

UBEZPIECZENIA SPOŁECZNE

Teoria i praktyka

NR 4/2022 (155)

ISSN 1731-0725

Selected aspects of migration and various forms of social security for Ukrainian citizens after Russia's aggression against Ukraine

- the spatial distribution of Ukrainian refugees
 - the short-term consequences of the migration wave on the Polish labour market
 - the role of Poland as a transit country
 - the main lines of action taken by Polish and European public institutions supporting refugees from Ukraine
 - Ukrainian public administration under a state of war
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Dear Readers,

we present you with the latest issue of the quarterly “Ubezpieczenia Społeczne. Teoria i praktyka” devoted to selected aspects of migration and various forms of social security for Ukrainian citizens following Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

A year ago, Russian troops invaded Ukraine. The war continues, causing huge losses to Ukraine and its people. The most serious, tragic result of this attack is the enormity in human losses: thousands of dead, seriously injured, an increase in the number of people with irreversible disabilities. The country and its economy are being systematically destroyed; its infrastructure, industry, and agriculture.

The basic need for this brutally attacked population has become the protection and saving of life and health. This has been achieved – to a large extent – by moving the populace from areas threatened by attack, both within the Ukrainian state itself and beyond its borders. There has also been a need to provide extensive material, social and medical support to the affected citizens of Ukraine. In view of such a situation, it was necessary to adapt existing social protection systems to the new needs, as well as to introduce new legal solutions, also outside the narrowly understood social subject, as well as new benefits. Actions aimed at achieving this goal were taken by the citizens of Ukraine themselves and the authorities of Ukraine and other mainly European countries. Among these countries, Poland has played the greatest role both in terms of the number of refugees received and the social support provided, as well as – which is no less important – the opening up of its domestic labour market to the incomers.

These issues – internal and external migration as well as the support provided and declared for citizens of the attacked country – are the subject of this issue of “Ubezpieczenia Społeczne. Teoria i praktyka”.

The topic’s significance is indisputable, mainly due to the physical threat to a multi-million nation. It is therefore important to show the scale of the problem, for example, by specifying the number and nature of migration – possibly the most numerous since World War II. It is important who leaves Ukraine and for how long. These characteristics are of great importance both for the Ukrainian state and for the host countries (societies). In this context, it is important whether the refugees want to settle in the host country for a longer period of time (possibly permanently), or whether they are only looking for temporary shelter, whether they plan to leave Ukraine or whether they will only be leaving Ukraine for a certain period of time.

This is important for the well-being of the newcomers, the prospects of their possible integration in a new place, and – what is very important – the social perception in the host country given conditions of limited domestic resources. The host countries must respond adequately to emerging challenges. It is necessary to provide appropriate legal provisions and material resources for the purposes of assistance and to create such conditions for refugees so that they can meet their own and their families’ needs in the best possible way.

It is also important that the citizens of the host country – such as Poland – are properly informed about the situation and the social policy applied. For example, it is of great importance to show that refugees from Ukraine in Poland work for their livelihood and often represent a high level of education and professional competence, so they can have a very positive impact not only on their well-being, but also on the gaps existing within the Polish labour market.

From the perspective of the host country, it is important whether migrants will supply the labour market, which sectors, and whether they will complement or compete with the indigenous workforce. Undoubtedly, the situation, economically and in terms of image, is advantageous when emigrants do not stay only on various types of benefits, but fully engage in the economic life of the country. Of course, one cannot lose sight of the issue of labour shortages in Ukraine itself as a result of war emigration. This important matter, however, is not the focus of this issue.

The aim of the work herein presented is therefore a preliminary diagnosis of migration phenomena – on the one hand, the assessment of emigration to Poland as the country most involved in this process, also in the earlier period, and on the other hand, showing the type and scope of social assistance provided to migrants. An important specific goal is to present selected aspects of the employment of Ukrainian citizens, important both for them and for the situation of the Polish labour market, as well as the social perception of large numbers of refugees residing in Poland.

The issue contains the following texts: *Ukrainian migrants in Poland during the war: the state of knowledge and key challenges* by Paweł Kaczmarczyk, *Refugees from Ukraine on the Polish labour market* by Jan Gromadzki and Piotr Lewandowski, *The functioning of the Ukrainian public administration in a state of war* by Hlib Filipchuk, *Polish public institutions activity for refugees from Ukraine, with special focus on the tasks carried out by ZUS* by Gertruda Uścińska, *Immigrants, residents, employees. Refugees from Ukraine in local migration policy in Poland* by Kamil Matuszczyk, *Retirement and disability pension protection for refugees from Ukraine on the basis of the Polish-Ukrainian agreement on social security in the event of an armed conflict in Ukraine* by Andrzej Szybkie, *Actions for Ukraine in the European Union* by Marzena Prus-Nowacka and Artur Czarkowski.

The basic conclusions drawn from the above papers are as follows:

- the scale of emigration from Ukraine is the largest of all migration processes in the post-WWII period;
- the largest number of refugees arrived in Poland;
- the demographic structure of current migrants is different than in previous years;
- despite the fact that the reason for emigrating from Ukraine recently was protection from war, as opposed to earlier forms of economic migration, refugees have indeed entered the Polish labour market;
- Polish citizens and the Polish state and non-governmental organizations have provided massive support to war refugees;
- a special act was introduced in Poland at an unprecedented pace, which enabled war refugees from Ukraine to come to our country, take up legal employment, and be

included within the same system of benefits Polish citizens are; including medical and educational services. The principles of coordination of social security benefits, established before the war, still apply;

- initiatives to help Ukrainian citizens have also been undertaken by other states and international organizations – including the European Union;
- the issue of migration also concerns internal processes in Ukraine;
- social systems in Ukraine itself have been adapted to the war situation.

As noted in the first sentence of this introduction, Russian aggression in Ukraine continues.

The community of researchers represented in this issue will continue to follow the development of the situation both in terms of the scale and nature of migration, as well as the social initiatives undertaken to support Ukrainian citizens and their homeland.

The issue opens with an article by Professor P. Kaczmarczyk, who shows the scale of migration of Ukrainians to Poland, the demographic and social structure of immigrants and the directions of their movement, as well as their various types. Migration processes after the war that started on February 24, 2022 are shown against the background of earlier migrations. The previous influx of Ukrainian citizens to Poland was significant and was mainly economic in nature – Ukrainian citizens came to work or study. P. Kaczmarczyk puts forward the thesis that mass arrivals to Poland since the beginning of the war have been motivated by the knowledge of our country and contacts established earlier. Of course, the geographical proximity of Poland, cultural similarity, including language, have also been important for such a choice. An important characteristic of migrants from Ukraine is their high level of social capital and motivation for employment.

This new migration has been compared with earlier population movements. Apart from the fact that, at least initially, several million people arrived in Poland in a short period of time, something unprecedented before, their demographic structure was different – the majority were young women with children, as well as the elderly.

An important aspect of Ukrainian citizens' migration to Poland, one already mentioned, is their employment. Most refugees want to work. P. Kaczmarczyk, J. Gromadzki and P. Lewandowski write about the regions and sectors in which they are employed. Researchers also point out that people from Ukraine generally have a high level of education and professional preparation, but often work below their competences.

An important result of J. Gromadzki's and P. Lewandowski's research is the finding that the employment of Ukrainians in Poland does not constitute competition leading to lower salaries being paid to Poles. This fact is not only to show that refugees work professionally, but it is also important for the image.

The dramatic situation of the victims of Russia's attack has evoked the need for large-scale material, housing and social support. Therefore, new benefits have been introduced in Ukraine. The topics of internal migration in Ukraine and the benefits granted to citizens are addressed in H. Filipchuk's text. It shows that people moved within their

country to avoid the direct effects of warfare. However, the situation was and is changeable; areas considered relatively safe are also subject to attacks and often people have to further move on. The author also proves that the digitization introduced earlier in Ukraine turned out to be extremely useful in dramatic wartime conditions, enabling both the payment of benefits from the pre-war period and the new ones, granted as support for war victims, as well as for enterprises affected by the war.

As mentioned earlier, Poland, to which the largest number of war refugees from Ukraine headed, prepared a broad support package that went beyond social assistance traditionally understood. The massive refugee influx required special legal solutions and the coordination of the activities of all public institutions. G. Uścińska writes about it. In the first stage of the migration, Polish citizens provided privately great help to the refugees. Very quickly, the state authorities took up this initiative. Citizens of Ukraine were granted a PESEL ID, which allowed them to take up employment, and to access benefits and social services on an equal footing with Polish citizens. In particular, access to education and health services provided by the Polish state is of great importance for those with children.

Non-governmental organizations have also become involved in helping refugees – K. Matuszczyk's text is devoted to this form of help in large cities. The author analyzes the actions taken in three agglomerations – Warsaw, Cracow and Gdansk, in response to large-scale migration to these cities. Their policy included both providing temporary assistance to refugees as well as long-term activities for the local migration policy and the integration of the newly arrived residents.

The Polish-Ukrainian agreement on the coordination of social security systems, which has been in force for many years, continues to be implemented and currently also provides retirement and disability pension protection to war refugees from Ukraine. This issue is presented by A. Szybkie. The author emphasizes the excellent cooperation with the social security institution in Ukraine. It also points out that challenges to social security issues may increase and one should be prepared for changes in this area.

M. Prus-Nowacka and A. Czarkowski, in turn, have raised the topic of initiatives for Ukraine undertaken by the European Union. The authors point out that the EU had earlier also provided assistance to Ukraine, before the outbreak of the war, but has now intensified these activities by introducing a number of legal acts and aid instruments.

The articles collected in the issue by no means exhaust the issue of migration and the need to support Ukrainian citizens caused by the war. Unfortunately, the war continues and its terrible effects are still being felt by adults and children. However, it can be said that in these terrible conditions, some of the initiatives were helpful and contributed at least to a small extent in mitigating the tragic effects of Russian aggression. Most of the systemic changes in the law that were swiftly implemented in response to the invasion have worked. Nevertheless, continued attacks by the Russian Federation on critical infrastructure throughout Ukraine may trigger further internal and external migration movements. In this regard, in the opinion of P. Kaczmarczyk, expected should be

a further increase in migration to Poland and a demographic structure different than before the war; with a greater participation of older people and children.

Another task for the governments of Ukraine and European countries will be to provide further social support and institutional assistance to displaced persons.

At the same time, preparations are underway for future undertakings to rebuild the devastated country. As outlined in this volume, work is underway on a ten-year recovery plan, which presents the additional challenges of raising the huge financial resources needed for this purpose, as well as the need to change the way public funds are themselves managed in Ukraine.

We consider this issue to be a preliminary stage of research in this field, research that will undoubtedly continue.

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Hlib Filipchuk*

Ukrainian migrants in Poland during the war: the state of the art and key challenges

Authors contribution:

A – Research project
B – Data collection
C – Statistical analysis
D – Data interpretation
E – Manuscript preparation
F – Literature analysis
G – Fundraising

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Introduction: The war unleashed by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 has triggered one of the greatest mobility processes in modern European history. From the perspective of the few months elapsing since the war's outbreak, the first assessments of the scale of this phenomenon can be made (both in terms of the volume of the outflow and the structure of those fleeing the war and who have reached various European and non-European countries), but also addressed can be its short- and long-term consequences.

Objective: To provide an introduction to the issue of recent refugees from Ukraine and to indicate the role Poland plays as a transit country in this process, a receiving country and, in the future, perhaps also a country where refugees from Ukraine will find long-term residence.

Materials and methods: The paper has been prepared using the method of critical review of literature on migration in Europe and an analysis of data from the Statistics Poland, Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Results: Irrespective of wartime developments, it is to be expected that the future scale of immigration to Poland will be larger compared to that before the war. For the first time in Poland's modern history, immigrants residing in our country include elderly people and children. The migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland after the outbreak of the war is characterised by the following: people fleeing Ukraine have come from the entire territory of the country, have arrived mainly in the largest Polish cities – as a result, the population of these cities has dramatically increased, at least in the short term. About 60% of the refugees have arrived in Poland with their children, and about 80% of them have left family members in Ukraine. About 70% of Ukrainians plan to stay in Poland in the near future, and more than 80% of them work in Poland.

Key words: foreigners, migration, population, refugees, war in Ukraine

Ukraińscy migranci w Polsce w czasie wojny: stan wiedzy i kluczowe wyzwania

Wstęp: Wojna rozpoczęta przez Federację Rosyjską 24 lutego 2022 r. zainicjowała jeden z największych procesów mobilności we współczesnej historii Europy. Z perspektywy kilku miesięcy, które upłynęły od wybuchu wojny, można pokusić się o pierwsze oceny skali tego zjawiska (zarówno na poziomie skali odpływu z Ukrainy, jak i struktury osób, które uciekają przed wojną i docierają do wybranych krajów europejskich i pozaeuropejskich), ale także odnieść się do jego krótkookresowych i długookresowych skutków.

Cel: Wprowadzenie do problematyki najnowszego uchodźstwa z Ukrainy i wskazanie, jaką rolę w tym procesie odgrywa Polska jako kraj tranzytowy, kraj recepcji, a w przyszłości być może także kraj, w którym uchodźcy z Ukrainy znajdą długo-okresowe miejsce zamieszkania.

Materiały i metody: Przy przygotowaniu artykułu wykorzystano metodę krytyki piśmiennictwa dotyczącego migracji w Europie oraz analizę danych Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego, Eurostatu oraz Organizacji Współpracy Gospodarczej i Rozwoju (OECD).

Wyniki: Niezależnie od rozwoju sytuacji wojennej należy liczyć się z faktem, że przyszła skala imigracji w Polsce będzie wyższa w porównaniu z tą obserwowaną przed wojną. Po raz pierwszy w nowożytnej historii Polski wśród imigrantów przebywających w naszym kraju są osoby starsze i dzieci. Migracja obywateli Ukrainy do Polski po wybuchu wojny posiada następujące cechy: osoby uciekające z Ukrainy pochodzą z całego terytorium państwa, udawały się głównie do największych polskich miast – w konsekwencji, przynajmniej w krótkim okresie, liczba ich mieszkańców drastycznie wzrosła. Około 60 proc. uchodźców dotarło do Polski z dziećmi, a około 80 proc. z nich zostawiło w Ukrainie członków rodziny. Około 70 proc. osób planuje pozostanie w Polsce w najbliższym czasie, a ponad 80 proc. obywateli Ukrainy pracuje w Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: cudzoziemcy, migracja, populacja, uchodźcy, wojna w Ukrainie

Submitted: 27.11.2022

Accepted: 8.2.2023

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2359

Introduction

The war launched by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 has triggered one of the greatest mobility processes in modern European history. In fact, the data currently available indicate that this phenomenon is of similar dimensions to the population movements just after the end of the Second World War. It appears in practice – even if we focus only on the experience of Poland, that the size of this latest migration flow exceeds the scale of the processes that have been referred to as the European “refugee crisis” or “migration crisis” of 2014–2016. Today, from the perspective of the few months since the outbreak of the war, it seems already possible to make initial assessments as to the phenomenon’s scale (both in terms of the scale of the outflow from Ukraine and the structure of people who have fled the war and have reach certain European and non-European countries), but also to address its short- and long-term consequences.

