is extremely difficult to find a job, so I am learning the language. I hope that later I will be able to find a job and provide for myself and my child. ”

- Female, 53 years old, August 2023

“ There is no work now, I am a hairdresser. I cut the hair of those who ask me to. I search for a job in salons, but they don't need me! I don't know what will happen next, but I have a small child, and it is very difficult mentally. I can't take other jobs, because I am studying and my classes schedule varies every day. I would need to constantly leave at different times to take the child to school, and pick him up to take home, employers do not want all this! It is very difficult for me with a small child, I worry all the time. ”

- Female, 27 years old, September 2022

“ The biggest problem is that a diploma of higher education is not valid without being recognized and it does not allow you to work in your specialty. ”

- Male, 38 years old, July 2023

“ My daughter with two higher education [degrees] works 16 hours a day at a chicken factory to survive, she does not see her child. I am babysitting my 7 years old grandson, it is impossible to leave him alone at such an age. We have no one else, and we cannot expect help from anyone. ”

- Female, 50 years old, August 2022

A prevalent feeling among respondents was that they were confined to low-skilled, low-paid jobs either because of the various barriers to higher quality employment mentioned above or because of direct discrimination. Low pay that failed to cover living expenses, long workdays and fewer days off work, demanding physical labour, pay disparities with other workers, abusive practices by employers, and the risk of scams, were all mentioned by respondents to varying degrees and can be often traced further back to the previously mentioned barriers. This employment situation was particularly challenging for respondents who had a significantly better employment situation before the outbreak of war and for those who were older and/or with health issues/disabilities, which added another layer of vulnerability and exclusion. Poor conditions for employment came on top of the strain from the experiences of the conflict and the many demands placed on respondents who had to start over in a new location. Indeed, respondents often alluded to the significant challenges of settling down in the host countries with some wishing to directly appeal to the compassion of their hosts, not least when it came to finding employment and (perceived) expectations for becoming self-sufficient in the shortest time possible.

“ I don't know if it makes sense to share my experiences, but I don't have people who are close to me here and I feel this is very difficult for me psychologically, which makes me often cry at night and a nervous tic appeared. When I fled the war and came here, the coordinator said that the schedule would be 5/2 and sometimes 6/1, but the 11/1 schedule began to appear more often. Recently I worked 15 days without days off (7 morning shifts and 8-night shifts). If the plant had not been temporarily closed for repairs, then I would no longer be able to go to work due to chronic fatigue, which is debilitating. It seems to me that there are no options anymore... ”

- Female, 23 years old, July 2022

“ I have two kids! I work with my husband at the factory, we work 3/3 for 12 hours. The work is hard but the schedule is convenient for us, we work in different shifts, my husband is at work, I am at home, and vice versa. I hardly see my husband. One salary goes to pay for housing, the other, so to speak, to survive. After all, children grow up quickly, you need to buy clothes, shoes. We believe that soon we will return home. ”

- Female, 29 years old, July 2023

“ In every country people come to you to speak their language, as if we went on a journey of our own free will. People expect you to immediately go to work and be worthy of being in their country, while you have neither the desire to work nor to be here. It is difficult to explain that we need time to realise that life will no longer be the same and that we need support because we have lost everything: home, friends, family, language, property. We are in a strange place in terrible circumstances and we did not come to rest. ”

- Female, 33 years old, June 2022

Positive experiences with employment were also mentioned and pointed to better opportunities and salaries available to them, the support provided with starting one's own business and the various options for re-training and job conversion. References to such positive experiences increased in frequency as time passed, possibly indicating increasing success with accessing the labour market and becoming integrated in the host country. Even in these cases, however, concerns were raised about long-term prospects as a beneficiary of temporary protection, with several respondents calling for greater clarity on future timeframes and the extension of rights.

“ I had my own business in Ukraine for 6 years. [...] I was registered with the Social Services Centre, took the course “Business from 0” and I want to use grants from the EU to open my own business. ”

- Female, 41 years old, March 2023

## Language training

Language remained an important topic of concern, over and above comments about how it limited employment, finding accommodation (see [sections above](#)) or educational attainment (see [section below](#)). In addition to these, respondents were also keen to indicate how speaking the local language enhanced possibilities for integration and impacted the quality of experiences in the host country across the board. As such, accessing the rights provided under the temporary protection were sometimes conditioned by speaking the local language: registrations and paperwork related to temporary protection, getting information about rights and obligations, settling lease agreements or even accessing medical services were made more difficult by the language barrier. Moreover, much needed socialisation and deeper integration in the host country were reduced by the language barrier, elderly respondents in particular having found the new language context especially challenging.

“ Because of the language barrier, my grandmother returned home, she could not stand it. ”

- Female, 18 years old, July 2022

*“ All processes are very slow and bureaucratic, and even more difficult due to lack of knowledge of [local language]. Only a few people speak English here. ”*

- Female, 36 years old, May 2022

Language support provided by the state or sourced by the respondents was seen as critical, therefore, with respondents having highlighted challenges with accessing affordable language support or the way the trainings were organised and their learning outcomes. Indeed, most respondents addressed issues with accessing language support (38 testimonies with a negative sentiment), which was often down to structural issues such as local authorities/areas not providing language training at all or such trainings being behind a paywall (10 comments). Glitches with receiving the required paperwork also restricted or delayed access to language training for some respondents, while many indicated as a limiting factor the many responsibilities they had to juggle at the same time (childcare, employment, health needs).

*“ There is a great shortage of face-to-face courses for learning the [local language]. There is no way I can sign up for such courses. There is no help for renting a house. Because I do not speak the [local language], it is difficult to negotiate a housing lease. ”*

- Prefer not to say, 44 years old, June 2022

*“ I do not have the opportunity to work and learn the language at the same time, because I have a son who also needs attention and I do not have anyone to leave him with to continue learning the language in the evenings (since children do not study at school in the evenings). We have started learning the language, but it is not enough (...) to find a job in our field (...). ”*

- Female, 35 years old, May 2023

When language training was accessed, respondents questioned whether it was appropriate for their needs. Issues that were raised concerned the content delivered, language training being perceived to be too intense by some or not intense enough by others (e.g. lack of beginner classes, few contact hours). Other respondents questioned how these trainings were organised, a few pointing out that the classes were not always delivered by qualified staff or even by tutors who spoke the language of participants. Finally, some participants had the perception that they were not progressing swiftly enough to enable them to further study in the host country or to find a job in line with their specialisation, either because language training was not designed for these purposes or because the task as such was deemed exceedingly difficult. A few respondents also highlighted the importance of opportunities to practice the language outside of classes to ensure language acquisition at an advanced level, with a few calling for more structured opportunities for this to be made available (social clubs/circles, online or offline).

*“ Learning a language is difficult when teachers explain the [local language] in English (I don't understand). There is not enough teaching time [to learn] [half a day at school]. ”*

- Prefer not to say, 49 years old, May 2023

*“ [EU country] does not have a state language learning program for Ukrainians. The funds allocated for municipalities are spent on volunteers who teach the language once a week for 1.5 hours! The courses are short-term. It is thus impossible to master the language for full integration into society. ”*

- Female, 61 years old, May 2023

*“ I am in the intro programme. I attend [local language] courses and go to the accounting office for practice. It is difficult for me psychologically to live at the expense of state funding because I have worked all my adult life. My goal is to find a job, and I do my best for this. But learning a language in 9 months to the level required by the employer turned out to be difficult. ”*

- Female, 32 years old, May 2023

## Financial assistance

Financial assistance and support in kind (other than accommodation or meals in reception centres) were discussed in close to 150 testimonies. About four in five of these comments had a negative sentiment as respondents wanted to convey the difficulties encountered with accessing support or with making ends meet on the support provided. Positive testimonies conveyed overall gratitude for the support received and the ones covered in this section which mentioned instances of support explicitly should be read in conjunction with the generic expressions of gratitude towards the hosting states mentioned in the introduction to this chapter as these most likely captured financial assistance as well.