In this context, the purpose of this short paper is to provide an introduction to the issue of refugees recently arrived from Ukraine and to indicate the role that Poland plays in this process as a transit country, a receiving country and, in the future, perhaps also a country where refugees from Ukraine will take up long-term residence. My thesis is that the processes currently observed are not only the result of Poland’s geographical location and it being a country bordering Ukraine, but also – or perhaps most importantly – of the migratory experiences of both countries. For many years they have been associated with more or less mass migration, or rather mobility, because here we need to talk of circular or short-term mobility.

Therefore, I have devoted the first part to outlining a concise context of the events that Poland and Poles have faced since 24 February 2022. I will try to show the way in which immigration to Poland has become massive, the role played in this process by immigration from Ukraine and, in particular, the reason why this particular migration phenomenon would be relevant to the current influx into our country. In the second part, I will focus on a key issue, i.e. an analytical look at what we know and what we do not know about the recent inflow from Ukraine to Poland. I will use the data available from both official sources, i.e. Border Guard (Straż Graniczna) data and register data, but in particular the increasingly frequent survey data, which make it possible to assess not only the scale of the phenomenon itself, but also the characteristics of the Ukrainian population in Poland. The latter aspect seems of crucial importance given the context of the final part of this paper, which refers to the needs and challenges related to the presence of Ukrainians in Poland. This final (concluding) part will also aim to identify the main risk areas and key challenges that Poland will face in the coming months, and probably years, and which would require a response at the level of both public policies and the academic community.

Migration to Poland before 2022: scale, structure, significance

The concept of the so-called migration transition assumes that, at a certain point, highly developed countries change their migration status, i.e. they change from emigration countries ones in which the process of migratory inflow from abroad will prevail.¹ This process can be explained in very different ways. Initial explanations referred directly to demographic factors and emphasised that both emigration processes and immigration issues were supposed to be directly related to population dynamics. This would mean that emigration phenomena are mainly a consequence of overpopulation and the pressures associated with high population dynamics, while immigration issues were supposed to be a response to emerging population problems, resulting from low fertility rates and the population ageing process.² However, the discussion on migration transition tended to focus on other elements.³ Attention was drawn to the perhaps fundamental importance of the economic factor, in particular the way labour markets function in highly developed countries.⁴ The role of migration policies in the process of either accelerating or inhibiting foreigners' inflow to a given country was also being emphasised.⁵

Poland is a rather specific country in this context, one already analysed many times in migration literature. Researchers have documented the fact that, in the case of Poland, it would be very difficult to explicitly link migration issues with the demographic situation. Attention was drawn to the role of the period of the Polish People's Republic (Polska Republika Ludowa), which largely blocked natural migration phenomena and, as a result, the postulated migration transition could have been significantly delayed. The fundamental role of the post-2004 period was also mentioned, when Poland became one of the most important migrant-sending countries in contemporary Europe.⁶

All this is, however, related to the fact that until about 10 years ago Poland would hardly have been considered a country of immigration, as all available data rather indicated that it was quite a typical emigration country, with a significant predominance of

1 M. Okólski, *Transition from emigration to immigration. Is it the destiny of modern European countries?* [in:] *European Immigrations. Trends, Structures and Policy Implications*, ed. M. Okólski, Amsterdam 2012, and also whole, *European Immigrations: Trends, Structures and Policy Implications*, ed. M. Okólski, Amsterdam 2012.

2 J.C. Chesnais, *The Demographic Transition Theory* [in:] *Population and Development: Challenges and Opportunities, Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems*, ed. A. Vishnevsky, Oxford 2009, and also F. Dassetto, *Pour une théorie des cycles migratoires* [in:] *Immigration et nouveaux pluralismes: une confrontation de sociétés*, eds. A. Bastenier, F. Dassetto, Brussels 1990.

3 J. Arango, *Early starters and latecomers. Comparing countries of immigration and immigration regimes in Europe* [in:] *European Immigrations. Trends, Structures and Policy Implications*, ed. M. Okólski, Amsterdam 2012.

4 H. Fassmann, E. Musil et al., *Longer-Term Demographic Dynamics in South-East Europe: Convergent, Divergent and Delayed Development Paths*, "Central and Eastern European Migration Review" 2014, Vol. 3.

5 *European Immigrations:...*, op. cit.

6 A. Fihel, M. Okólski, *Population decline in the post-communist countries of the European Union*, "Population and Societies" 2016, Vol. 567.

emigrants over immigrants. Suffice it to say that according to data from the Statistics Poland (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS), about 2.5 million permanent residents of Poland stayed outside the country (this is an estimate), while data from the 2011 census showed that some 100,000 foreigners may have been living in Poland. Until about 7 years ago, in 2015, the Eurostat data showed that Poland was one of the last countries in the European Union (EU) in terms of the percentage of immigrants within the total population.⁷

In addition, which here should be emphasised, the inflow to Poland had several important and quite specific features, in particular when compared to Western Europe.⁸ Firstly, as indicated above, distinctive in general was the very low mobility. Secondly, immigrants came to Poland from only a few countries, mainly post-Soviet ones, including Ukraine, which was clearly the most important emigration country. Thirdly, a clear concentration of these people was observed in only a few large agglomerations: Warsaw and the Mazovian Voivodeship were evident magnets for foreign citizens. And fourthly – and this is a feature that has only recently changed – the most important role in the processes of immigration to Poland was played by temporary or circular migration, often not included in statistical records and as such not even treated as migration *per se*, given the definitions currently used in the European Union. This means that both in terms of the scale and structure of mobility, Poland was quite an unusual case when compared to other EU countries, and not only those from the western part of the continent.

Interestingly, this picture has not changed after 2007, when legal provisions allowing foreign citizens to take up employment without the typically required work permit were introduced into the Polish legal system. The simplified procedure – because this is the one in question here – was implemented into Polish law mainly to fill short-term staff shortages in selected sectors of the Polish economy.⁹ For the first few years following introduction, it was used to a relatively limited extent, although the scale of the inflow was still significantly higher than that observed in the earlier transformation stage.¹⁰ The situation changed drastically after 2014, i.e. after the outbreak of the first war in Ukraine. It happened that the citizens of Ukraine, including those who had left regions directly affected by warfare, instead of employing the time-consuming and not easy refugee procedure, chose another path to legalise their stay and work in Poland, i.e. economic migration. This is a very interesting circumstance, and I will return to it later in this paper when discussing the legislative

7 A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk, *A known but uncertain path: The role of foreign labour in Polish agriculture*, "Journal of Rural Studies" 2018, Vol. 64.

8 A. Górny, *Transformacja nieoczywista: Polska jako kraj imigracji*, Warszawa 2010, and also *eadem*, *All circular but different: Variation in patterns of Ukraine-to-Poland migration*, "Population, Space and Place" 2017, Vol. 23(8); doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2074>.

9 A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk et al., *Imigranci w Polsce w kontekście uproszczonej procedury zatrudniania cudzoziemców*, Warszawa 2018.

10 Ibid.

solutions employed after 24 February 2022. The changes that took place were very rapid and, for many, extremely surprising. Data on the first residence permits issued on the territory of the European Union were the first sign. They indicated that very quickly, as early as 2016–2017, Poland had become the European leader in terms of the inflow of new immigrants. These data have been also very quickly confirmed in terms of the immigrant stock. Experimental estimates by the Statistics Poland showed that the immigrant stock at the end of 2018 could have been about 850,000, and this number is undoubtedly incomparable to that registered by the 2011 census.¹¹ It is worth noting that, for obvious reasons, the scale of the inflow was the result of events in Ukraine, not only the war itself, but also a crisis of a political, social and economic nature. However, it cannot be ignored that such a massive inflow would not have been possible without the influence of the demand factor. As pointed out, *inter alia*, by Agata Górny and Paweł Kaczmarczyk,¹² the Polish economy was in a phase of vigorous growth, and at the same time the first symptoms of a demographic crisis had appeared on the Polish labour market, with decline in the cohorts entering the labour market as its direct manifestation.¹³ At this specific moment, the simplified procedure that had been introduced several years earlier proved to be a particularly valuable legislative solution, which allowed for hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian immigrants to enter the Polish labour market in a very short time. The scale of this phenomenon was, anyway, also changing after the aforementioned 2018. The data used by the Statistics Poland, which related to the period immediately before the outbreak of the pandemic, indicated that up to 2.2 million foreigners may have been staying in Poland.¹⁴ Moreover, the scale of this phenomenon did not change substantially during the pandemic. According to various estimates, the immigrant stock in Poland at that time may have decreased by 5–7% – which is a scale of change incomparably smaller than that observed in the countries of the European Union or of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which registered a drastic decrease in the scale of immigration.¹⁵ The structurally important role of these people in the Polish labour market was observed in 2021, when immigration returned to its pre-pandemic trends, as indicated by data on all possible titles related to labour market participation, such as work permits, declarations of intent to

11 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Cudzoziemcy na krajowym rynku pracy w ujęciu regionalnym*, Warszawa 2018.

12 A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk, *A known but uncertain path: The role of foreign labour in Polish agriculture*, "Journal of Rural Studies" 2018, Vol. 64, and also *idem*, *Temporary workers and migration transition: on a changing role of the agricultural sector in international migration to Poland* [in:] *International Labour Migration to Europe's Rural Regions*, 2020.

13 P. Strzelecki, J. Growiec, R. Wyszniński, *The Contribution of Immigration from Ukraine to Economic Growth in Poland*, NBP Working Paper No. 322, Warszawa 2020.

14 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Populacja cudzoziemców w Polsce w czasie COVID-19*, 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl/statystyki-eksperymentalne/kapital-ludzki/populacja-cudzoziemcow-w-polsce-w-czasie-covid-19,12,1.html> (7.6.2020).

15 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *International Migration Outlook 2022*, Paris 2022.

employ a foreigner or seasonal work permits, as well as the record number of foreigners who were registered in the social insurance system in Poland. Throughout this period, people coming from Ukraine played the most important role in immigration to Poland, so it is worth now devoting a little more attention to them.

As I have already mentioned, before the outbreak of the war, citizens of Ukraine constituted by far the largest group among all immigrants in Poland. According to data from the Statistics Poland, this group can be estimated at about 1.35 million people.¹⁶ In strictly structural terms, this group was dominated by men (ca 60%) and primarily by economically active persons, who may have accounted for up to 95% of the total stock. Importantly, the dominant role of migrants from Ukraine was marked in almost all migration channels, especially, of course, those of labour migration. In fact, data for 2018–2021 show that these migrants were the recipients of 88% of declarations of intent to employ a foreigner, 98% of seasonal work permits and more than 70% of work permits (own calculations based on data from the Ministry of Labour). Not without reason, most analytical studies on this phase of immigration to Poland have often focused exclusively on persons from Ukraine, as those with the greatest impact on economic processes in Poland.¹⁷ This process could not, of course, have been so dynamic without the significant support of two essential factors. The first being the migration networks, which have been created and strengthened since the beginning of the transformation, when the first migrants from Ukraine arrived in Poland not yet as workers, but as mobile traders.¹⁸ The second being an active and increasing involvement of temporary work agencies and various types of intermediaries, who have responded to the demand from Polish employers, but at the same time have enabled the arrival in Poland of those who did not have the social capital in the form of the above-mentioned networks. It was, *inter alia*, due to the activity of temporary work agencies that we have experienced, after 2014, a growing process of “levelling” immigration from Ukraine in terms of its spatial distribution. Immigration from Ukraine to Poland is still concentrated in larger agglomerations, but – as indicated, for example, by the data on the system of declarations – citizens of this country have become permanently present in most regions of Poland (if not in each of them), including those that had previously practically not experienced the phenomenon of immigration.¹⁹ In addition, immigration from Ukraine to Poland has retained its nature of being temporary and often even circular mobility. This was forced by the specificity of the adopted legal solutions, in particular the rules of the

16 M. Duszczyk, P. Kaczmarczyk, *The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges*, “Intereconomics” 2022, Vol. 3; Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Cudzoziemcy na krajowym...*, op. cit.; Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Populacja cudzoziemców w Polsce w czasie COVID-19*, 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl/statystyki-eksperymentalne/kapital-ludzki/populacja-cudzoziemcow-w-polsce-w-czasie-covid-19,12,1.html> (7.6.2020).

17 Cf. P. Strzelecki, J. Growiec, R. Wyszyński, op. cit.

18 A. Górny, *Transformacja...*, op. cit.

19 A. Górny, P. Śleszyński, *Exploring the spatial concentration of foreign employment in Poland under the simplified procedure*, “Geographia Polonica” 2019, Vol. 92(3); doi: 10.7163/10.7163/GPol.0152.

simplified procedure. However, it is worth emphasising that according to a number of studies the specific form of migration to Poland and participation in the Polish labour market was a derivative of certain strategies and life choices of Ukrainian families, which in this way have continuously subsidised the family budgets of persons permanently residing on the territory of Ukraine.²⁰ Finally, the nature of participation in the Polish labour market and temporary forms of migration contributed to a radical expansion in the transport networks between the two countries and, over time, to a marked reduction in their prices.

Here it is worth discussing the inflow of migrants from Ukraine to Poland at the outbreak of the war. For it must be realised that already at that time there may have been between 1.3 and even 1.5 million migrants from Ukraine in Poland.²¹ They were active participants in the Polish labour market, were present in almost all regions of Poland and, in addition, were still combining their careers in Poland with their lives in Ukraine, which meant that the two countries had a very strongly developed network of personal, transport, business, social and assorted ties.²²

War and migration: what happened after 24 February 2022

The war, launched by Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, resulted in the largest-scale flow (since the Second World War) of people seeking assistance outside their country. In the case of Poland, some 3.5 million persons crossed the border in the first two months alone, the vast majority of them being citizens of Ukraine. Estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2022) indicate how massive the process we are currently dealing with actually is. The information available indicates that almost 8 million people have been registered outside Ukraine and nearly 5 million people have been registered in EU countries in connection with the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive. This solution, introduced into the EU legal order in 2001, is of fundamental importance for the discussed process, as it provides a very large group of people with access to support and care without the need to go through the arduous refugee procedure, grants them a number of entitlements, including access to social benefits and to the labour market, but also provides them with freedom of mobility, including the possibility of return

20 A. Górny, *All circular but different: Variation in patterns of Ukraine-to-Poland migration*, "Population, Space and Place" 2017, Vol. 23(8); doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2074>, also M. Kindler, V. Ratcheva, M. Piechowska, *Social networks, social capital and migrant integration at local level. European literature review*, IRiS Working Paper Series, 2015.

21 M. Duszczuk, P. Kaczmarczyk, op. cit.

22 A. Górny, M. Kindler, *The temporary nature of Ukrainian migration: Definitions, determinants and consequences* [in:] *Ukrainian Migration to the European Union*, 2016.

to Ukraine and re-entry to the EU.²³ The data quoted above do not take into account people who had to leave their homes and seek protection on Ukrainian territory. In this case, the data are largely imperfect, but indicate that from 5 to even 7 million people were affected by this situation. As a consequence, the war has forced up to 15 million people to move, i.e. almost a third of the Ukrainian population. According to estimates provided by Ukrainian researchers, almost 60% of children were affected. About one million families have lost their homes or dwellings (data provided by researchers of the Kiev School of Economics²⁴).

Due to the nature of this paper, I will neither analyse the structure nor the geographical distribution of the phenomenon of refugees from Ukraine, focusing solely on the case of Poland. This is fully justified, as the UNHCR data quoted above clearly show that Poland is the country which has received the largest group of people fleeing the war and, in addition, is the place where the largest group of refugees from Ukraine still resides.²⁵

For the purpose of assessing the scale of the phenomenon in the first weeks of the war, the data made available by the Border Guard were of crucial importance. They presented a picture of mass exile from Ukraine, which was most intense during the first 8 weeks of the war. Since then, border crossings from Poland to Ukraine have become increasingly important, and this rather balanced picture has not changed despite the development of the war itself, even with the recent massive attacks on critical infrastructure. The aggregated data show that almost 8 million border crossings into Poland and about 6 million departures from our country have been recorded at the border section between Poland and Ukraine. These data were absolutely crucial in the first days and weeks of the war, but now their usefulness is diminishing. Firstly, they refer, indeed, not to people crossing the border, but to the act of crossing the border. Taking into account the circular movement between Poland and Ukraine, which has been resumed for some time, and in addition the new legal solutions that allow refugees from Ukraine to return freely to their country and then re-enter Poland, it is difficult to assess now what proportion of the above number are one-off border crossers and what part is made up of people who regularly move between the two countries. Secondly, the mentioned data raise some interpretation problems. From a layperson's perspective, these 8 million border crossings look like a mass process. However, in the pre-pandemic period, about 9–10 million border crossings from Ukrainian territory were recorded annually. This would imply that the war has clearly contributed to an increased mobility, but border traffic alone is not the key indicator here.

23 M. Jaroszewicz, J. Grzyski, M. Krępa, *The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis Demands New Solutions*, "Nature Human Behaviour" 2022, Vol. 6(6); doi: 10.1038/s41562-022-01361-3, and also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, op. cit.

24 Data provided by Ukrainian researchers during seminars and working meetings held since the outbreak of the war.

25 In the case of the European Union, the largest inflow of people from Ukraine, apart from Poland, was recorded by Germany, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom and southern European countries; for obvious reasons, I overlook in this case the Ukrainian citizens who were registered on the territory of the Russian Federation, as these data have limited reliability.

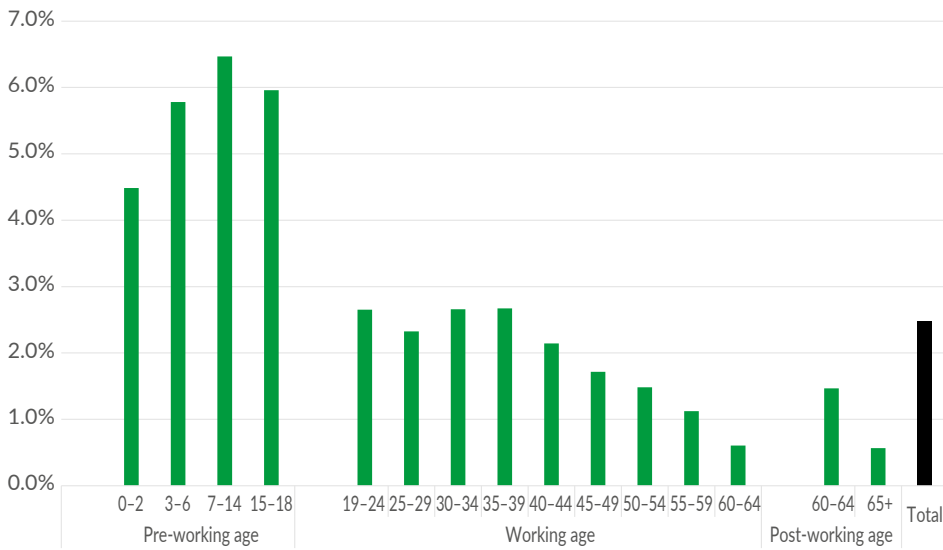
For these reasons various solutions have been sought since the beginning of the war to assess the scale of that phenomenon. Such tools were most required by those cities clearly confronted with the largest inflow wave. In the earlier part of this article I have already highlighted the reasons for this situation. Before the war, the largest part of the Ukrainian diaspora was located in Polish cities. It is therefore not surprising that they have now served as the most important reception centres. In addition, it was clear from the outset that it was in the cities that Ukrainians could expect the best access to public services and, in time, to the labour market. In the first months of the war, a series of reports were published by the Paweł Adamowicz Union of Polish Metropolises.²⁶ These studies were based on data extracted from the mobile phones of their users, which offers certain opportunities, but also involves major constraints. This affords an opportunity to obtain very quickly information on the stock of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland. It is important to note that this information applies not only to refugees, but also to Ukrainians who were in Poland before 24 February 2022. On the other hand, this solution involves certain problems, such as the high cost of the measurement, and the fact that this information comes from a specific day – the data that I will present in a moment show how significant this can be. In addition, the mode of data acquisition by the research companies is not obvious, in particular it is not clear whether the users themselves are aware that their data may be used. According to the data published by the Union of Polish Metropolises, the stock of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland was about 3.2 million in March 2022, increasing to 3.85 million in April and falling to nearly 3.4 million in May 2022. These values indicate the massive scale of the process, but they also highlight something else: the largest Polish cities have become the main destination for people fleeing Ukraine, and as a result, their population has risen dramatically, at least in the short term. I will come back to this issue later.

A significant problem with the discussed data is that they provide in principle only basic information about the surveyed population. They enable an overall assessment of the scale of the phenomenon, as well as the scale of the challenges posed, but they do not allow, for example, the design of public policies relating to refugees from Ukraine. Therefore, the introduction of compulsory PESEL (Personal Identification Number) registration for refugees from Ukraine who seek access to public services in Poland has become a kind of breakthrough. These data, made available by public services in our country, allow some important conclusions to be drawn about the process itself, as well as its structure. About 1.5 million people were registered in the system over the entire registration period, and this figure places Poland in first place among European Union countries providing support. However, this number is not constant. In recent weeks, the PESEL database has been linked to the Border Guard database, which makes it possible to delete from the PESEL database the records of Ukrainian citizens spending

26 M. Wojdat, P. Cywiński, *Miejska gościnność: wielki wzrost, wyzwania i szanse. Raport o uchodźcach z Ukrainy w największych polskich miastach*, Warszawa 2022.

more than 30 days outside Poland. As a result, there were still about 950,000 Ukrainian citizens in the PESEL register at the time of writing, which in turn would imply quite a massive process of return to this war-torn country. This conclusion may not be, however, fully justified, as it is clear that people coming to Poland again will easily activate their PESEL numbers and thus add to the stock of refugees from Ukraine. Both further attacks by Russia and a deterioration in the weather can be expected in the coming weeks. It is worth monitoring whether all this will be reflected in this statistical information system.

Diagram 1. Refugees from Ukraine vs. population of Poland: share by age category (in %), as at the end of 2022*

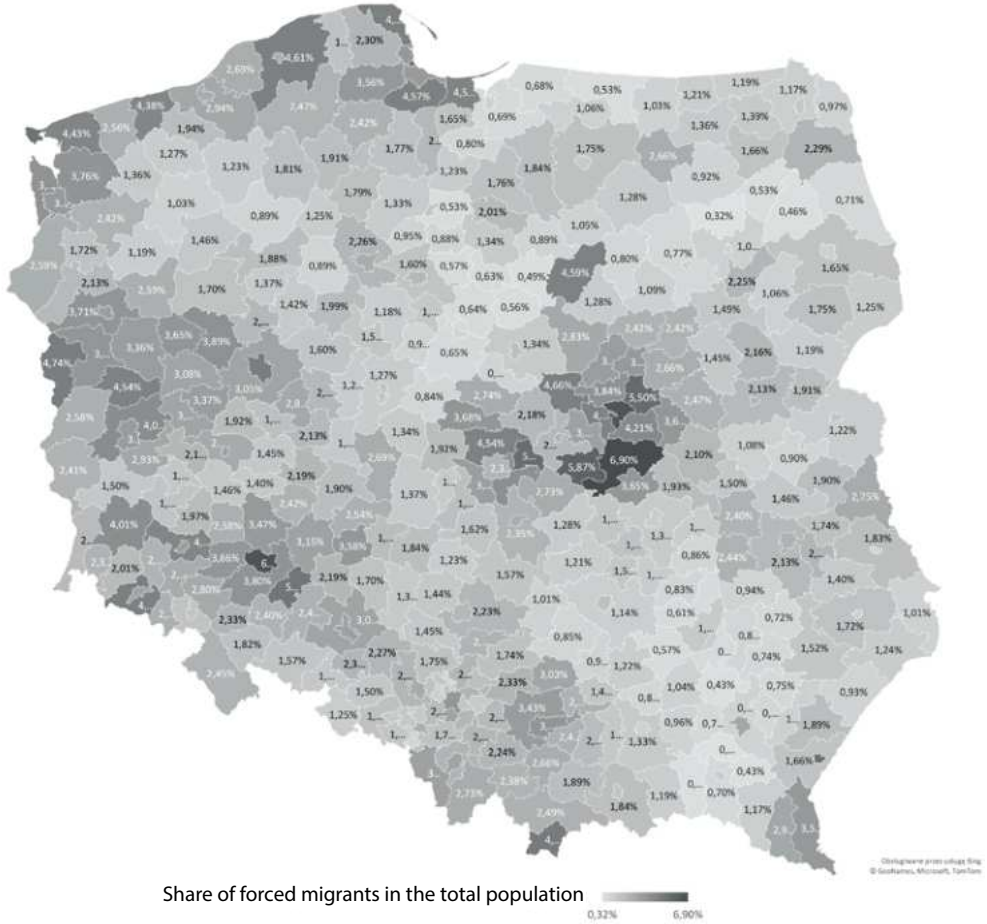


* Due to the different retirement age for men and women, the 60–64 age category appears twice.

Source: own compilation based on PESEL data

The data from the PESEL register have a fundamental advantage: they clearly show the different structure of the current inflow from Ukraine when compared to previous migration waves. The data show that children account for about 45% of those registered, while as regards people of working age, women represent a huge proportion – about 43% of the total population. For the first time in the modern history of Poland, we are also noting a relatively massive inflow of elderly people: they account for almost 6% of the total number of people recorded in the PESEL register. This information is extremely important, illustrating the scale of the challenges faced. For while the share of migrants of working age in the total population of Poland is about 3–4%, it exceeds 6% for school-age children, and – for the above-mentioned reasons – these percentages are higher for Polish cities, where most people fleeing the war arrive (cf. Diagram 1).

Diagram 2. Share of (registered) refugees in total population – district level, in % (as at the end of 2022)



Source: own compilation based on PESEL data (and Polish Development Fund Group (Grupa Polskiego Funduszu Rozwoju) resources)

In addition, the PESEL data unequivocally confirm the concentration of migrants from Ukraine on two levels (cf. Figure 2). Firstly, a clear concentration is observed in large urban centres, in particular in the broadly defined Warsaw agglomeration. Secondly, the border area is still an optimal choice for a large part of the Ukrainian population in Poland, which is associated with regular returns to their country of origin. It is worth noting that the most recent data, i.e. those relating to the beginning of 2023, show that this concentration in border regions is becoming less important. This may mean that refugees from Ukraine have adapted to the external conditions and are able to move between Poland and Ukraine irrespective of their place of residence, the latter being determined mainly by the labour market situation and access to public services (hence the key role of large cities).

I would like to devote the last part of this paper to a synthesis of the results of two studies that, so far, most fully show the characteristics of the Ukrainian refugee population in Poland and, at the same time, allow their emigration paths to be assessed.

The first of these is a survey carried out by the National Bank of Poland (Narodowy Bank Polski – NBP) in the late spring of 2022.²⁷ Thanks to the involvement in the survey of the bank's regional branch network, a very good quality and balanced sample was achieved. The survey shows that a huge proportion of refugees from Ukraine reached Poland directly, although this was not possible in the case of 13% of them – these people had to move through the territories of other countries, which – as we recall – was quite common, in particular during the first days of the war. People who stayed on the territory of Poland came basically from the entire area of Ukraine, however, with a clear over-representation of two types of regions: the first being regions in the direct conflict zone, and the second – areas which, although far from the front line, had well-developed migration networks for their inhabitants. This fact confirms the well-known thesis that most refugee movements are indeed mixed processes, involving people whose lives are in real danger, but also encouraging the mobility of those who are far from direct hostilities. In the case of Ukraine, this is all the more understandable as the war dynamics in the first weeks were very high and there was a strong feeling that hostilities could very easily spread over the entire territory of the country. For obvious reasons, the refugees' inflow to Poland is selective, mainly involving women and dependants. According to NBP data, about 60% of the respondents have arrived in Poland with children, and about 80% have left family members in Ukraine proper. In fact, persons who have arrived here without dependants are usually young, very young or elderly people, often perhaps with no family at all. This means that very strong links with the resources left in Ukraine are quite natural with the tendency to visit that country on a regular basis being entirely understandable.

I have earlier mentioned the role of the previous migration experience of Ukrainians in Poland. This factor is also of significant importance in the NBP survey. It appears that only (or perhaps as much as) 50% of the respondents had no migration experience in Poland, but neither did they have contacts that would make life here easier. In addition, about half of the surveyed population lacked linguistic skills and only 5% declared a good knowledge of Polish. These data are so important because they show that refugees are mainly concentrated in those regions that previously had little involvement in migration processes. This means that in their case the reception/integration challenges will be immeasurably more important. It has already been mentioned that the phenomenon of refugees from Ukraine is selective in nature – this is very clearly indicated by data on the educational level of people fleeing that country. The NBP data show that about 50% of them have a tertiary education, and other surveys (as discussed below) provide even higher percentages in this regard. At the same time, the data obtained under the NBP

27 I. Chmielewska-Kalińska, B. Dudek, P. Strzelecki, *Sytuacja życiowa i ekonomiczna uchodźców z Ukrainy w Polsce. Raport z badania ankietowego zrealizowanego przez OO NBP*, Warszawa 2022.

survey confirm the relatively high economic activity of refugees: 30% of them took up employment in Poland and a further 50% were looking for a job, only a few months after the outbreak of the war. At the same time, for a large part of them, Poland appeared to be a country where they intended to spend at several of the subsequent months. About 70% of respondents declared their intention to stay in Poland for the next year, and only 5% planned to leave for another country. The most obvious behaviour, however, was uncertainty, which was especially evident in the case of those who had not left their immediate family members in Ukraine.