Availability and level of support were most commonly discussed, with 72 of these testimonies having had a negative sentiment, whereas 20 had a neutral or positive sentiment. The lack of support (as a more permanent feature, as opposed to the temporary glitches in accessing support discussed in the next paragraph), was mentioned by 30 respondents and had to do either with limiting policies in the host countries or insufficient information about what support was available. On this second point, a few other respondents specifically made reference to the lack of information about their rights when it came to financial assistance and called for greater clarity in this regard. When respondents did access financial support, they talked about how in some cases it was not enough to cover the most basic necessities, and in most others how it did not allow for any emergency expenditures. Getting by on this support became increasingly difficult as savings ran out (for those who had them) and as employment could not be readily sourced, with some respondents relying on support from family members in Ukraine or even considering going back to Ukraine despite the ongoing conflict.

*“ [EU country] does not help with money, products. Only the volunteers do. Transportation is paid. There is no help. There is no free study of the [local language]. ”*

- Female, 46 years old, May 2022

*“ [EU country] is the most expensive in Europe, and the benefits are the same amount as in other countries or lower. Enough for a modest meal. Although there are other needs, such as transport, development, training, medical insurance does not cover all health costs, for example, those for a dentist. ”*

- Female, 46 years old, August 2023

Beyond the availability and level of financial support as such, the necessary administrative procedures for respondents to gain access to this support (exiting and returning on financial support, residence permit being required or certificates for being unemployed) were found to be overly bureaucratic and to delay the access to much-needed aid by weeks or sometimes months. Preferential treatment for some, requirements and rules that were perceived to be unfair and instances of abuse, especially by landlords who were part of the support schemes (withholding aid to displaced persons), added to the negative experiences of respondents. All this exacerbated



an acute feeling of discomfort that was explicit in some testimonies or implicit in the narrative of others about the necessity to rely on external support and not being self-reliant.

*“Everything is fine with us, I took my children away from the war. The only thing that we lack is food and we cannot apply for payments until the residence permit is ready.”*

- Female, 32 years old, June 2022

*“I really want not to live on payments. This is the most difficult for us, as we are used to living on our own and not as we do now.”*

- Female, 42 years old, August 2023

An important feature to contextualise further these testimonies is that experiences tend to cluster together by host countries, which is expected given that policies impacting financial assistance operated nation-wide and differed from country to country. Finally, references to abuses in the system were also localised in countries with extensive collaborations with the private sector for the support of displaced persons, some respondents having requested closer monitoring for compliance.

## Education

Education was another important focus point for the respondents, covering education both for themselves and for their children. Close to 100 testimonies mentioned aspects related to education, with just over half having a predominantly negative sentiment in relation to lack of access to education, administrative barriers and requirements, negative experiences at school or the lack of information about the available options. Testimonies having a neutral or positive sentiment mentioned, in their turn, access to high-quality education and the learning environment more generally.

Around 25 testimonies indicated issues with access to education, ranging from educational facilities in their area having no available places to administrative requirements that could not be readily met and to difficulties with enrolling in the school programmes because of the timing of the displacement. Issues with access to formal education were most frequent for kindergarten (no places available or only against high fees) and university studies (issues with paperwork and right to study) with a few respondents mentioning also problems with accessing secondary education. At the same time, respondents were also keen to emphasise the benefits of accessing the educational opportunities from the host countries, with neutral and positive experiences (combined total of 39 testimonies) being more common than negative ones and, in general, with the ratio becoming more favourable with the passing of time.

*“There are problems with enrolling children in kindergarten and school. I hope that this issue will be resolved at least from the new academic year. I can't work yet because of the lack of places in kindergartens and the need to take care of my younger son and parents.”*

- Female, 38 years old, May 2022

*“I am also grateful that my daughter has the opportunity to study at [local school], she has new friends and can meet them and spend her leisure time under peaceful skies.”*

- Female, 41 years old, May 2023

Once enrolled in education, experiences were also mixed, with a few respondents referring to instances of bullying and discrimination that were perceived to be due to their situation as displaced persons from Ukraine. It was also mentioned that the relevant authorities did not always take the necessary measures, albeit in a few cases the school's response to the situation was highly appreciated. Positive experiences once in school were also mentioned with equal frequency and had to do with the inclusive environment and the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities made available to learners.

*“ My child is bullied at school. This goes on since October. School management makes appointments, applies different methods, but these methods are not effective, and my child continues to suffer while attending school. We have no right to change the [administrative unit]. We can't change schools. This situation threatens the life and health of my child. ”*

- Female, 50 years old, May 2023

*“ My kids are rowing. We live in a sports club. Children are happy to study in [local] schools, have friends (Ukrainians and [locals]). They train, go to competitions, travel. We make a lot of efforts to make them feel good here. ”*

- Female, 49 years old, June 2023

Finally, the intersection of education with housing, employment and language was frequently featured in the testimonies. Details about these intersections were already covered in previous sections, the only issue needing to be indicated here is how language proficiency restricts opportunities for learning and the call by some respondents for extending educational provision in Ukrainian. A few of the respondents mentioned still attending classes remotely from Ukraine but for the rest, language proficiency was another barrier to educational attainment and integration.

## Medical care

Medical care was a significant concern for displaced persons from Ukraine who had ongoing or urgent health needs. Problems with accessing medical care were most frequently mentioned: either medical coverage was not available at all for some reason (unemployment, most commonly) or coverage was long delayed by the length of formal registration procedure, or some medical services were not covered at all (e.g. dental treatment), and the cost was not affordable to many of the respondents. Access to care was further restricted by housing location, as everything from access to pharmacies and emergency care was less available in more remote areas, as well as by a lack of understanding about the rights and procedures in the host country. Indeed, a more frequent complaint from respondents was that some medication was available only on prescription (and that was hard to get because of long wait times to see a doctor) or because the preferred set of medical tests was not provided.

*“ My journey from Ukraine was very long. For the last 11 years I lived in [Ukrainian city], I managed to get out of the controlled territory only at the end of March. In May, I lost my pregnancy and, due to a caesarean section, had to wait 2 months for recovery (...) to continue the journey. I was repeatedly under shelling and threats, being forced to leave my husband and dog in Ukraine. Depressed and without support, I am alone in [EU country], waiting for the necessary documentation to get access to a psychotherapist and gynaecologist. ”*

- Female, 29 years old, August 2022

“ For six months I could not make an appointment with doctors to examine my child’s [disability]. Now it turned out that the child needs to install [medical device] as soon as possible, but they are very expensive... [several thousand] euros. The state can partially compensate for the cost of the devices, but I am not entitled to compensation for the child, because I do not have an insurance. I can’t get insurance because I don’t work. But how can I work with a small child who needs medical attention and a [medical device] as aid...? ”

- Female, 39 years old, September 2022

Some of the complaints had to do with structural issues in the healthcare system of the host countries (long wait times, underserved areas, medical service of varying quality) but others were more specific to displaced persons from Ukraine (language barrier, instances of discrimination, lack of insurance coverage if out of employment or delayed coverage for formal paperwork). The situation from displacement was especially difficult for long-term recipients of health care (e.g. for chronic diseases such as cancer) who had to interrupt their treatment and resume it from another country. Those who were older or had disabilities were also at risk of not having medical coverage, considering that public health insurance was sometimes tied to being employed or to having a disability formally recognised.

“ After the war began, I came to [EU country] with my husband to continue quietly treating his stomach cancer. The good thing was that chemotherapy was free for him, examinations, and hospital treatment too. But it was annoying that for such a disease I still had to wait for several weeks for both examination and treatment, and this was time wasted. After 10 months, my husband died [...] ”

- Female, 55 years old, March 2023

For some respondents, the experience of accessing health was very positive, as they received high-quality treatment for chronic diseases or emergency situations. The extensive coverage of medical insurance in some countries, giving access to high quality services, and the inclusive terms on which it was offered was highly appreciated by respondents and seen as a model to be followed.

“ My sister needed treatment. She underwent three surgeries, all expenses were covered by compulsory insurance, which is provided to us free of charge in [EU country]. I dream that [...] one day Ukraine [will] have similar social security conditions as in [EU country]. ”

- Female, 37 years old, April 2023

## Feelings, emotions and psychological support

Many respondents (250) chose to speak about their state of mind at the time of the questionnaire, their fears and aspirations for the future and their psychological needs, either explicitly (209 testimonies) or implicitly through the situations that they were describing (49 testimonies). Most of those respondents who talked openly about their state of mind indicated that they were under significant strain – they were experiencing high levels of stress, constant anxiety, hopelessness, had panic attacks, depression or thoughts of suicide. These negative feelings originated from their experiences of open conflict and forced displacement (see [War experiences](#)); others had to do with the difficulties of adapting to their new situation in the host countries, finding employment, stable accommodation, making ends meet on limited finances, while worrying at the same time for their family and acquaintances still affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

*“ I sleep badly, have panic attacks, because I am very worried about my old parents who live under occupation. They are there alone. And I can't even imagine how scared they are. In 2017, we left one occupation to get to another...”*

- Female, 40 years old, March 2023

*“ My husband has been in captivity since 25 February 2022. He is currently a soldier, and this is what worries me most. My little son, who was born here in [EU country], has never seen his father, and I have not seen my husband for almost a year and a half. We cannot go home which is now under occupation. It is difficult every day to think, live, breathe, eat, and understand that he is a prisoner there.”*

- Female, 41 years old, April 2023

Respondents were keenly aware of the need to start life anew in the host country, often from scratch, but the task was felt to be daunting, the sense of loss of their former life in Ukraine (mentioned in 15 testimonies) and the precarity of their situation under the temporary protection (mentioned in 20 testimonies), weighing heavily on their minds. The sense of loss, of being out of place, was further amplified by instances of discrimination and hostile attitudes in the host countries. Although mentioned by only a small minority of respondents, arbitrary actions and discrimination by staff at reception and assistance centres, xenophobia and intransigent attitudes of local residents, conflicts with the Russian diaspora or even with Ukrainians previously settled in the destination countries made some respondents feel unwelcome and made the process of beginning anew more challenging. As such, a number of respondents referred to struggles not to become overcome by despair, a few of them having mentioned how their sense of responsibility and duty of care towards their children was the only motivation and driver for keeping going. At the same time, being the sole provider and responsible caretaker of other family members, in the host country or in Ukraine, added to the pressure, to worries and concerns, and added further strain on the mental health of respondents.

*“ It was very scary, difficult, but I have to be strong for the sake of my children. And I thank all [EU country nationals] for their support and help. ”*

- Female, 34 years old, July 2022

*“ In general, I was very frightened and for the whole month of March I could not come to my senses - I cried all the time, I could not play with my child - I had no strength. Now everything is getting a little better - my daughter is in kindergarten, I got a job. A [EU] family took us in. But when the summer is over, and in Ukraine the war does not end (...), and my salary will not allow me to rent a house in the [EU country]. And again it's scary, I'm afraid to be outside in the winter. I can't feel safe anywhere, I can't plan for the future, there is no hope. ”*

- Female, 41 years old, June 2022

*“ I understand that I am probably not in the worst situation, but I am overcome by despair, what to do next. If I were alone, then probably the level of my responsibility would not be so high, but I am with my son. [...] From this understanding, it seems that life is over and there is nowhere to go back. And I can't cope with this feeling.... ”*

- Female, 43 years old, May 2022

*“ It's like I'm stuck between two worlds - I am a stranger in [EU country] and in Ukraine too... We are constantly under stress and anxiety for family, friends and news.”*

- Female, 45 years old, June 2023

Psychological support was seen as even more important for coping with the trauma and extreme situations that displaced persons from Ukraine had faced, respondents having highly appreciated this support when it was provided and actively called for it when it was not (12 testimonies). Having a support network in the host country and the help of local community and residents also helped respondents to cope and was associated with a more positive experience, through practical assistance with day-to-day matters or psychological support. Finally, the safety and shelter of the host countries were explicitly valued by a large number of respondents and the minority of respondents who referenced mainly positive experiences in the host countries, with starting a new employment, finding welcoming hosts and settling in at school, point to some of the next steps toward regaining psychological wellbeing.

*“ One sad thing is that there is no psychological help, there is no possibility to replenish with positive emotions. All Ukrainians need the support of a psychologist. The problem with transport exacerbates the emotional state, the feeling that you are in prison. This develops panic attacks and psychological problems. ”*

- Female, 53 years old, May 2023

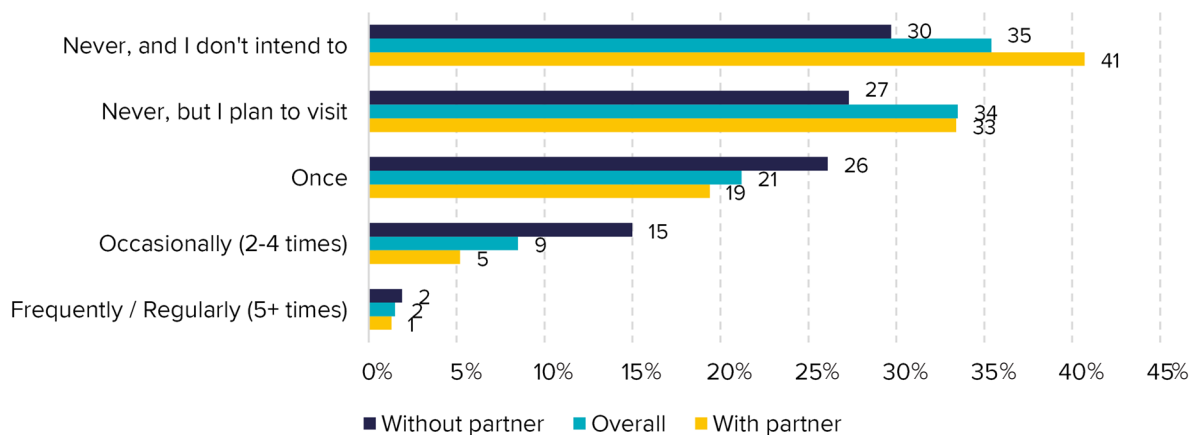
# Results

## 2.6. Future intentions

### Overview of 2023 survey results

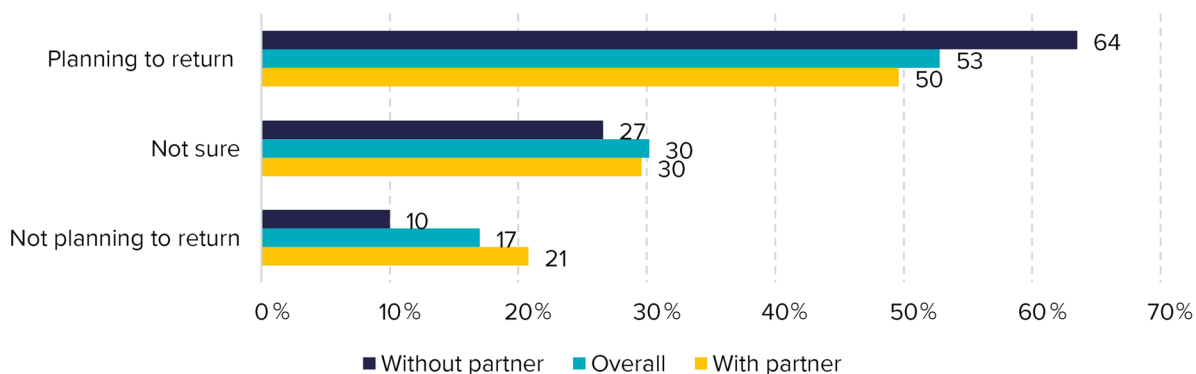
Even as Russian Federation's war against Ukraine persists into its second year, Ukrainian refugees and the Ukrainian state alike have been actively engaged in planning and preparing for the future and recovery in the aftermath. Return has been regarded by all parties as a central component of recovery in post-war Ukraine. Various studies have indicated that many refugees aspire to return one day,<sup>28</sup> and there is a broad consensus among host countries and Ukraine itself that the return and reintegration of Ukrainian nationals will play a pivotal role in meeting the labour requirements for the reconstruction of Ukraine.<sup>29</sup> However, with the prolonged displacement, a significant number may opt to remain in their current host countries. It is crucial to comprehend the attitudes and future intentions of displaced Ukrainians in Europe, as this understanding is vital for effective planning and ensuring the best possible support and outcomes for Ukrainian refugees, host countries and Ukraine alike.