The results of this survey were complemented, and the selected topics extended by the data obtained from a survey carried out in August/September 2022 by a research team from the University of Warsaw.²⁸ This time, most diverse recruitment methods were employed, allowing one to acquire information on nearly 8 thousand people. The definition of the surveyed population is of key importance for further considerations. It was assumed that the subject of the survey should be adult Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland. Such a definition was based on the belief that, irrespective of whether they have arrived in Poland after 24 February 2022 or had already been in Poland before, we are talking about a group of people who have been obviously affected by the war, either directly or indirectly. As a consequence, about 35% of the surveyed sample were those residing in Poland at the outbreak of the war, and 65% – those who had arrived in Poland subsequently. At the same time, and this is extremely important, 19% of the total sample consisted of refugees with migration experience in Poland (these persons accounted for ca 30% of the refugee population). As the distinction between people with and without migration experience appears quite relevant for further considerations, let me present selected findings from the survey as follows.

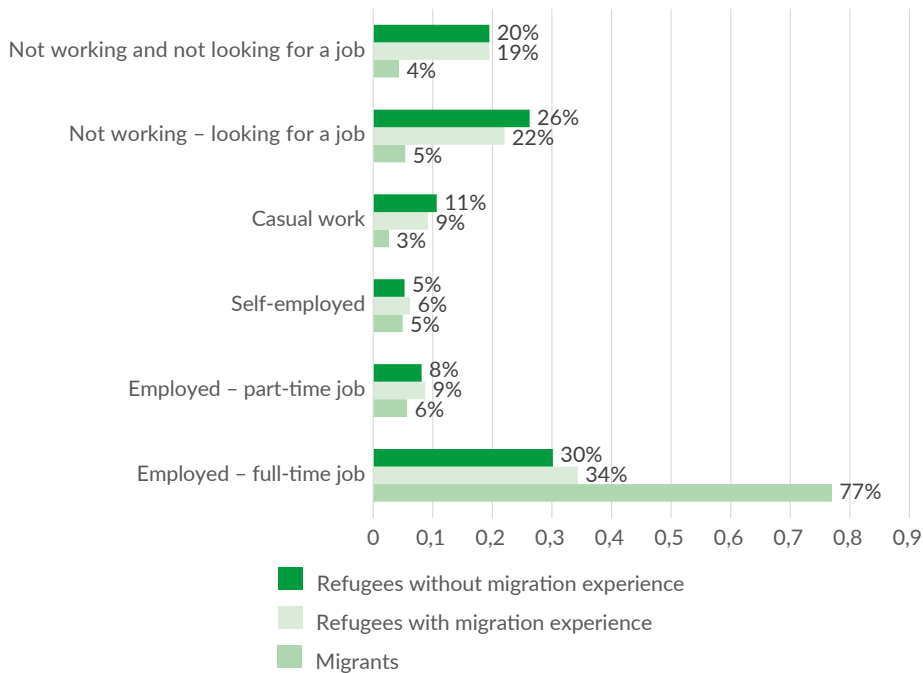
Both the age and gender structure in the analysed samples are similar to those we can obtain from register data. For obvious reasons, the sample does not include minors, and there is also a slight overrepresentation of women, which was typical of Polish surveys of Ukrainian immigrants in recent years.²⁹ The first important piece of information, however, was the place of residence of the respondents' partners at the time of the survey. It appeared that almost 90% of the men surveyed were in Poland with their female partners. However, the situation was quite different for women. In the case of women who had resided in Poland before 24 February, the percentage of partners staying here was similar to the rates for men, i.e. about 85% (indicating that the movement of men

28 The study "Między Ukrainą a Polską..." ("Between Ukraine and Poland...") has been initiated by Centrum Doskonałości w Naukach Społecznych (Centre of Excellence in the Social Sciences) and is implemented by Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami (Centre of Migration Research) at the University of Warsaw. The overarching aim is to create the first research panel of this scale, which would make it possible to "track" the Ukrainian population in time (within the framework of successive waves of the survey), but also in the spatial dimension (as we assume that the survey will cover people staying not only in Poland, but also returning to Ukraine or moving on to other countries); A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk, *Between Ukraine and Poland. Ukrainian migrants in Poland during the war*, "CMR Spotlight" 2023, Vol. 12(48).

29 A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk et al., *Imigranci z Ukrainy w Polsce. Raport z badania*, 2016, and also A. Górny, K. Kołodziejczyk et al., *Nowe obszary docelowe w migracji z Ukrainy do Polski: Przypadek Bydgoszczy i Wrocławia na tle innych miast*, Warszawa 2019.

across the border was possible, to some extent). For those who had already arrived after the outbreak of war, however, the percentage was only 35–40%. This clearly confirms the gender-selective nature of the most recent refugees from Ukraine, a fact that will undoubtedly affect migration plans and behaviours in the future. The University of Warsaw study confirmed that immigrants/refugees from Ukraine were characterised by very high levels of human capital. If for people who have been resident in Poland longer, the percentage of those with higher education was above 55%, while for the latest wave of refugees this exceeded 65%. It is, certainly, an open question to what extent this capital can be used on the Polish labour market, and what is its real value and “transferability”,³⁰ but there is no doubt that such high proportions of people with tertiary education create a marked potential for the future. The structure of education translates to some extent into the current characteristics of Ukrainian migrant participation in the Polish labour market. It is not surprising that a huge proportion of migrants, i.e. people who had been resident in Poland before the war, are not only economically active but also work (cf. Diagram 3).

Diagram 3. Participation of immigrants and refugees from Ukraine in the Polish labour market, as a % of the total population for the given category



Source: own compilation based on the University of Warsaw survey (Centre of Excellence in Social Sciences and Centre of Migration Research)

³⁰ V. Baláž, A.M. Williams et al., *What Competences, Which Migrants? Tacit and Explicit Knowledge Acquired via Migration*, “Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies” 2019, Vol. 47(8).

The results of the survey showed that the share of respondents in full-time employment exceeded 80% and only 4% of them were not working and were not looking for a job. More surprising, but also extremely positive, are the results for the refugee population. For it appears that about 40–45% of them were in employment, mostly full-time. In addition, these percentages are slightly higher for those who had previous migration experience. Besides, about 5% of the respondents declared that they were running their own business and about 10% were taking up casual jobs. About 20% were not working and did not plan to take up employment, which means that those who were active but not working at the time of the survey accounted for about 20–25% of the total. As might be expected, some differences were noted between men and women, especially when it comes to the labour market inactivity and lack of employment, the percentages were higher for women. This is even harder to comprehend when we look at the data indicating why those surveyed were not looking for a job. It appears that childcare was a key factor for most of them (30–40%, depending on previous migration experience), but learning, health problems and age were other important reasons. Interestingly, childcare challenges were highlighted not only by people who had arrived in Poland after the outbreak of war, but also by the emigrants of previous waves. This suggests that the war has affected the behaviour and migration strategies of these people as well. The labour market situation is clearly connected with the respondents' source of income. The information obtained shows here a clear difference between migrants and refugees. In the case of migrants, income from work clearly dominated, although they have also declared the use of family support and social benefits. As regards refugees, income from work and state support in the form of social benefits were of equal value. However, the key issue is that almost a third of respondents have also pointed to savings and family support as a direct safeguard for their current functioning in Poland. About 25% of respondents have also mentioned NGO (non-governmental organization) support as an important factor in their functioning. The outlined picture is very interesting given the context of previous European refugee experiences. This is because it highlights a relatively harsh selection of persons who have arrived in Poland: suggested, for example, by the very high percentage of people who can draw on their own savings. Above all, however, the data draw attention to the exceptional activity of Ukrainians in Poland. Although they may take advantage of the public support available in Poland, they are also noticeably entering the Polish labour market. Already now, a few months after their arrival to Poland, it is income from work that is becoming their key means of subsistence.

It is also important how the noticeably high level of education, as previously reported, translates into the labour market situation. The collected data suggest an emerging duality of the Polish labour market in this respect. Data on employment sectors obviously differ for women and men. The most significant sectors for women are: manufacturing, catering, trade, but also sectors requiring higher qualifications: education, health care, IT and communications. For men, three key sectors dominate:

manufacturing, construction, as well as IT and communications (the latter employing more than 20% of the last wave of migrants). This phenomenon is even better described by data on the occupational structure (cf. Diagram 4).

Diagram 4. Occupations performed by immigrants and refugees from Ukraine, as a percentage share of the total in a given category



Source: own compilation based on the University of Warsaw survey (Centre of Excellence in Social Sciences and Centre of Migration Research)

Diagram 4 presents data showing a very clear concentration of employees in two groups of occupations. On the one hand, these are basically unskilled professions (about 35–40% of refugees), and on the other hand, specialist or managerial professions (about 20–25% together). This differentiation is even more pronounced for women, who, as it appears, manage to find jobs with relatively high requirements of competence. The data presented here are most provisional, being an important incentive to examine this issue very carefully in subsequent studies.

The last issue which I would like to focus on are the plans of migrants from Ukraine concerning their stay in Poland. Probably the key word to use in this context is “uncertainty”. The survey data show that a very large proportion of both Ukrainian migrants (30%) and refugees of the latest wave (over 40%) were not able to clearly declare their plans regarding their residence in Poland. This is one of the most typical results that appears in virtually all studies on migrants from Ukraine both in Poland and other European countries. The second element is to some extent a derivative of the trends already observed. For it appears that almost 60% of migrants from Ukraine considered staying longer or even settling in Poland. This would imply that the war has further reinforced the trends observed after 2018, manifested in the extension of residence in Poland and the gradual process of family reunification.³¹ The percentage of such plans is much lower for refugees from Ukraine, but also in this case, the share of those who plan to stay in Poland for a longer of time ranged from 25 to 30% and was higher for those with previous migration experience. From the perspective of Poland as a country that has received the largest group of refugees from Ukraine, the declarations of people whose plans are either undefined or who intend to return to Ukraine in the coming months also seem important. It appears that about 1/5 of them are people who plan to bind their future with Poland in one way or another, e.g. are considering temporary economic migration in the future. This appears rather important as a result, for it would indicate that certain integration measures make sense also with regard to those who will reside in Poland for a short or very short time.

In lieu of a summary: perspectives and challenges

The two surveys mentioned in the above section illustrate a most diverse group, often linked by the tragic experience of war, its associated trauma and overwhelming sense of uncertainty, which in many cases makes it even impossible for concrete steps related to any subsequent functioning as such to occur. This being fully understandable if one considers recent months, but equally the current situation, and in particular the fact that many who have arrived in Poland have left their immediate family in Ukraine. However, the situation seems to be much more serious and creates additional challenges at the level of public policies in Poland itself. It is not difficult to identify how the next stages of the war in Ukraine will generate additional levels of uncertainty.

Firstly, developments in military terms are far from clear. The last few weeks may be deemed a success for Ukraine, but it is equally very difficult to envisage if and how the war will end. Secondly, the scale of the country’s destruction is immense. Already after the first three months of the war, losses at the level of critical infrastructure were

31 A. Górny, P. Kaczmarczyk, *Temporary workers...*, op. cit.

estimated at around USD 100 billion, and could be as high as USD 4 billion a day. These are unimaginable figures, particularly considering the strategic changes of the Russian Federation, which in recent weeks has concentrated its attacks at precisely this level. It is estimated that around one million families have lost their homes, the losses at the level of infrastructure crucial to public services are still not known, e.g. the destruction of educational facilities. This means that as such any return may be very difficult or even impossible for many, even those who declare today a desire to return to Ukraine quickly. Thirdly, the socio-economic aspect may be crucial in the longer term. Even today, international institutions such as the World Bank predict an unprecedented economic crisis in the near future. The GDP of Ukraine is estimated to have fallen by about 35% this year, with moderately positive prospects for the near future.³² It is estimated that poverty could increase from 5% to as much as 25%, and the decline in real income could be as much as 40%.³³ It will therefore be a huge challenge not only to rebuild, but also to live in such a devastated country. The process of rebuilding Ukraine, which is very likely to take place with the support of the international community, will of course be crucial in the medium and long term. As early as this summer, a ten-year plan for the reconstruction of Ukraine was formulated with a value comparable to that of the Marshall Plan, but it is also clear that in addition to the opportunities this programme will create, it may also generate additional risks.³⁴ Foreign experts emphasise that it will not be possible to successfully rebuild the Ukrainian state without radical changes in the management of public funds and without eliminating the corruption that has been so far widespread. In the context of migration, this could mean additional dimensions of risk and additional levels of uncertainty, which could contribute to further waves of migration. Remarkably, such assumptions have been made since the first months of the war. Scenarios formulated in May this year by Maciej Duszczyk and Paweł Kaczmarczyk³⁵ indicated that it was the scenario of an inefficient reconstruction of Ukraine that could generate the largest scale of migration in the future.

The aforementioned scenarios, irrespective of the methodological controversies they may raise, address aspects relevant to public discussion in Poland. This is because they indicate that, irrespective of the development of the situation, we should expect that the future scale of immigration to Poland will be higher compared to that before the war. Moreover, its structure will be significantly different. For the first time in Poland's modern history, immigrants residing in our country include elderly people and children, and this sets completely new areas of challenges.³⁶ These challenges have been, and are, the subject of numerous academic publications, as well as studies by think tanks, non-governmental organisations, local government institutions at various levels, which

32 World Bank, *Europe and Central Asia Economic Update, Fall 2022: Social Protection for Recovery*, Washington, D.C. 2022.

33 Ibid.

34 Cf. including T. Bogdan, *Evaluation of Ukraine's National Recovery Draft Plan*, Vienna 2022.

35 M. Duszczyk, P. Kaczmarczyk, op. cit.

36 Ibid.

aim to outline at least the general developments in the future and to answer the question as to what we will face first.³⁷ It is clear that reception practices still play a dominant role in this discourse. Therefore, a great deal of attention is paid to the issue of housing and to the way in which we can provide the basic necessities of life for people who have arrived to Poland from Ukraine. Given the housing situation in Poland, it is difficult to expect any easy or straightforward answers, all the more that they often involve further challenges.