Although long-term returns to specific parts of the country are currently not possible, some Ukrainian refugees are already undertaking short-term visits to Ukraine for various reasons. Among the SAM-UKR respondents, more than three out of ten (31%) have visited Ukraine at least once since leaving the country, while 34% have not made the trip yet but are planning to do so (Fig. 25). The probability and frequency of these visits seems strongly linked to whether individuals fled with their partners. Among those who left without their partners, 43% of respondents have visited Ukraine, and 17% have made the trip at least twice. These patterns align with the primary reasons given for these returns. Nearly three out of four respondents (74%) have returned to visit family and friends, followed by the wish to check on their property and belongings (30%) or to assist their community (13%).<sup>30</sup>



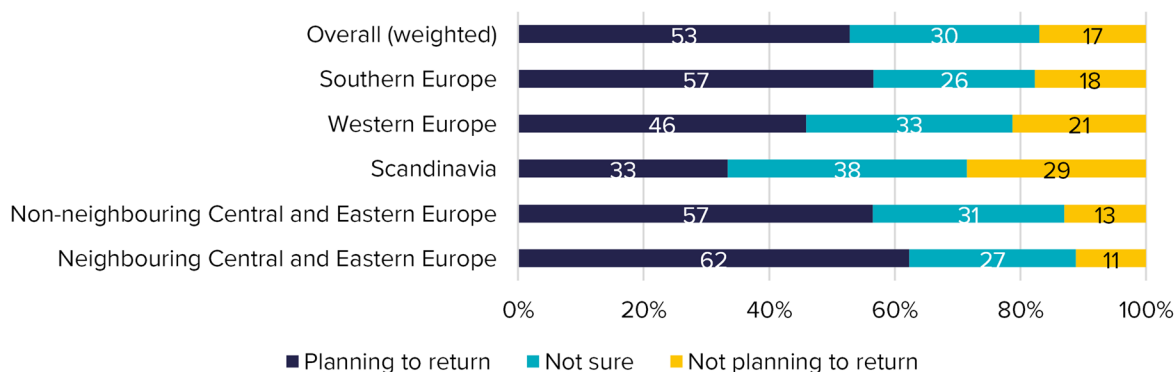
**Figure 25.** Percentage of respondents visiting Ukraine during the war, overall and by presence of accompanying partner (among those who have partner) (overall n= 2,976, with/without partner n= 1,713) (Source: SAM-UKR)

Family unit breakdowns and the necessity to plan for family reunification, whether in Ukraine or elsewhere, will likely impact the short- and long-term plans of many refugees. In the shorter term, almost half of the respondents (48%) stated that they already had plans for family members and friends to join them in their current country. The prevalence of these intentions varied based on the region of origin, with the highest percentages found among respondents originating from Kyiv city (52%) and the lowest among those from the macro-region of West Ukraine (31%). Looking at the longer-term perspective, individuals without accompanying partners in their current countries show higher return intentions compared to those who fled with their partners (64% compared to 50%) (Fig. 26).



**Figure 26.** Percentage of respondents by return plans after the war overall and by presence of accompanying partner (among those who have partner) (overall n=3,027, with/without partner n=1,748) (Source: SAM-UKR)

In general, 53% of all respondents expressed their intention to return to Ukraine after the war, but a significant portion remained unsure (30%) (Fig. 26). Only about 17% were certain that they will not return. Notably, respondents' return intentions seemed to vary across current host contexts (Fig. 27). In neighbouring Central and Eastern European countries, almost two out of three (62%) indicated being certain that they will return, while this figure dropped to one out of three (33%) in Scandinavian countries. It is noteworthy, however, that the highest share of respondents in Scandinavia remained uncertain about their return plans at the time of the survey.



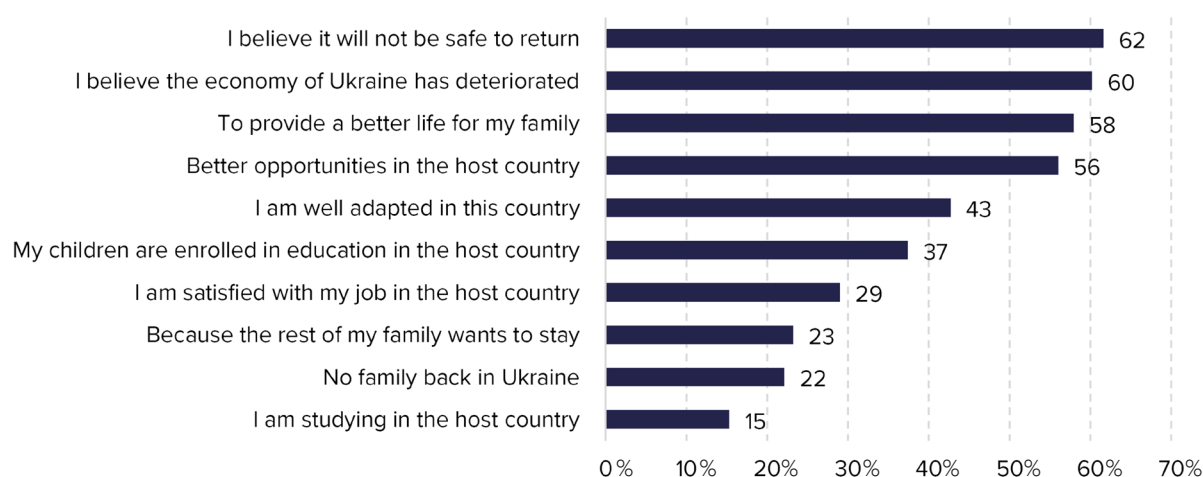
**Figure 27.** Return plans after the war by current region of residence (n=3,027) (Source: SAM-UKR)



For those respondents who indicated plans to return, their primary reasons for doing so included reuniting with family and friends (58%), the desire to resume their previous way of life (53%), the desire to contribute to the rebuilding of Ukraine (52%), and the belief that the security situation in Ukraine will improve (41%, Fig. 28). Conversely, for those not planning to return, the main reasons mentioned included safety concerns (62%), the deterioration of Ukraine's economy (60%), the desire to provide a better life for their family (58%), and the availability of better opportunities in their current country (56%, Fig. 29).

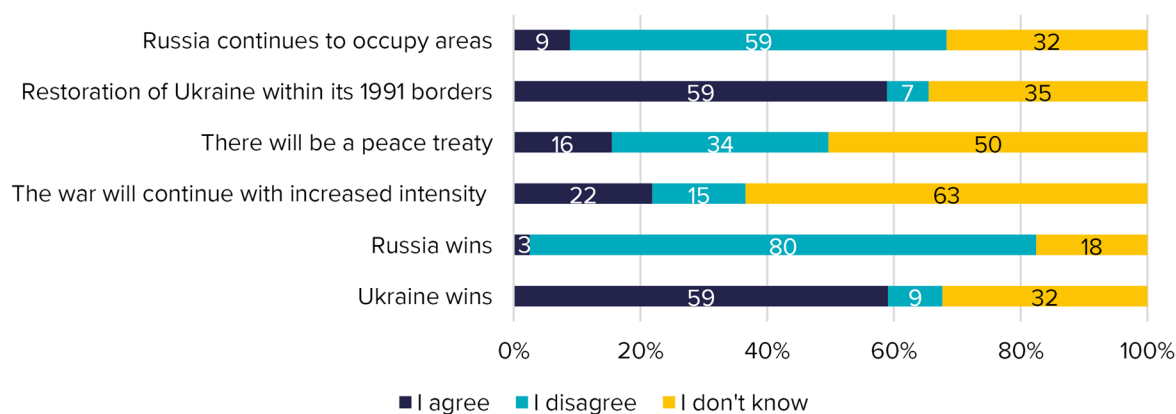


**Figure 28.** Main reasons for planning to return (percentage of respondents who indicated each reason - multiple answers possible) (Source: SAM-UKR)



**Figure 29.** Main reasons for not planning to return (percentage of respondents who indicated each reason - multiple answers possible) (Source: SAM-UKR)

At this point, return plans are subject to change over time. When respondents were questioned about their expectations for the state of affairs in Ukraine in 12 months, their answers highlighted the unpredictability of the situation (Fig. 30). Despite a significant number of respondents expressing uncertainty with responses like “I don’t know,” most respondents still hold the belief that Russian Federation will not emerge victorious (80%), and they anticipate Ukraine’s triumph (59%) along with the restoration of Ukraine to its 1991 borders (59%).



**Figure 30.** The expected status of Russia Federation's war against Ukraine in 12 months (percentage of respondents agreeing/disagreeing with the statements) (Source: SAM-UKR)

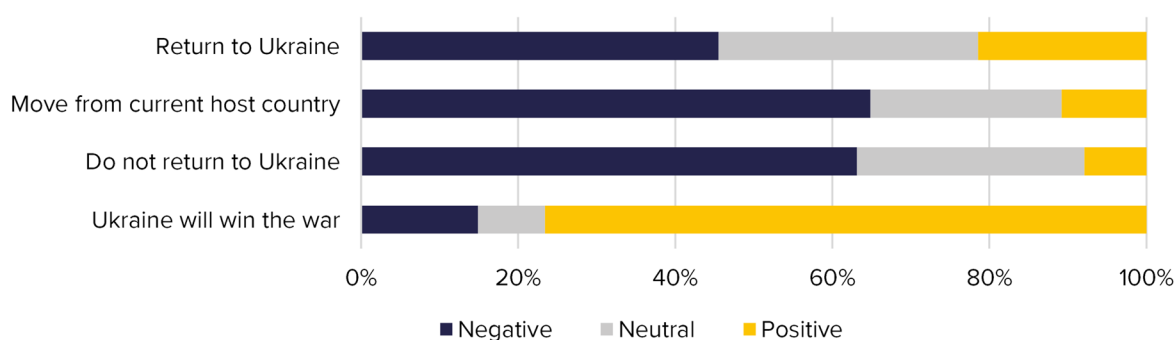
## Qualitative Analysis

In their testimonies, forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine frequently mentioned their future intentions and hopes (248 testimonies). The main topics comprised elements pertaining to:

- their eagerness to return to Ukraine (112 testimonies)
- their hope of a swift resolution to the conflict (60 testimonies),
- their inability, or unwillingness to return for diverse reasons (38 testimonies)
- the need to move onwards to another host country (37 testimonies)

The testimonies gathered included numerous mentions of Ukraine winning the war, which were associated with a strong positive sentiment, indicating a belief vastly shared among respondents.

The sentiment analysis revealed that for those intending not to return to Ukraine or to move from the current host country, negative sentiment prevailed (65% of respondents). By contrast, the sentiment of references discussing their possible return to Ukraine were neutral or positive (55% of respondents), while the vast majority of those who mentioned Ukraine winning were positive (75% of respondents, Fig. 31).



**Figure 31.** Sentiment analysis of testimonies related to Future intentions by sub-theme (Source: EUAA analysis of SAM-UKR testimonies)

## Return to Ukraine

While many respondents professed their belief and hope that they would soon return to Ukraine, a minority indicated that they did not intend to return. The reasons put forward for returning were diverse and range from reunification with family members (parents or partners) who stayed behind to the wish to contribute to war effort against the Russian Federation, or dissatisfaction with the quality of life in the EU. Notably, the decision to return was not always unanimous among family members and some testimonies indicated the intention of the respondent to return despite the objections of their relatives.

The language barrier which rendered finding a job challenging, as well as having to work in different sectors than one's field of expertise were often mentioned as reasons contributing to a lower quality of life as displaced in the EU than before the war in Ukraine. The lack of money, not receiving enough benefits to cover children's needs, childcare or accommodation while also learning a new language and being, often, in charge of dependent adults and children without additional support also contributed to the intention to return to Ukraine. The uncertainty about their future in the EU, considering their legal status, employment opportunities or education in their language were also mentioned.

Conversely, the wish to help rebuild Ukraine upon their return, especially after the end of the war was shared by many respondents, irrespective of the uncertainty of the condition in which their homes would be because of the war. Respondents wished to reunite with family members, including partners and parents, and friends who stayed behind, visit their animals, and return to their homes. These strong wishes supplemented the desire to return to Ukraine. Some respondents even mentioned regretting leaving Ukraine and gathering the strength to return and support those who need help in their country.

*“ I hope that the war will end, that my house will be restored and I will return home. ”*

- Female, 61 years old, East region

*“ In general, I arranged my life, but my husband lives and works in Ukraine, so despite everything, I really want to return. And our standard of living in Ukraine was much better than it is now in Europe. ”*

- Female, 36 years old, South region

*“ We want the war to end and return home, because our beloved animals and our home are waiting there. ”*

- Female, 42 years old, East region

*“ My husband was injured and we made the decision to return home to support him in his recovery. ”*

- Female, 39 years old, Kyiv city

*“ Unfortunately, there is no compensation for the family in which we live, and we have not received any help, so far, for two months of stay. Savings are running out, we will return to Ukraine. ”*

- Female, 49 years old, East region

## Move from current host country

Respondents who expressed the desire to move from their current host country mentioned mostly negative factors driving this desire. Many refugees cited bureaucracy, the inability to obtain work visas, and uncertainty about their legal status as the main reasons for considering relocation from the current host country. While refugees appreciated the immediate support, they expected more processes to be translated into their native language and for the duration of certain benefits to last longer, in order to give them more opportunity to learn the language and find relevant jobs. Similarly, the lack of job opportunities in one's field, and the lack of affordable housing, were additional factors.

On the same topic, the perceived proliferation of better job opportunities and integration schemes in other EU countries, contributed to the willingness to leave their current host country. Perceived pro-Russian sentiment or the presence of Russian diaspora in some communities was another adverse factor that made Ukrainians feel less welcome. For a minority of refugees, having family in another EU country was the main reason to move towards that country, signifying the importance of family reunification. Speaking the language of another country and having better environmental conditions than their current situation were also mentioned. The uncertainty about future prospects in their current host country often contributed to the desire to leave.

*“ The mess, the reluctance to help people and the bureaucracy in [EU country] completely overruled my desire to stay and work in this country. ”*

- Male, 41 years old, West region

*“ I want to leave [EU country]. There is no job or housing. The amount of support is only enough to feed three people, there is no compensation for rent. And there are no jobs either. ”*

- Female, 45 years old, South region

*“ Unfortunately, I do not have the opportunity to open a work visa or blue card in the [EU country]. If such an opportunity does not arise, then most likely I will move to another country, where it is possible to open a work visa and eventually obtain a residence permit. ”*

- Female, 29 years old, location not available

*“ But Russians or pro-Russian locals in [EU country] is what choking us - we better be living at -30 in [other EU country] as berry pickers, but in peace. ”*

- Male, 32 years old, Kyiv city

## Do not return to Ukraine

Some respondents aspired not to return to Ukraine, primarily because of the fear that there would no longer be homes and communities to return to, or because of lasting fear and anxieties stemming from their experience of war violence. As already described in the section on war experiences, the overwhelmingly negative experiences as a result of the war reduced the willingness of people to return. In some cases, entire communities were destroyed, including houses, and witnesses of this destruction expressed their inability to return. The uncertainty about the future, especially with regards to their family and properties, was a contributing factor to the unwillingness to return.

In addition, people who had already been displaced internally prior to the February 2022 large-scale invasion repeatedly experienced the trauma of forced displacement, and could not imagine returning to the possibility of forced displacement once more.

Besides, some respondents noted the better educational opportunities for their children and employment prospects in Europe as the main reasons to stay in Europe. Having already found a community, enrolled to study in a university, or a better job abroad than possible now in Ukraine were contributing factors to the desire to stay in Europe.