Access to public services is certainly another issue raised. Since the first days of the war, there has been a discussion about the possibility of providing education for Ukrainian children, but also about developing a formula that would ensure access to education of a sufficiently high quality and, at the same time, would not close off the chances of contact with the educational system in Ukraine. However, the data quoted above show that in many cases the needs may be much more prosaic, e.g. they may be related to the need for childcare, which is the first and essential condition for Ukrainian women in Poland to become economically active. Possible improvements in access to medical care are still under discussion, although here, too, there have already been calls for specific measures.³⁸

In this context, the labour market is not the biggest problem. This is indicated by the results of the aforementioned studies, which are surprising as they document the relatively high level of economic activity amongst Ukrainians already a few months after their arrival in Poland. This is undoubtedly determined by cultural proximity, the previous migration experience of many Ukrainians, but also by the solutions implemented in Poland and, finally, by the needs of the Polish labour market, which is very eager to take advantage of the inflow of hundreds of thousands of additional workers. However, it would be a mistake, in my opinion, to assume that we are dealing here with a self-regulating mechanism. The situation of many people from Ukraine is, indeed, precarious and their language skills are in many cases limited, thus giving rise to a natural field for abuse on the part of employers or temporary work agencies (something which will require detailed analysis and control). It is also worth considering how effective we will be in making use of this human capital in an efficient way. This question is not trivial, as Poland's economy has clearly failed to cope with this very element for many years.³⁹ Finally, actions undertaken by Poland, but also by other European countries, should take into account the interests of Ukraine as a country of origin of immigrants. It is not surprising that the Ukrainian government seeks to keep its citizens in the country at all costs and encourages their return as soon as possible, especially those with unique competences. However, arguments from the catalogue of discussions on the so-called brain drain may prove counter-productive. From the perspective of both the receiving countries and Ukraine itself, it seems most promising to undertake measures that

37 Cf. including M. Bukowski, M. Duszczyk, *Gościnnie Polska 2022*, Warszawa 2022, and also M. Wojdat, P. Cywiński, *Miejska gościnność: wielki wzrost, wyzwania i szanse. Raport o uchodźcach z Ukrainy w największych polskich miastach*, Warszawa 2022.

38 Cf. especially M. Bukowski, M. Duszczyk, op. cit.

39 Cf. *inter alia* P. Strzelecki, J. Growiec, R. Wszyński, op. cit.

will be of a reception and pro-integration nature, but will support mobility. For example, it is worth supporting the economic activity of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, but it is also necessary to ensure that the skills they acquire can be used at home in the future. At the same time, the contacts and links that are being established now will be of invaluable importance in the process of rebuilding Ukraine, in which Poland can be expected to play a major role.

Finally, I would like to devote a few sentences to an issue that is relatively rarely discussed in the context of the recent immigration from Ukraine. It concerns attitudes towards foreigners. The surveys at our disposal do not allow the actual attitude of Poles towards foreigners and immigrants to be mapped.⁴¹ However, the situation during the war shows that Poles have become very actively involved in the process of helping and supporting Ukrainian citizens, and positive attitudes towards newcomers from across the eastern border clearly still prevail.⁴² Unfortunately, however, numerous experiences show that these attitudes can easily change, either through the narrative of public institutions or in connection with deliberate acts of disinformation and propaganda.⁴³ In this context, we should not forget one of the fundamental duties of public institutions, which should be that of communicating reliable information on socio-economic processes, including, of course, immigration, to the citizens of a given country.⁴⁴ The picture resulting from this communication should be one-sided, as migration itself is a highly complex phenomenon and far from having clear-cut, black-and-white divisions. While showing the potential risks associated with the presence of foreigners in our country, it is also worth highlighting the potential associated therewith, as well as the opportunities it entails. In this context, we should also not forget about the important role Ukrainians have played on the Polish labour market in recent years and their contribution to the Polish social security system in the past.

41 Z. Brunarska, P. Kaczmarczyk, A. Piekut, *Postawy wobec imigrantów w "starych" i "nowych" krajach migracyjnych. Czy historia migracji ma znaczenie?* [in:] *Polska–Europa. Wyniki Europejskiego Sondażu Społecznego 2002–2018/19*, eds. P. Sztabiński, D. Przybysz, F. Sztabiński, Warszawa 2020.

42 Ł. Baszczak, A. Kielczewska et al., *Pomoc polskiego społeczeństwa dla uchodźców z Ukrainy*, Warszawa 2022.

43 Cf. *inter alia* M. Bukowski, M. Duszczyk, op. cit.; Kaczmarczyk P., op. cit.

44 Ibid.

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Refugees from Ukraine on the Polish labour market

Authors contribution:

A – Research project
B – Data collection
C – Statistical analysis
D – Data interpretation
E – Manuscript preparation
F – Literature analysis
G – Fundraising

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Introduction: Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, triggered the largest forced migration in Europe since World War II. By April, net migration at the Polish–Ukrainian border reached 2.1 million, including 2 million Ukrainian citizens.

Objective: In this paper, we evaluate the integration and effects of the refugee inflow in the short term.

Materials and methods: In this paper, we study the spatial distribution of Ukrainian refugees, the determinants of their decision on where to settle, their professional situation after arriving in Poland, and finally, the short-term consequences of the migration wave on the Polish labour market. We focus on the period between February and April 2022, as the available administrative data we use in this study covers it.

Results: First, the Ukrainian refugees in Poland largely followed the pre-war locations of Ukrainian economic migrants. Better economic opportunities, hotel accommodations availability, and public administration funding are other factors associated with higher refugee inflows at the county level. Second, the employment of refugees is relatively high, especially considering challenges related to childcare and language barriers. However, skill mismatch is an issue, as most refugees are relatively well educated, but most work in elementary occupations. Third, our econometric results show that the refugee inflow did not affect the labour market outcomes of the Polish population and other migrants.

Key words: migration, Polish labour market, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian refugee

Uchodźcy z Ukrainy na polskim rynku pracy

Wstęp: Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę 24 lutego 2022 r. wywołała największą przymusową migrację w Europie od czasów II wojny światowej. Do kwietnia saldo migracji na granicy polsko-ukraińskiej sięgnęło 2,1 mln, w tym 2 mln to obywatele Ukrainy.

Cel: W niniejszym artykule badamy integrację i skutki napływu uchodźców w krótkim okresie.

Materiały i metody: W artykule badamy przestrzenne rozmieszczenie uchodźców ukraińskich, determinanty ich decyzji o miejscu osiedlenia się, ich sytuację zawodową po przybyciu do Polski, wreszcie krótkookresowe konsekwencje fali migracyjnej na polskim rynku pracy. Skupiamy się na okresie od lutego do kwietnia 2022 r., ponieważ obejmują go dostępne dane administracyjne, z których korzystamy.

Wyniki: Po pierwsze ukraińscy uchodźcy w Polsce w dużej mierze podążali za przedwojennymi miejscami pobytu ukraińskich migrantów zarobkowych. Lepsze warunki ekonomiczne, dostępność miejsc noclegowych w hotelach oraz finansowanie administracji publicznej to kolejne czynniki związane z większym napływem uchodźców na poziomie powiatu. Po drugie zatrudnienie uchodźców jest stosunkowo wysokie, zwłaszcza biorąc pod uwagę wyzwania związane z opieką nad dziećmi i z barierami językowymi. Problemem jest jednak niedopasowanie umiejętności, ponieważ większość z tych osób jest stosunkowo dobrze wykształcona, ale większość pracuje przy pracach prostych. Po trzecie nasze wyniki ekonometryczne pokazują, że napływ uchodźców nie wpłynął na sytuację na rynku pracy polskiej populacji i innych migrantów.

Słowa kluczowe: migracja, polski rynek pracy, rosyjska inwazja na Ukrainę, ukraińscy uchodźcy

Submitted: 14.10.2022

Accepted: 13.12.2022

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2353

Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 triggered Europe's largest forced migration since World War II. By April, net migration at the Polish–Ukrainian border had reached 2.1 million, including 2 million Ukrainian citizens.¹ The unprecedented inflow of war refugees required a multifaceted response to provide housing and humanitarian assistance and ensure access to Poland's labour market and welfare state provisions. Important questions refer to the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Poland, particularly on the labour market, and the potential consequences for the indigenous population and other migrants. Throughout the paper, we use the term “refugees” to describe individuals who crossed the Polish border following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This aligns with the UNHCR's (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee) definition of refugees as

people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.²

In this paper, we study the spatial distribution of Ukrainian refugees, the determinants of their decision on where to settle, their professional situation after arriving in Poland, and finally, the short-term consequences of the migration wave on the Polish labour market itself. We focus on the period between February and April 2022, as the available administrative data we use in this study covers this period.

Our study has three main contributions. First, we show that social networks most likely matter for the location decision of refugees as their spatial distribution aligns with the distribution of pre-war economic Ukrainian migrants in Poland. Better economic opportunities, hotel accommodation availability, and public administration funding are also associated with higher refugee inflows at the county level. Second, refugee employment is relatively high, especially given the difficulties associated with childcare and language barriers. However, skill mismatch is a problem. Most refugees are relatively well-educated, but most work in low-skilled jobs. Third, using econometric methods, we find that the refugee inflow did not affect the labour market outcomes of the Polish population or other migrants.

Data

We combine various data based on administrative records:

- data on the number of refugees who obtained a Polish ID number (PESEL number) – provided by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland;

¹ *Dane statystyczne dotyczące sytuacji na granicy z Ukrainą*, <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/2705,dane-statystyczne-dotyczace-sytuacji-na-granicy-z-Ukraina> (13.10.2022).

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, *What is a refugee?*, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/what-is-a-refugee.html> (13.10.2022).

- data on work permits by occupation, sector, gender, citizenship and age – provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy;
- data on total employment and average earnings (base values for the calculation of the social security contributions) by gender and citizenship – provided by the Polish Social Insurance Institution (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – ZUS).

As well as a range of data on socio-economic factors from Statistics Poland. All data are at a county (*powiat*) level.

Location choices of refugees

In mid-March, Poland introduced a special law³ that allowed refugees from Ukraine to apply for a newly created legal status valid for 18 months after arrival (with the possibility of extension). After obtaining this status, refugees were eligible for Polish social transfers, could legally work in Poland, and gained access to public education and health care systems. Of the 2 million refugees who had arrived by April, 1 million people applied for special status. The other refugees either migrated to other EU countries or decided not to apply for the status as they considered a quick return to Ukraine.

Refugees from Ukraine have been free to choose their destination in Poland.⁴ The distribution of refugees across Polish counties was uneven (Figure 1). The number of refugees per 1,000 residents was generally higher in Western than in Eastern Poland. The largest cities, such as Warsaw, Cracow, Wrocław, and their metropolitan areas, recorded a high refugee inflow per 1,000 residents. The rate in question was also high along the Baltic coast, and Poland's southern and western borders, perhaps due to available accommodation in hotels and other forms of hospitality infrastructure.

Next, we discuss factors that could have affected refugees' decisions on where to settle. These factors include existing social networks – before the war, about 1.35 million Ukrainians lived in Poland as economic migrants⁵ – economic opportunities, availability of accommodation, and the quality of public goods. To this aim, we regress the share of refugees in local population at a county level against the pre-war share of Ukrainian migrants and variables measuring other abovementioned factors. A more extensive discussion of the factors associated with

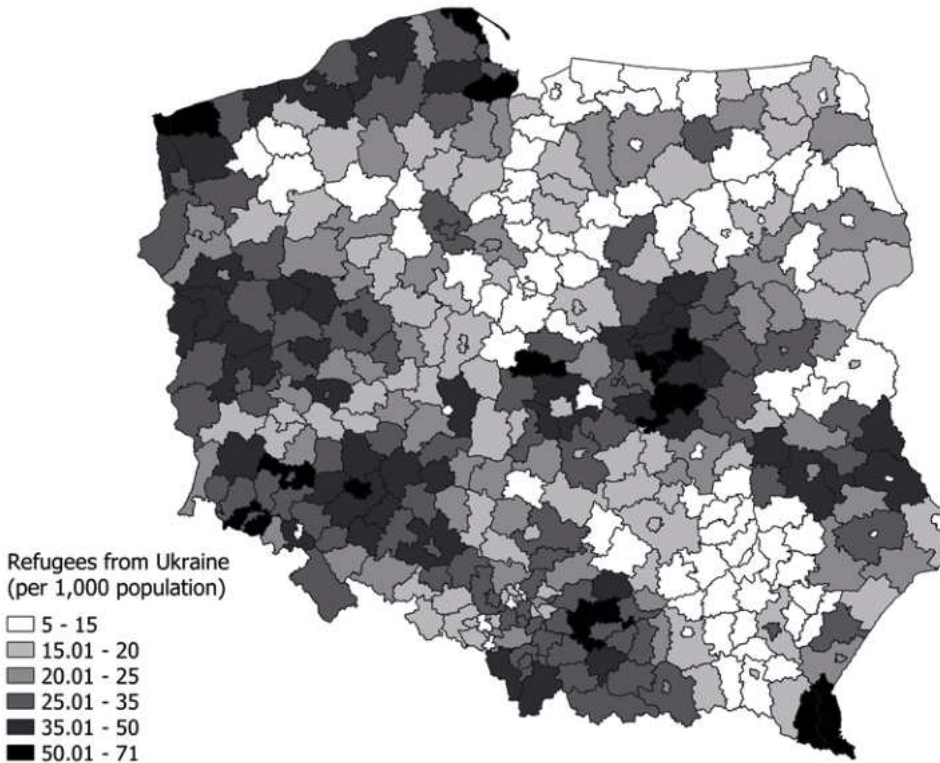
3 For the details of the law, see: the Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that state, Journal of Laws of 2022, item 583.

4 This policy contrasts with the approach taken in other recent refugee inflows in Europe. For instance, Germany used a central allocation mechanism to settle Syrian refugees across the country, see: J. Bredtmann, *Immigration and electoral outcomes: Evidence from the 2015 refugee inflow to Germany*, "Regional Science and Urban Economics" 2022, Vol. 96; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2022.103807>.

5 M. Duszczyc, P. Kaczmarczyk, *The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges*, "Intereconomics" 2022, Vol. 57, pp. 164–170; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-022-1053-6>.

refugee location decisions is presented in European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)⁶.

Figure 1. Refugees-to-population ratio (April 30, 2022)



Source: own study based on data from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland

Economic opportunities played a critical role in refugee location decisions. First, the higher the unemployment rate, the lower the refugee-to-population ratio. Second, the higher the *per capita* income (as proxied by Personal Income Tax (PIT) revenue), the higher the refugee-to-population ratio. Jointly, economic opportunities were the essential factor associated with refugee destination choices: they explain 18% of the variance in the refugee-to-population ratio at the county level (Figure 3).⁷

Social networks also played a vital role: the higher the pre-war ratio of Ukrainian workers to the population, the higher the refugees-to-population (Figure 2). We attribute 15% of the differences in the refugee-to-population ratio to networks (Figure 3).