*“ I want to stay here. To educate my child here. To wait for my husband here. Here our work is paid much higher than in Ukraine, unfortunately. ”*

- Female, 49 years old, North region

*“ In Ukraine, human rights laws are not being upheld and violated, and constitutional and political laws that govern the country of Ukraine, from which I had to flee, are not being enforced. I have personally experienced these violations of law, which is why I have a great fear of returning to Ukraine, fearing for my life. ”*

- Male, 45 years old, Kyiv city

*“ Unfortunately, I don't want to return to Ukraine, it seems I can't stand it for the third time. ”*

- Female, 30 years old, North region

*“ There is no return to Ukraine, there in one day I lost everything, the house was destroyed by bombs, there was no work, even elementary things were not possible to take, I left with a bag with documents and medicines and with the children, that's all. ”*

- Female, 47 years old, East region

## Ukraine will win the war

Multiple respondents took the opportunity to share their belief that Ukraine will win the war. These statements were strongly supported by personal feelings, a sense of community and trust in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the political leadership. People frequently added “Glory to Ukraine” to their testimonies. While most statements on this sub-theme were positive and pro-Ukraine, some were worded negatively against Russians and the terrifying acts of war that were committed, frequently experienced by respondents.

Despite being grateful for the ongoing support, respondents also suggested that more aid to Ukraine is needed to support their efforts in this war. Strong desire for peace for everyone was shown, along with belief in the endurance of Ukrainians, in addition to appreciation for the host countries and the policies that allow them to stay in Europe while the war is ongoing.

*“ We are waiting for the war to end. Victory will be for Ukraine. We believe in it with all our hearts! ”*

- Female, 43 years old, Kyiv city

# 3

## Conclusions

This report brings together three organisations to delve deeply into the experiences of displaced people from Ukraine, based on their first-hand accounts gathered through online surveys, and corroborated by findings in complementary studies.

The testimonies shared by respondents to the SAM-UKR survey revealed the main themes concerning the displaced population and were interlaced with analysis of closed-ended questions to enrich these insights and provided essential context. An in-depth examination of the experiences and needs of the respondents in the host country identified pressing topics for improvement in services provided in the EU, though the majority of respondents were grateful for the support offered. The provision of language courses in the local language, in combination with childcare support could enhance the employability of the displaced population. Mismatches between the skill levels of displaced people and the available jobs diminished the overall satisfaction with life in the EU. While education for children and healthcare were widely accessible, administrative processes, often conducted in the local languages, posed barriers to entry to some services. The uncertainty surrounding the legal status of the displaced population, notably with regard to its duration and the additional rights it may confer was an additional burden shared by respondents.

The vivid descriptions of war experiences provided a poignant insight into the grim reality of the conflict and its profound impact on the affected population. The trauma and psychological effects, characterised by heightened levels of vigilance, stress and anxiety, due to exposure to war, underline the need for increased psychological support. Despite such experiences, the displaced population exhibited remarkable resilience in asserting their independence and finding, employment and housing. A recurrent theme expressed by many was the determination to build a better future for their families. Family and friends played a dual role and were frequently mentioned as both sources of support and concern, especially when it came to uncertainties about the availability of medical care for dependents, or educational opportunities for children.

The temporary nature of the protection afforded to the displaced population, under the temporary protection directive, introduced a considerable level of uncertainty regarding their future prospects, and the lack of clarity about the respondents' rights was frequently mentioned. Given the ever-evolving situation, the timely dissemination of information to the affected population could alleviate this uncertainty. Decisions regarding intentions to return, move onwards in the EU, or stay in their current host country were strongly influenced by considerations related to their family, employment and educational prospects, as well as quality of life considerations. Respondents expressed gratitude towards the EU, Member States, organisations, volunteers and strangers along the way for their support. They felt welcomed, despite the inherent and structural challenges of the forced displacement.

This report has demonstrated the value of collecting testimonies directly from hard-to-reach affected communities, using a common questionnaire in different countries. This approach, complemented by various dissemination techniques and translated into the language of the target population, facilitates a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the displaced people. This report can therefore provide valuable insights to all stakeholders contributing to the response to the ongoing Ukrainian displacement situation.

## Perspectives from Ukraine

According to research from Gradus, the majority of Ukrainians continue to look towards the future with optimism and hope. In a manner reminiscent of the early stages of the conflict, most Ukrainians believe in victory and are convinced that Ukraine can achieve it. Despite predominant emotions of fatigue and burnout, optimism continues to prevail over pessimism. Furthermore, for the first time in three decades since gaining independence, most respondents believe that the country is charting a course in the right direction. A convincing majority of respondents also support the decisions made by the Ukrainian government. These trends are consistent among both those who remained in Ukraine and those who left abroad.

On the other hand, there is a discernible extension in the anticipated duration of the war. While last year most respondents believed that the war could be resolved within one to two years, there is now a notable shift in expectations towards a timeframe encompassing 2024 and 2025. Additionally, among respondents residing outside of Ukraine, a significantly larger group is convinced that the protracted nature of the conflict will endure for several more years.

Among prominent social phenomena, the war has led to a significant increase in horizontal connections among Ukrainians, as well as an increase in the level of trust between people, both within Ukraine and abroad. Despite the enduring adverse legacy of the Soviet past, which fragmented the societal fabric, the exigencies of the conflict have fostered Ukrainian societal healing, mitigating the effects from social isolation and encouraged a spirit of mutual support, fostering a newfound readiness for interaction and assistance within Ukrainian society.

It is also worth noting that among all groups of respondents, there is a strong support for the country's efforts and the direction of its leadership towards integration into international alliances, particularly with the EU and NATO.



# 4

## Annex

# Methodological approach

### General

Surveys of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine (SAM-UKR) collects data from adults displaced from Ukraine into the EU following Russia's invasion in February 2022. The survey is voluntary, anonymous, available online in English, Ukrainian and Russian and self-administered using a device with internet access.

The survey questionnaire comprises 38 questions, organised into 6 sections. In the first section, the survey collects respondents' informed consent and screens for eligibility based on questions on age, nationality, and residence. The second section captures demographic information including gender, civil status, people they travelled with, namely children and dependent adults, if any, educational qualifications, languages spoken, and employment and occupation before the war. The third section includes questions capturing respondents' movements, including current location, entry into the EU, preferred destination within the EU (if not the country of current residence), the criteria shaping destination preferences, and plans for family to join. The fourth section asks respondents about their prior life in Ukraine, including their oblast of origin, the date they left, their main reasons for leaving, and experiences of internal displacement. A fifth section captures information on circular movements to Ukraine, including short returns since the start of the war as well as intentions to return, pending future conditions. The final section covers various aspects of respondents' life in the host country, including registration status, reception and assistance received, participation in education and employment, sources of income, and satisfaction and urgent needs in the host country. An additional open-text question is included to collect further information in the form of written testimonies, which are covered by the qualitative analysis. A privacy policy and data protection notice (approved by the EUAA's Data Protection Officer) are available on the survey platform. An ethics self-assessment was conducted to ensure compliance with fundamental ethical principles of surveying vulnerable populations.

The dissemination strategy of the survey 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, likely 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. As a result, sample sizes from individual countries were not always proportional to those countries' relative prominence within the EU+ as a destination for displaced Ukrainians. This is why certain adjustment procedures were used and are outlined in the next section.

## Quantitative Analysis

This publication reports findings from SAM-UKR survey responses provided between 9 February 2023 and 13 September 2023, following up on an earlier joint report (released in October 2022<sup>31</sup>) that presented results from the 2022 round of data collection. Data quality was established based on eligibility criteria for analysis inclusion/exclusion, checked at multiple points, internal validity and duplicate monitoring. An initial raw sample of 4173 respondents who completed the survey between the dates above, was narrowed down by 8% following additional eligibility checks (on whether respondents were living in Ukraine at the time of invasion). Moreover, given the survey's aim to capture information on displacement to EU+ countries, respondents who reported residing in countries outside Europe or who did not report a country of current residence were also excluded from the survey. The final sample thus comprised responses from 3418 adults who were residing in Ukraine at the time of the invasion and who subsequently fled – directly or indirectly – to an EU+ country in which they were residing at the time of the survey.