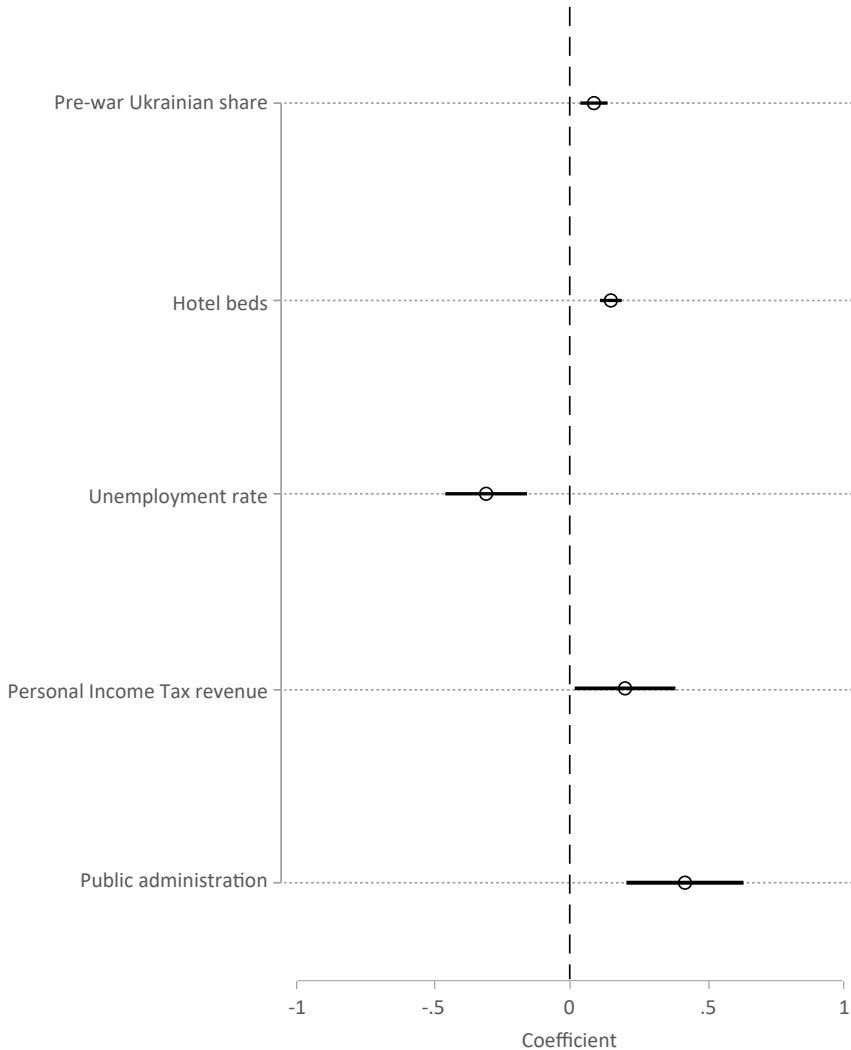
The availability of hotel beds was another determinant of destination choice, as refugees could have stayed in empty hotel rooms. This factor contributed about 11% of

⁶ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report 2022–23: Business Unusual*. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, London 2022.

⁷ Overall, our model explains 50% of the refugee-to-population ratio variance at the county level.

the variance (Figure 3). Finally, refugees decided more often to settle in counties with relatively high spending on public administration. Hence, counties with better-funded local administration could have attracted more refugees. However, this factor explains only 5% of the differences in the refugee-to-population rate, much less than economic opportunities and networks.

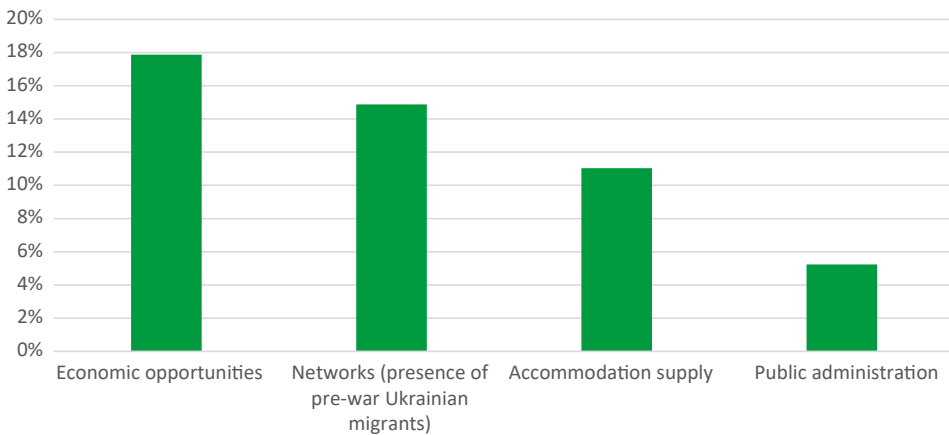
Figure 2. Correlates of the refugees-to-population ratio at the county level



Note: The figure shows the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from the regression of the refugees-to-population ratio on selected county characteristics. All variables are rescaled by a relevant population and expressed in logs. In addition to the covariates presented in the graph, we control for region fixed effects (*powiaty*). Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Source: own study based on data from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland and Statistics Poland

Figure 3. Decomposition of the variance of refugee-to-population ratio at the county level in Poland (April 30, 2022)



Note: Results of the Shapley decomposition (A.F. Shorrocks, *Decomposition procedures for distributional analysis: a unified framework based on the Shapley value*, “The Journal of Economic Inequality” 2013, Vol. 11, pp. 99–126; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10888-011-9214-zs>) based on the regression presented in Figure 1. Economic opportunities: the contribution of unemployment rate and PIT revenues per person; Networks: the contribution of pre-war Ukrainian population share; Accommodation supply: the contribution of hotel bed availability; Public administration: the contribution of public administration funding.

Source: own study based on data from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland and Statistics Poland

Structure of refugee employment

Women and children constitute the majority of refugees who arrived in Poland in the first, largest wave of refugee inflow. By the end of April 2022, about 70% of refugees were women. 50% of refugees were under the age of 22, and 47% of refugees were children under the age of 18. Only 13% of refugees were men aged 20–59 because most Ukrainian men aged 18–60 have been prohibited from leaving the country.

Displaced people face multiple challenges, in particular when it comes to earning income. Under the special law described earlier, Ukrainian refugees can enter the Polish labour market without seeking any permits.⁸ As most of them are women with children, their decisions to look for a job are intertwined with any decisions and opportunities relating to organising childcare. Moreover, most of them have no history of migration to Poland⁹, so they face language barriers. At the same time, they are,

⁸ However, employers are obliged to report hiring refugees to a local public employment service. These reports constitute the data we use to measure refugees’ employment.

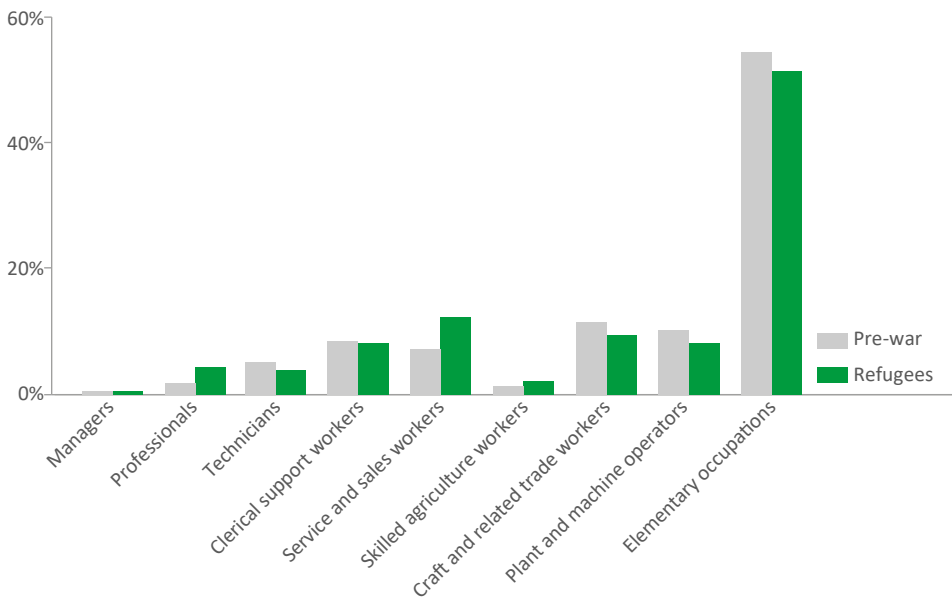
⁹ I. Chmielewska-Kalińska, B. Dudek, P. Strzelecki, *The living and economic situation of Ukrainian refugees in Poland*, Narodowy Bank Polski, Warszawa 2022.

on average, better educated than many other forcibly displaced populations, which improves their labour market prospects. According to the survey conducted by the Polish Central Bank (Narodowy Bank Polski) in April and May 2022, 50% of adult Ukrainian refugees in Poland had tertiary education.¹⁰

By the end of April 2022, nearly 100,000 refugees had started their first job in Poland. By the end of June, this number had reached 235,000. These employment numbers are high, especially considering the challenges mentioned above. In the following analysis, we focus on women, who constitute most of the refugees registered in Poland, especially those of working age.

More than 50% of refugee workers found work in elementary occupations (compared to 7% of the indigenous employed population). This raises concerns about a skill mismatch as a half of Ukrainian refugees have tertiary education, which equips them with skill levels above those required in elementary occupations. The occupational structure of refugee employment was very similar to the pre-war employment structure of Ukrainian workers (see Figure 4). Compared to the pre-war economic migrants, a higher share of refugees worked in service and sales occupations. As with pre-war migrants, about half of the refugees worked in market services (Figure 5). Refugees worked in non-market services more than twice as often as pre-war Ukrainian workers. Fewer workers found work in industry (mainly manufacturing and logistics) compared to the pre-war migrant population.

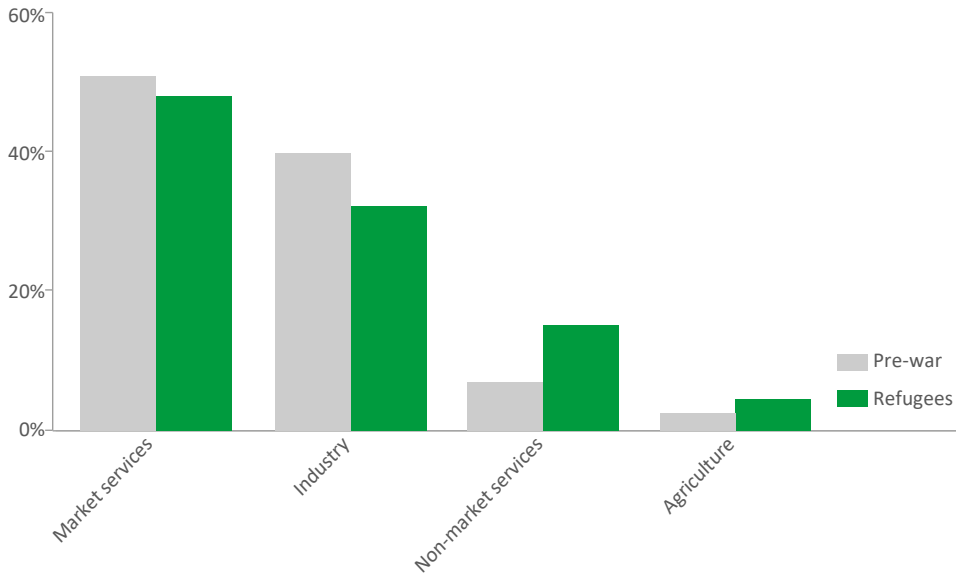
Figure 4. Employment by occupation (% of total employment, women): pre-war Ukrainian workers and refugee workers



Source: own study based on data from the Ministry of Family and Social Policy

¹⁰ Ibid.

Figure 5. Employment by sector (% of total employment, women): pre-war Ukrainian workers and refugee workers



Source: own study based on data from the Ministry of Family and Social Policy

Immediate consequences for the Polish labour market

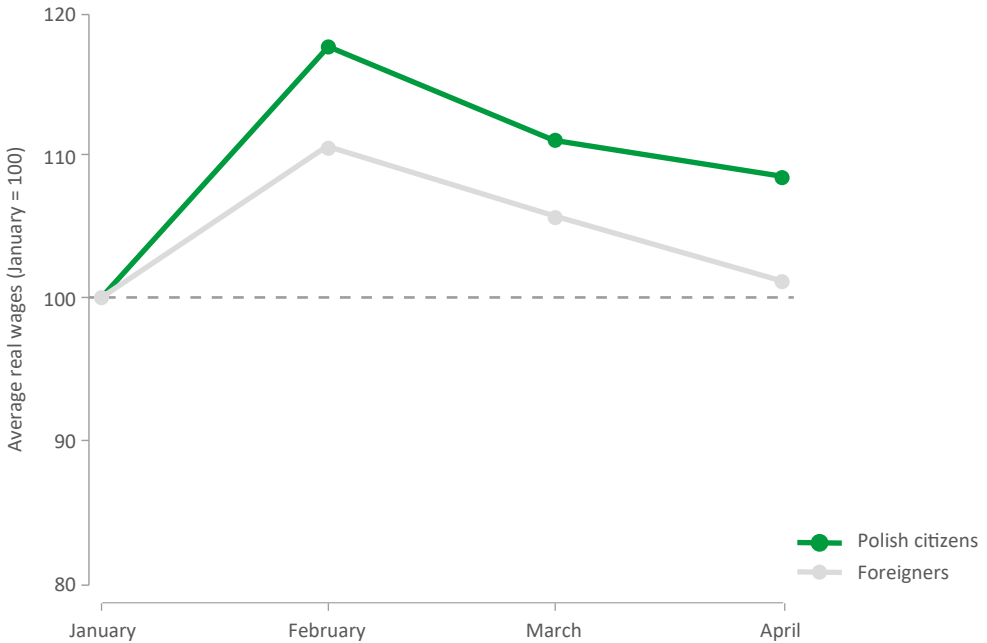
The potential impact on the labour market situation of the indigenous population and other migrants is a crucial aspect of sudden migrant inflows. Past experiences suggest that such inflows have benign effects and mainly translate to higher employment, with no negative consequences on the indigenous population, particularly their earnings¹¹.

We combine data from the Polish Social Insurance Institution and the Ministry of Family and Social Policy to examine the short-term consequences of the refugee influx on the labour market outcomes for indigenous and foreign workers. In the first four months of 2022, the growth in real monthly earnings among foreigners was slower than among indigenous workers (Figure 6). In February, real wages increased substantially among both groups but afterwards declined. In April, indigenous real monthly earnings were 10% higher than in January, while foreigners' earnings returned to January levels. It is unclear to what extent these differences

¹¹ D. Card, *The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift on the Miami Labor Market*, "ILR Review" 1990, Vol. 43, pp. 245–257; <https://doi.org/10.1177/001979399004300205>.

in earnings trajectories result from the forced migration inflow. However, Figure 6 suggests that the divergence in earnings growth was primarily due to smaller raises in February – before refugees entered the Polish labour market.

Figure 6. Average real monthly earnings (January 2022 = 100): Polish citizens and foreigners



Source: own study based on data from the Polish Social Insurance Institution

To investigate the consequences of the refugee wave, we estimate the following model:

$$\Delta y_c = \beta_0 + \theta R_c + \beta_1 y_c^{January} + \beta_2 X_c + \eta_c + \epsilon_c$$

where:

Δy_c is the difference in a given outcome between January and April of 2022 in county c ,

$y_c^{January}$ is the initial level of the outcome of interest,

R_c is the refugee-to-population ratio in county c , and

X_c is a set of control variables (urbanization rate and unemployment rate in county c in January 2022).

We additionally control for county fixed effects (η_c).

The regression results suggest that the refugee inflow did not affect the labour market outcomes of the Polish population or other migrants. We find no strong association between the refugee-to-population ratio and labour market outcomes (Table 1). We estimate zero effects on foreigners' earnings, employment, and the unemployment rate. If anything, the refugee inflow was associated with a tiny increase in the monthly wages of Polish women.

Table 1. Refugee inflow and labour market outcomes in Poland (women only)

	Earnings Polish citizens	Earnings Foreigners	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
Refugee-to-population rate (log)	0.014*	0.002	-0.000	0.000
	(0.007)	(0.022)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Initial unemployment rate	yes	yes	yes	yes
Urbanization rate	yes	yes	yes	yes
Region FE	yes	yes	yes	yes
Adj. R-squared	0.30	0.10	0.36	0.37
Observations	340	340	340	340

* $p < 0.1$,

** $p < 0.05$,

*** $p < 0.01$.

Note: The table presents the regression results of four outcomes on the log refugee-to-population rate. All outcomes are measured for women. Column 1 shows the results for the log monthly earnings of Polish citizens. Column 2 shows the results for the log monthly earnings of foreign citizens. Column 3 shows the results for the employment rate. Column 4 shows the results for the registered unemployment rate. All outcome variables are expressed as difference between the January and April levels. In all regressions, we control for the initial levels of outcome variables, initial unemployment rate, urbanization rate and region fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Source: own study based on data from the Polish Social Insurance Institution, Ministry of Family and Policy, and Statistics Poland

Conclusions and implications

The unprovoked and illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered the largest forced displacement in Europe since World War II. Between late February and April 2022, more than 2 million people migrated to Poland. Unlike the previous waves of forced migration to the European Union, Ukrainian refugees were almost immediately allowed to enter the Polish labour market.

This paper established three facts about Ukrainian refugees' short-term labour market integration in Poland. First, the pre-war locations of Ukrainian economic migrants were largely followed by Ukrainian refugees in Poland. Other factors associated with higher refugee inflows at the county level include increased economic opportunities, hotel room availability, and public administration funding. Second, despite the challenges of childcare and language barriers, the employment of refugees is relatively high. However, skill mismatch is an issue because most refugees are relatively well educated, but the

majority of them work in low-skilled jobs. Third, our econometric findings show that the inflow of refugees did not affect the labour market outcomes of the Polish population or other migrants.

Despite this positive outlook, concerns remain. First, Poland's strong economic growth facilitated the labour market integration of refugees, but the inevitable economic slow-down will reduce labour demand. Refugees' employment outcomes may worsen, especially as market services sectors are often particularly hit by recessions. Second, most refugees work in low-skilled jobs while many have tertiary education. This over-skilling has several consequences. It may discourage people from working in Poland and lead to mental health problems. It also contributes to a skill mismatch. Poland has labour shortages in many occupations requiring higher skills, but few migrants work in such jobs. Finally, it has a high opportunity cost – the refugees are most likely not learning the new skills they could use in Ukraine after the war. During the 1990s, Germany offered temporary protection to 700,000 Yugoslavian refugees fleeing war. In the 2000s, returning refugees boosted economic ties between their countries and Germany, with economic benefits for both sides. Refugees who in Germany worked in occupations more apt to transfer knowledge, technologies and best practices drove this positive change¹². Unfortunately, the prevailing pattern of refugee employment in Poland will probably not create such positive long-term effects. Public policy should address skill mismatches, support refugees in their learning of Polish, and assist them in searching for jobs that match their education.

12 D. Bahar, A. Hauptmann et al., *Migration and Knowledge Diffusion: The Effect of Returning Refugees on Export Performance in the Former Yugoslavia*, "The Review of Economics and Statistics" 2022; https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_01165.

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The functioning of Ukrainian public administration under a state of war

Authors contribution:

- A – Research project
- B – Data collection
- C – Statistical analysis
- D – Data interpretation
- E – Manuscript preparation
- F – Literature analysis
- G – Fundraising

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Introduction: The article deals with Ukrainian public administration activity in the face of the full-scale Russian military invasion. The article emphasizes the role of the impact of digital public sector development and the aid solutions introduced after the start of the invasion. Discussed are the conditions for the functioning of the social security system in a state of war.

Objective: To present information about the actions taken by the Ukrainian government to maintain the effectiveness of public administration. A number of digital reforms have been identified.

Materials and methods: Review of websites and legislation regulating the functioning of Ukraine during the war.

Results: The conclusions indicate that despite the positive impact of digitization on the possibility for the efficient functioning of public services, it is fundamental to maintain the balance between national security and the availability of services for citizens. An additional challenge is the very short time to implement aid solutions.

Key words: Diia, digitization, e-services, government administration, war in Ukraine

Funkcjonowanie ukraińskiej administracji publicznej w stanie wojny

Wstęp: Artykuł traktuje o działalności administracji publicznej Ukrainy w czasie inwazji militarnej Rosji. W tekście podkreślono rolę wpływu rozwoju cyfrowego sektora publicznego i rozwiązań pomocowych wprowadzonych zaraz po rozpoczęciu wojny. Omówiono warunki funkcjonowania systemu zabezpieczenia społecznego w stanie wojny.

Cel: Prezentacja informacji o działaniach podjętych przez rząd ukraiński, aby utrzymać skuteczność administracji publicznej. Wskazano na szereg reform cyfrowych.

Materiały i metody: Przegląd stron internetowych oraz ustawodawstwa regulującego funkcjonowanie Ukrainy w czasie wojny.

Wyniki: We wnioskach wskazano, że choć odnotowano pozytywny wpływ cyfryzacji na sprawne funkcjonowanie usług publicznych, najważniejszą kwestią pozostaje dostępność tych usług dla obywateli przy zachowaniu bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Dodatkowym wyzwaniem jest bardzo krótki czas na wdrożenie rozwiązań pomocowych.

Słowa kluczowe: Diia, cyfryzacja, e-usługi, administracja rządowa, wojna w Ukrainie

Submitted: 15.12.2022

Accepted: 27.2.2023

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2802

Introduction

This article is devoted to the solutions introduced in Ukrainian public administration given the Russian invasion of February 24, 2022. The digital development of Ukraine allowed the country's IT systems to be prepared for a crisis situation and ensured the continuity of the functioning of offices, at least in an online mode.

Before February 24, 2022, the creation of a digital state and the related state reforms were a priority for those in power. As announced by the Ministry of Digitization and the government, further solutions were successfully introduced in the government portal and Diia application, which replaces any physical version of an identity document and offers a number of public services online. At the beginning of February 2022, this application was used by 14 million unique users,¹ constituting a 5-fold increase year to year. On February 8, 2022, the previously announced special legal and tax system for the IT industry "Diia.City" came into force, which provides users with very favourable tax conditions and rules employee payments. However, due to the outbreak of war, digitization priorities had to be changed. The digitization of state services for citizens is especially effective in crisis situations, such as a pandemic, and is undoubtedly an important element of the state's functioning in a state of war. On February 24, 2022, the government of Ukraine faced a challenge: it had to provide citizens with access to key services, while guaranteeing the digital security of government records and websites, because the war is also taking place in cyberspace.

Conditions for the functioning of public administration in a state of war

All changes in the functioning of offices and other state institutions are introduced with the intention of expanding the availability of services to citizens while maintaining the national security of Ukraine. Public authorities need to adapt quickly to change in order to operate continuously, especially at the start of the invasion (late February–early March 2022), and currently this is the most visible in regions close to the front line. Due to the imposition of martial law, since February 24, the rules by which state authorities operate are defined by a special act on the legal regime of martial law.² This act specifies, among others: the possibility of creating temporary state bodies – military administration – to ensure the effectiveness of Ukrainian legislation, defence, protection of the population, public safety and order, protection of the

¹ 14 млн користувачів застосунку Дія [14 mln korystuvachiv zasniku Diia], official channel of the Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine on the Telegram platform, <https://t.me/zedigital/989> (24.10.2022).

² Закон України Про правовий режим воєнного стану [Zakon Ukrainy Pro pravovyi rezhym voiennoho stanu] (Supreme Council of Ukraine), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/389-19#Text> (24.10.2022).

rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens. The decision to establish military administrations is taken by the President of Ukraine on the proposal of regional state authorities or the military command. These administrations are established in one or more localities (villages, communes, cities, oblasts) where the executive bodies are unable to perform the tasks and powers granted to them by the constitution and laws. It may also be the result of self-dissolution or an independent departure on the part of these authorities from exercising their powers, or their actual non-execution or their expiry in accordance with the law. Already on the day the invasion began, 24 military administrations were established at the oblast level and one in the capital, Kiev. During the ongoing hostilities, military administrations are established at the discretion of the president at the level of towns, villages and communes, which are subordinate to the military administration of the region in which they are located, and are subordinate to the General Staff of Ukraine. These units are responsible for defence, security, the protection of critical local urban or district infrastructure, while municipal authorities are responsible for the functioning of urban infrastructure – transport, water supply, heat, the organization of bomb shelters, etc. This differentiation in the competences of military administration and urban authorities is essential because not every oblast capital had a military municipal administration.

Another significant change is the extension of rural powers, commune and city administrations for the period of martial law³ and granting them exclusive powers to make decisions regarding:

- freeing plots owned by the commune from illegally erected temporary structures (authorities may destroy, for example, shops or bazaars located on public plots);
- inspection of buildings and structures destroyed as a result of warfare;
- demolition of buildings and structures which, according to the results of the survey, are considered dangerous and pose a threat to people's lives;
- transferring funds from the relevant local budget for the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and/or providing guidelines for the provisions of martial law;
- establishing institutions providing free basic legal assistance, appointing and dismissing managers of these institutions;
- fight against natural disasters and epidemics;
- hazardous waste management.

Other state bodies, e.g. centres of citizen administrative services, local government administration, had to introduce significant changes in their functioning in regions that suffer from the devastating effects of warfare. Most services for natural and legal persons are available in other districts and at mobile administrative service points.⁴ The

3 Закон України, Про внесення змін до деяких законів України щодо функціонування державної служби та місцевого самоврядування у період дії воєнного стану [Zakon Ukrainy, Pro vnesennia zmin do deiakykh zakoniv Ukrainy shchodo funktsionuvannia derzhavnoi sluzhby ta mistsevoho samovriaduvannia u period dii voiennoho stanu] (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2259-IX#Text> (24.10.2022).

4 United Nations Development Programme, *Mobile administrative service centres near home*, <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/news/mobile-administrative-service-centres-near-home> (24.10.2022).

continuity of the operation of judicial authorities, with the exception of those that cannot function due to the immediate proximity of the front line, was ensured by the decision of the Supreme Court of Ukraine. The territorial jurisdiction of court cases has also been changed. This means that cases from courts located in the fighting area have been transferred to other units for consideration.

One of the priority state tasks during martial law is the protection of information contained in state registers against enemy interference. To this end, the relevant resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers⁵ on March 6, 2022 (10 days after the invasion began) established that under martial law, state registration of various processes takes place under certain conditions, e.g. regardless of the location of real estate, legal persons, individual entrepreneurs or public organizations, if the relevant restrictions (conditions) are not provided for in a separate act. The procedure for registering public associations and charitable foundations whose activities are aimed at helping the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations, law enforcement agencies, civil defence authorities, voluntary formations of territorial communities, and other persons ensuring security and defence has also been simplified. The administrative fee for the registration of such entities is not paid, and when it comes to deadlines, the relevant offices register immediately after receiving all the necessary documents. Under the conditions of martial law, bearing in mind the need to ensure the reliability of information in the registers, the Ministry of Justice has introduced the possibility of carrying out the most urgent registration activities related to companies. The possibility of registering civil status records has also been guaranteed. With the exception of some administrative-territorial units, the following functions are in place: inheritance register, unified register of special forms of notarial documents, state register of civil status records. At the beginning of the invasion, access to the state register of property rights to real estate and to the state register of movable encumbrances was temporarily restricted, which meant that it was impossible to carry out, for example, the purchase or sale of a plot of land. Restrictions on access to the above registers were only to be lifted in May. At the same time, the scope of notarial acts for Russian citizens has been restricted: with such acts being denied to them as well as to legal entities established and registered in accordance with Russian legislation or with partners – and here under commercial law – from Russia.

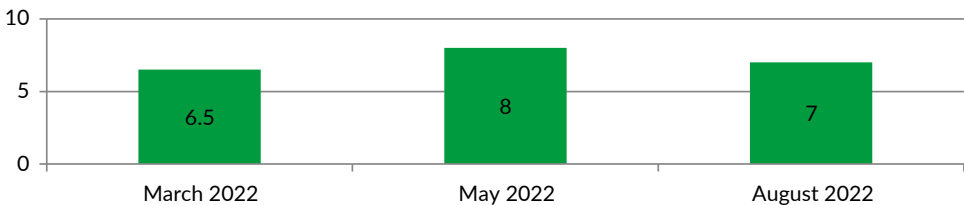
During the period in question, special attention should also be paid to the appropriate reorganization of the internal functioning of offices and public institutions. It is necessary to create remote workplaces for employees where possible, move data centres to safer places and digitize documentation.

⁵ Кабінет Міністрів України. Постанова від 06 березня 2022 р. № 209 Деякі питання державної реєстрації в умовах воєнного стану та внесення змін до постанови Кабінету Міністрів України від 28 лютого 2022 р. № 164 [Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy. Postanova vid 6 bereznia 2022 r. No. 209 Deiaki pytannia derzhavnoi reiestratsii v umovakh voiennoho stanu ta vnesennia zmin do postanovy Kabinetu Ministriv Ukrainy vid 28 liutoho 2022 r. No. 164] (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine), <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/nps/deyaki-pitannya-derzhavnoyi-reyestratsiyi-v-umovah-voennogo-stanu-ta-vnesennya-zmin-do-postanovi-kabinetu-ministriv-ukrayini-vid-28-lyutoho-2022-r-164-209> (24.10.2022).

The range of assistance solutions for citizens

As a result of the invasion, Ukraine suffered the greatest internal migration crisis since the Second World War. Within six months, as of 23 August 2022, the number of internally displaced people remains very high at 6.9 million people.⁶ According to the eighth round of the study⁷ by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), covering the period July–August 2022, most of the more than 300,000 new internal movements took place in the south and east of the country.