In light of the sampling issues outlined above, to ensure a fair representation of varying respondent profiles and experiences across the EU+, indicators in the main body of the text were presented applying proportional regional weights or with an accompanying regional breakdown, making weights redundant. The regional weighting factors were calculated to adjust the proportion of survey responses from a given region within the sample (distinguishing, based on country of current residence, between neighbouring Central and Eastern European (CEE), non-neighbouring CEE, Scandinavian, Western European, and Southern European countries, Table 2) to the relative proportion of adult Temporary Protection Directive beneficiaries (as reported by Eurostat) in that region compared to the overall EU+ total. The logic for grouping the 30 reported countries of residence into these five regions was determined based on distance from Ukraine (e.g., neighbouring countries), special prevalence within the sample (e.g., some Scandinavian countries), and further common geographical and socio-political distinctions (e.g., CEE, Western, or Southern Europe) that tend to coincide with relevant factors such as economic conditions or prior migration levels from Ukraine.

Regional Categories	Countries
Neighbouring CEE countries	Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia
Non-neighbouring CEE area	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia
Scandinavian countries	Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden
Western Europe	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland
Southern Europe	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

**Table 2.** Countries included in different regional categories used for weighting and referred to in the text

Different subcategories were tested to gain deeper insights into different topics. These included geographical categories (concerning macro-regions of origin, as shown in Table 3, current location, desired destination, and the Ukrainian border crossing points), family circumstances (with or without children as well as with or without other dependent persons), migratory stage (categories of those who have reached their destination, those who have not as well as those who are not sure) among others. Only references to the most relevant ones were included in the text.

Macro-region	Oblasts/cities
Kyiv city	Kyiv city
West	Chernivtsi Oblast, Lviv Oblast, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, Rivne Oblast, Ternopil Oblast, Volyn Oblast, Zakarpattia Oblast
Centre	Cherkasy Oblast, Kirovohrad Oblast, Poltava Oblast, Vinnytsia Oblast
North	Zhytomyr Oblast, Kyiv Oblast, Chernihiv Oblast, Sumy Oblast
South	Crimea, Sevastopol City, Odesa Oblast, Kherson Oblast, Mykolaiv Oblast
East	Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Donetsk Oblast, Kharkiv Oblast, Luhansk Oblast, Zaporizhzhia Oblast

**Table 3.** The breakdown of Ukrainian macro-regions referred to in the report by oblasts/cities

## Qualitative Analysis

A thematic analysis of 1 523 testimonies from the SAM-UKR survey was performed to identify topics of concern for displaced persons from Ukraine, their experiences of displacement and any areas for policy interventions. The testimonies were collected through an open-ended question at the end of the survey asking respondents to write about any other topic they wished about their journey or situation (optional item on the survey). Around 1 in 7 respondents left comments that ranged from a sentence to several pages of text. The testimonies cover responses from the period between 8 April 2022 to 31 August 2023. Testimonies were anonymised to remove identifiable information and references to specific EU countries. The gender, age and, depending on the section, either the region of origin from Ukraine, date of the testimony or nationality of respondents (Ukrainian or third-country nationals) are reported after each testimony. The demographics and education background of those who wrote testimonies are shown on table 4.

A codebook was developed through inductive approaches supplemented by a deductive approach. A preliminary list of codes was discussed and agreed by two members of the research team based on separate readings of the first 500 testimonies. Codes that were theoretically relevant - experiences of war, secondary movements and immediate reception at the border - were added to the list of inductive codes. This preliminary codebook was tested independently

Age	Distribution	Citizenship	Distribution	Gender	Distribution	Education	Distribution
<b>18-44</b>	70.2 %	<b>Ukrainian</b>	94.6 %	<b>Female</b>	76.7 %	<b>Primary</b>	0.5 %
<b>45-64</b>	27.1 %	<b>Non-Ukrainian</b>	5.4 %	<b>Male</b>	22.4 %	<b>Secondary</b>	10.4 %
<b>65+</b>	2.7 %			<b>Other</b>	0.9 %	<b>Bachelor's</b>	29.0 %
						<b>Master's/ PhD</b>	42.1 %
						<b>Professional</b>	16.9 %
						<b>Other</b>	1.0 %

**Table 4.** Distribution of demographic characteristics and educational attainment for those who responded in testimonies (Source: EUAA analysis of SAM-UKR testimonies)

by the two researchers against 100 testimonies that were randomly selected for adequate coverage and enhanced with any new relevant codes. Inter-coder reliability was done to check for consistency in coding and agreement was found to be high for the majority of codes. For those codes for which agreement was moderate to low, further clarifications and refining were agreed by the two researchers.

In a first round, all testimonies were coded to these themes with the help of NVivo software. Coding was performed by the two researchers who developed the codebook. An equal number of testimonies were randomly distributed to each coder with 30 testimonies being common to both coders for another check of the inter-coder reliability while the random allocation allowed a further assessment of differences in coding between the two coders (beyond random error). These extra checks were used to identify and enhance the quality of coding for those themes that showed significant discrepancies through revisiting some of the coding, further coordination between the two coders on strict inclusion/exclusion criteria, use of the different text search and other functionalities from NVivo to revisit the coding and enriched guidance to the colleagues tasked with the in-depth analysis and drafting. Finally, another 93 testimonies from August were included in the analysis to leverage responses from previously under-represented countries – these were coded entirely by one of the researchers and were not included in the second round of inter-coder reliability and statistical analysis checks.

Once the first round of high-level coding was completed, themes were allocated to four researchers (including the original two coders) for another round of in-depth coding into relevant subthemes and for a sentiment analysis of testimonies within each subtheme. Testimonies were coded for sentiment analysis against three levels: negative, neutral and positive with the entire testimony being the unit of analysis for each particular subtheme. Each researcher then drafted individually their own sections and the final output was reviewed for consistency and accuracy by the entire research team.

All testimonies in languages other than English were translated into English using machine translation services. Translations were run through several online tools (Google translate, the translate functionality in Excel and the European Commission *etranslation* tool) for enhanced accuracy. In addition, 24 testimonies for which the translations seemed most ambiguous were shared with Gradus for additional sense-checking and calibration. Comparisons between the translations by Gradus and the machine translation services showed generally good agreement.

## Perspectives from Gradus on methodology

The research conducted by the EUAA with the support of the OECD, comprises an impressive volume of narratives, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the forced displacement experiences among Ukrainian migrants who have found shelter in EU+ countries. These testimonies contribute significantly to the broader historical narrative regarding the experiences and traumas inflicted by the war on millions of Ukrainian citizens and the consequences thereof on their lives and the life of their family.

The survey was built on an innovative and convincing approach. Standardised closed-ended questions were combined with content analysis of an open-ended free-text question. This combination allowed for quantitative analysis of the collected information while retaining the depth of a qualitative approach, enriching numerical distributions with authentic insights. Since the research was conducted on a voluntary basis without a structured approach to sample formation, the data obtained can be analysed only in the framework of a qualitative study. All insights and distributions provided serve as indicators of prevalent trends but not as a representative picture of the war and migration experience of the Ukrainian community in EU countries.

This approach shows a number of strong advantages, such as: a) The ability to deeply understand the emotional state, needs, and intentions of Ukrainian migrants, b) Strengthening generalised quantitative indicators with interviewee quotes for illustrative and persuasive purposes, c) Gathering a significant number of insights useful for shaping future monitoring of migration sentiments among Ukrainians temporarily residing in the EU, d) Analysing open-ended question texts quantitatively using a coding glossary to calculate the number of typical interviewee responses, e) The content analysis methodology implemented by the research team confirms the high quality of the collected data. Detailed coding lists, a diversified team working with textual arrays, and subsequent result calculations allow for categorising the textual data into broad unified categories.

However, we must be aware of certain limitations of this methodology, which is important to pay attention to, such the following. Firstly, it would be highly valuable to divide the obtained data into several stages of the war against Ukraine: the initial stage (April 2022 – September 2022), the second wave of migration (October 2022 – April 2023), the third wave of migration (April 2023+) or to illustrate the distribution of collected interviews along a timeline in another way. The war and migration experiences significantly differ depending on the migration period, as well as migration motives and intentions.

In addition, the report authors rightly emphasise the high likelihood that respondents were more inclined to share negative experiences rather than positive ones. However, from our experience conducting in-depth interviews with Ukrainians who have undergone extreme war experiences (such as occupation, being in active combat zones, interacting with occupying forces, etc.), people tend to provide moderately negative responses, avoiding extremes. Therefore, it is fair to consider that this report predominantly reflects traumatic or problematic aspects of migration and adaptation in host countries, without providing a complete picture of the migration experience of Ukrainians who received temporary shelter. It also appears to underestimate the extent of extremely negative experiences.

Another crucial aspect concerns the issue of language in providing open text and language for content analysis. If texts have been translated from the language of provision to a unified language of analysis, it is important to understand the approaches to translation, potential errors, and the need for further verification of the text as was performed on a sample of ambiguous testimonies.

Finally, migration experience, especially migration motives and motives for return migration, are significantly influenced by the country of residence. In Northern European countries, according to Gradus survey results, a significant motive for staying is financial assistance and social support. Consequently, the most pronounced barrier to returning to Ukraine is the loss of income, destruction, or significant damage to housing in Ukraine, and so forth.

In summary, the gathered and analysed data hold high value for a profound understanding of trends in the war and migration experiences of Ukrainians temporarily residing in EU countries. However, it is advisable to perceive and interpret the collected data as qualitative research reflecting certain trends.

We must emphasise that the results of Gradus Research surveys, conducted among Ukrainian migrants in EU countries since the beginning of the war, confirm the findings of this study.<sup>32</sup> However, throughout the various stages of the conflict, Gradus data consistently recorded more positive assessments of the experience of arrival in host countries and adaptation there. This may be linked to the particularities of sample formation.

Initially, the traumatic experience of the first wave of migration, encountered during the process of departure and settlement in the new host country, significantly reinforced by the direct experience of being in a combat zone, led many respondents to make a permanent decision to stay in a safe place until the active phase of the war concludes. In the host countries, negative adaptation experiences were caused by high stress due to unfamiliar circumstances, lack of knowledge of local languages, the inability to quickly navigate necessary steps, and the shock of finding oneself in an entirely unfamiliar system of social relations (medical system, education system, etc.), as well as financial difficulties (loss of income, employment, etc.).

In addition, the primary motivations for staying in temporary protection countries include the necessity to ensure safety for their children and family members. The most frequently cited barrier to returning to Ukraine is the security situation and financial difficulties at home.

On the other hand, the main drivers for returning to Ukraine include the desire to reunite with family members left behind in Ukraine. This often involves reuniting spouses and children who emigrated with the husband who stayed in Ukraine. However, mass return migration will only occur with confidence in safety and economic viability (availability of work or other income in Ukraine).

It is worth to note that the main barriers to adaptation in host countries, according to most respondents, include a lack of knowledge of the local language, acting as a barrier to obtaining employment. However, over time, this indicator noticeably decreases. Unfortunately, certain demographic groups face specific adaptation barriers. For example, women with children mention a significant increase in workload and the difficulty of balancing childcare with full-time work. Many women are left without the help of their family in Ukraine, which used to assist in childcare. Respondents often highlight the medical system as challenging, inflexible, and unhelpful. The education system is generally rated highly, but a significant portion of respondents would like the opportunity for their children to be educated in the Ukrainian language.

Overall, since the beginning of the measurement history of Ukrainians who emigrated to EU countries due to the war, the majority have evaluated the experience of arrival and settling in a new place as positive. Attitudes of the local population and local authorities are, in general, considered attentive. The obtained conditions are deemed sufficient. Negative experiences were isolated and generally stemmed from high overall stress, lack of understanding of societal and state mechanisms in the host country, difficult circumstances of departure, and so on.

Notably, for many Ukrainians, the centre of life interests remains in Ukraine, leading to high activity in crossing borders and entering Ukraine for short periods.

In conclusion, the validity of the methodological approach used to study the traumatic experience of Ukrainian migrants can be asserted. The report contains a substantial number of crucial insights that will prove valuable in understanding the range of issues and challenges faced by the examined group.

# Endnotes

- 1 The term “refugee” is used in this report to refer to all persons who are fleeing from Russia’s war against Ukraine since February 2022, including individuals not only with a formal refugee status (as per the Geneva Convention) but also subsidiary and temporary protection (as in the case of most arrivals from Ukraine) and other legal bases for stay.
- 2 The [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022](#) established the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine as a consequence of an armed conflict within the meaning of the Temporary Protection Directive ([Directive 2001/55/EC](#)). The directive applies to all EU Member States except Denmark. [Iceland](#), [Norway](#) and [Switzerland](#) have introduced similar national provisions.
- 3 Furthermore, the decision specifies that Member States may extend temporary protection to all other stateless persons or nationals of third countries other than Ukraine residing legally in Ukraine who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin.
- 4 Eurostat, [Monthly data of Beneficiaries of temporary protection by citizenship, age and sex](#) (update as of 18 October 2023).
- 5 Based on EUAA Early warning and Preparedness System data as of 20 October 2023. The number includes an estimation for the missing data for Spain. Data are fully missing for Czechia and Slovakia but the number of pending cases there is considered to be negligible.
- 6 UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal](#) (update as of 20 October 2023).
- 7 IOM, [Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix](#).
- 8 Eurostat, [Population data](#) (update as of 25 September 2023).
- 9 Only countries with over 130,000 beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of August 2023 were included.
- 10 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 11 Please note that the qualitative sections of this report also include responses from a previous round of the survey in 2022. The related sample is described in a joint EUAA-IOM-OECD (2022) publication ‘Forced displacement from and within Ukraine: Profiles, experiences, and aspirations of affected populations’. EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 12 Here we assume that the overwhelming majority of civil (i.e., legally recognised) partners indicated by female respondents refer to men, even if same-sex relationships were indicated by a few respondents in other parts of the survey.
- 13 OECD (2023), [“What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine”](#), OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- 14 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 15 Multiple answers were possible.
- 16 UNHCR [Operational Data Portal](#).
- 17 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 18 R. Srinivasa Murthy and R. Lakshminarayana, [Mental health consequences of war: a brief review of research findings](#), World Psychiatry, 2006 Feb; 5(1): 25-30
- 19 According to the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 64/2022 as of 24 February 2022, the constitutional rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens provided for in Articles 30 – 34, 38, 39, 41 – 44, 53 of Constitution of Ukraine may be temporarily restricted during martial law (in particular, concerning inviolability of the home, secrecy of correspondence, non-interference in private and family life, freedom of movement, freedom of thought and speech, the right to own, use and dispose of one’s property, etc.), [Ukraine Invest](#).
- 20 UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal](#), accessed October 10, 2023.
- 21 The proportions of individuals categorized as “no status” and “applied for asylum” among SAM-UKR respondents appear higher than expected. The former suggests a significant number in an irregular situation, while the latter implies an elevated rate of asylum applications, a trend not substantiated by official statistics. This discrepancy might be attributed, in part, to respondents misunderstanding the question.
- 22 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 23 OECD (2022), “Housing support for Ukrainian refugees in receiving countries”, [OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine](#), OECD Publishing, Paris.
- 24 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 25 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 26 OECD (2023), [“What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine”](#), OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- 27 OECD (2023), [What are the integration challenges of Ukrainian refugee women?](#)
- 28 See, for example, UNHCR (2023), [Lives on hold: Intentions and Perspectives of Refugees and IDPs from Ukraine #4](#).
- 29 OECD (forthcoming), “Working towards dual intent integration of Ukrainian refugees”, OECD Policy Responses on the Impacts of the War in Ukraine, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- 30 Multiple answers possible.
- 31 EUAA/IOM/OECD (2022), [Forced displacement from and within Ukraine](#).
- 32 Open reports are available in English on the website <https://gradus.app/en>.