Figure 1. Number of internally displaced people in millions



Source: own study based on data from the International Organization for Migration

The social impact of such migration is dramatically high: almost half of the working-age IDPs (44%) receive no income whatsoever. Only a third of these people identify wages as their main source of income, and 24% declare that they have to rely on government support. As a result, most (70%) of displaced households are forced to cut costs, especially food-related, and one-third have taken out loans to survive. As autumn and winter approached, the living conditions of displaced persons were to become more and more difficult. 22% of those displaced and surveyed by the IOM noticed that their living conditions are not adapted to the realities of winter in Ukraine. More than one third of respondents are unable to move to a place of residence in appropriate conditions (mainly places with winter heating, constant access to water and electricity), and here mainly due to a lack of funds. 30% of internally displaced people who found shelter in villages (approx. 2 million people in total) have no access to medical services. About 60% of displaced people who have returned to their early places of residence, and who reside in their own homes need financial assistance. On the other hand, the need for medicines and renovation and construction materials is declared primarily by returnees and people who stayed in their places of residence.

This crisis requires a quick response from the government. This task is particularly complicated, firstly, due to the economic crisis in the country, and secondly, due to the diverse needs, because monetary benefits alone are not able to solve the situation of,

6 International Organization for Migration, *Displacement in Ukraine Again on the Rise*, IOM Data Shows, <https://www.iom.int/news/displacement-ukraine-again-rise-iom-data-shows> (3.11.2022).

7 International Organization for Migration, *Ukraine internal displacement report*, General population survey, Round 7, 23 July 2022, https://displacement.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/IOM_Gen%20Pop%20Report_R7_final%20ENG_updated%20logo.pdf (7.11.2022).

for example, the complete destruction of one's place of residence. The government of Ukraine has introduced a whole range of aid solutions for internally displaced persons, mainly in the field of social assistance. It is worth noting that cash benefits from social assistance will be paid throughout the entire period of martial law and one month after its end or lifting. During this period, it is not necessary to reapply every month for payment or additional confirmation of the right to receive the benefit.⁸ First of all, assistance has been provided for internally displaced persons following February 24, 2022, who have an appropriate certificate confirming this status. The status of being internally displaced persons can be obtained by those who have moved from the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as from the territory of administrative-territorial units where hostilities are taking place and which are included in the list approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.⁹

In November 2022, the following types of support for citizens and entrepreneurs were in operation, introduced in connection with the war:¹⁰

- monthly cash benefit for the internally displaced,
- a system for reporting damaged real estate as a result of warfare,
- benefits for entrepreneurs for the employment of the internally displaced,
- social assistance for Ukrainians living in temporarily occupied territories,
- providing compensation for the costs of temporary accommodation of the internally displaced,
- providing one-off compensation to those with disabilities caused by explosives (e.g. health damage as a result of a mine explosion),
- guaranteeing annual rehabilitation assistance to people with disabilities resulting from the action of explosives,
- granting subsidies for the creation or development of greenhouses,
- providing subsidies for the establishment or development of processing enterprises,
- allocating micro-grants to create or develop your own business.

Another state support programme has been announced and is being prepared for implementation at the time of writing: assistance to residents of recently liberated territories and those who have left.¹¹

8 Кабінет Міністрів України Постанова від 7 березня 2022 р. № 214 Деякі питання надання державної соціальної допомоги та пільг на період введення воєнного стану [Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy Postanova vid 7 bereznia 2022 r. No. 214 Deiaci pytannia nadannia derzhavnoi sotsialnoi dopomohy ta pillh na period vvvedennia voiennoho stanu] (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/214-2022-%D0%BF#Text> (24.11.2022).

9 Кабінет Міністрів України Розпорядження від 6 березня 2022 р. № 204-р Про затвердження переліку адміністративно-територіальних одиниць, на території яких надається допомога застрахованим особам в рамках Програми “єПідтримка” [Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy Rozporiadzhennia vid 6 bereznia 2022 r. No. 204-r Pro zatverdzhennia pereliku administratyvno-terytorialnykh odynyt, na terytorii yakykh nadaietsia dopomoha zastrakhovanyim osobam v ramkakh Prohramy “iePidtrymka”] (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/204-2022-%D1%80#n9> (24.11.2022).

10 Захист громадян під час війни, Портал Дія [Zakhyst hromadian pid chas viiny, Portal Diia], <https://guide.diia.gov.ua/thematic-area/zakhyst-hromadian-pid-chas-viiny> (24.11.2022).

11 Соціальні допомоги постраждалим від війни, Державна Допомога [Sotsialni dopomohy postrazhdalym vid viiny, Derzhavna Dopomoha], <https://groshi.edopomoga.gov.ua/> (24.11.2022).

When it comes to direct support for citizens, the most important solutions currently in force include:

- monthly cash benefit for the internally displaced – for those with the status of internally displaced persons residing in the territory of Ukraine. After the application is approved, the monthly amount is UAH 2,000 for an adult and UAH 3,000 for those with disabilities and children;
- reporting a damaged or destroyed property – is available to owners of damaged or destroyed flats or houses. The appropriate application should indicate the degree of damage or destruction of the property as a result of warfare. In the near future, the damage assessment procedure announced by the government is to begin, followed by the payment of compensation;
- benefit for entrepreneurs for the employment of the internally displaced – is payable to companies employing the displaced post February 24, 2022. Such an employer submits an appropriate application, after its positive consideration, the benefit is granted for a maximum of two months. The amount of the benefit amounts to the minimum wage (UAH 6,500 in 2022).

Digitization and support during the war

Providing citizens with access to a range of assistance solutions is possible thanks to the widespread digitization of state services. In July 2022, more than 80 types of online services were available on the government website and the Diia application. The Ministry of Digitization of Ukraine has an ambitious goal: the digitization of all public services. The most important thing is the elimination of unnecessary and excessive bureaucracy – that is, the transfer of websites (including the most necessary services and documents) to the digital sphere.¹²

Before February 24, 2022, the government portal and Diia application were very convenient and popular tools for Ukrainians to use public services. At the beginning of February, 14 million Diia users had been recorded, which is more than 1/3 of the country's population. The use of the digital version of identity documents and the possibility of submitting an application to an office via a smartphone or the relevant website as an alternative to an in-person visit have proven their worth and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. After the start of the war, Diia also had to restrict access to most services and digital identity documents as a result of the requirement to maintain state record data security and confidentiality. At the same time, to meet the needs of citizens leaving high-risk regions, the Ministry of Digitization has created an e-document – a digital document for the time of war, which contains passport data and

¹² *Велике інтерв'ю Михайла Федорова* [Velyke interv'iu Mykhaila Fedorova], "Forbes Ukraine" 31 October 2022, <https://forbes.ua/innovations/nastupniy-tehnologichniy-krok-viyna-droniv-mikhaylo-fedorov-pro-tsinu-startlink-peregovori-z-maskom-ta-reformu-gralnogo-biznesu-intervyyu-31102022-9332> (24.11.2022).

a taxpayer number. This document can replace traditional paper documents, also when the Ukrainian police or army need to verify a given person's identity.

Thanks to the widespread availability of the Diia application, on March 8 (i.e. 12 days after the invasion), the first assistance programme in the form of a one-off cash benefit for citizens was launched. It is worth noting that the application for the benefit was accepted only by the Diia application on a smartphone. The benefit was provided to insured persons who work on the basis of an employment contract, a GIG contract (a special form of employment for IT specialists, includes elements of an employment contract and a civil law contract), a civil law contract, on other grounds provided for by the law, and to entrepreneurs who constitute physical individuals. The prerequisites for obtaining the benefit were the applicant's registration as a contribution payer of compulsory social insurance in regions where hostilities are taking place, and the applicant's submission of tax returns for the fourth quarter of 2021 or the annual declaration for 2021. The benefit was paid to the account after 10 working days from the date of application submission. The programme's aim was to provide direct monetary support to those living in regions heavily affected by the warfare. The aid program operated until March 31, 2022, during which time over 4.5 million people applied for support.¹³

The next stage of Diia's development in war conditions is to make as many state services and documents available in the application as possible. Already on May 20, 2022, introduced was the possibility of handling an application for unemployed person status and obtaining appropriate benefits. At the end of August 2022, the digital version of the pensioner's ID card, residence permits for foreigners and English versions of documents available in Diia were made accessible. Applying for all forms of assistance for the internally displaced is available online – on the portal and in the application. It was announced that by the end of 2022, more than 10 new services are to appear in Diia. The strategy of the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine is to unify the mode of all state services and make each official service available on a citizen's smartphone. This strategy appears very effective for a variety of reasons:

- wartime does not slow down the progress of digital reforms – planned services are introduced at an accelerated pace;
- submitting applications via the Internet has made it possible to handle a large number of applications in a shorter time, to process a huge amount of information, and thus has not led to chaos in offices and has accelerated the processing of applications;
- e-services are safer both for citizens and state registers;
- the situation in the country prompted even more people to use state services electronically – at the end of August 2022, already 18 million people used Diia,¹⁴ which is more than half of Ukraine's current population.

¹³ 4,4 млн заявок на 6 500 еПідтримки [4,4 mln zaiaвок na 6 500 yePidtrymky], official channel of the Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine on the Telegram platform, <https://t.me/zedigital/1446> (22.11.2022).

¹⁴ Цього тижня кількість користувачів Дією сягнула 18 млн [Tsoho tyzhnia kilkist korystuvachiv Diieiu si-ahnuła 18 mln], official channel of the Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine on the Telegram platform, <https://t.me/zedigital/2375> (22.11.2022).

The social security system of Ukraine during the war

Ensuring the continuity of the social security system is highly threatened during active warfare. Due to the very high numbers of internally displaced people (Figure 1), it is difficult to guarantee benefits such as pensions. According to the data of the Pension Fund of Ukraine for August 2022, UAH 51.4 billion was allocated for pension payments that month, including UAH 10.4 billion for pension payments through Ukrainian post offices and 41 billion through authorized banks.¹⁵ These data show that, for various reasons, more than 20% of those entitled to a retirement benefit receive it “stationary”, i.e. at one of the Ukrainian post offices. It is necessary to provide alternative means of receiving such benefits in the event of disruptions to the work of facilities during hostilities. In addition, guaranteed should be access to a pension in a new place of residence for displaced persons. In order to properly ensure social protection and timely payments of pensions and other cash benefits, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted a relevant resolution¹⁶ on February 26, with the following solutions:

- if designated banks cannot pay pensions and cash benefits to those entitled, it is possible to transfer funds to the recipient via Oszczadbank, without opening an account. This bank is authorized to carry out settlements and cash transactions with funds from the Pension Fund of Ukraine;
- if a person received a pension and/or cash assistance in cash through a post office of Ukraine and was forced to change their actual place of residence, then they can receive benefits at Oszczadbank branches, without opening an account, as a cash transfer; or in cash at a post office of Ukraine in their current place of residence.

Similarly to temporary crisis solutions, a systemic approach to facilitating the use of social security benefits, making them more convenient and transparent, is the result of increasing the level of digitization of the social security system. For this purpose, e.g. in order to enable online access to most social security services, including the Diia portal, the Government of Ukraine decided to develop and implement a unified information system for the social sphere (Ukrainian: *Єдина інформаційна система соціальної сфери*, hereinafter referred to as EISSS),¹⁷ which is to increase the speed of services pro-

15 ПФУ: Завершено фінансування пенсій за серпень [PFU: Zaversheno finansuvannia pensii za serpen], <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/pfu-zaversheno-finansuvannia-pensii-za-serpen> (22.11.2022).

16 Кабінет Міністрів України Постанова від 26 лютого 2022 р. № 162 Про особливості виплати та доставки пенсій, грошових допомог на період введення воєнного стану [Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy Postanova vid 26 liutoho 2022 r. No. 162 Pro osoblyvosti vyplaty ta dostavky pensii, hroshovykh dopomoh na period vvedennia voiennoho stanu] (Cabinet of The Ministers of Ukraine), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/162-2022-%D0%BF#Text> (24.11.2022).

17 Кабінет Міністрів України Постанова від 14 квітня 2021 р. № 404 Про затвердження Положення про Єдину інформаційну систему соціальної сфери [Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy Postanova vid 14 kvitnia 2021 r. No. 404 Pro zatverdzhennia Polozhennia pro Yedynu informatsiinu systemu sotsialnoi sfery] (Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/404-2021-%D0%BF#Text> (24.11.2022).

vided. EISSS implementation provides for the centralized storage and automated processing of information, the distribution of social benefit payments, and the replacement and optimization of more than 15 obsolete but still functioning information systems and records. Thanks to the cooperation between EISSS and Diia, several important projects were implemented already at the beginning of the war, such as enabling the internally displaced to apply for assistance via the Diia application, in order to reduce queues at regional offices and social welfare centres. With regard to data on citizens, the introduction of a register such as EISSS marks a shift from the regional to the supra-regional principle. It has become a necessity given the conditions of warfare and temporary occupation of some regions of the country. The test operation of EISSS started on February 1, 2022, and the general roll-out of the system in all regions of Ukraine began on October 1, 2022.

Conclusions

Digitization increases accessibility and gives the opportunity to quickly adapt to changes in a particularly difficult time, and it allows the system of public services to function and support citizens. Ukrainian reforms, effectively introduced before the war, ensured a readiness to face the challenges of the migration crisis and help internally displaced people. Maintaining a balance between national security and the availability of services to citizens remains a huge challenge for the government – so far, balance in this matter has been achieved.

The implemented technology is not checked on the basis of tests and public opinion, but is introduced as soon as possible: under the pressure of the need to help people immediately; there is not enough time to carry out all the tests and the full implementation process. The e-service must prove itself as a method of obtaining help and support, besides, access to it must be efficient even in times of war – only these factors can prove the effectiveness of the digitization of a particular service. In addition, a holistic approach to the digitization of the most popular services and outdated registers will allow for an improvement in the functioning of Ukraine's public administration systems not only during the war, but also after its end.

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Polish public institutions activity for refugees from Ukraine, with a special focus on the tasks carried out by ZUS

Authors contribution:

- A – Research project
- B – Data collection
- C – Statistical analysis
- D – Data interpretation
- E – Manuscript preparation
- F – Literature analysis
- G – Fundraising

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Introduction: Russia's aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 resulted in a massive influx of war refugees into Poland. The Polish government decided to open the borders immediately and has simplified procedures to help legalise migrant stay. A huge role in providing humanitarian aid to refugees is played by Polish society itself. Pursuant to the Refugee Assistance Act passed on 12 March 2022, public-sector institutions, both at governmental and local-governmental level, have assumed the tasks of guaranteeing migrants access to social security, the labour market, education, and health care. The paper discusses the main lines of action taken by Polish public institutions supporting refugees from Ukraine.

Objective: Special attention was paid to the activities carried out by the Social Insurance Institution (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – ZUS) both within the framework of its statutory tasks and as a part of additional tasks commissioned to ZUS.

Materials and methods: The paper has been prepared with the use of quantitative data from the Polish government, ZUS and the United Nations. Polish and EU legislative provisions were also taken into account for the analysis.

Results: As of 24 February 2022, refugees from Ukraine have received assistance in Poland in various forms. It is estimated that the cost of public and private spending on various types of support has amounted to PLN 25.4 billion, of which public expenditure was PLN 15.9 billion. Based on a positive assessment of ZUS efficiency in the performance of commissioned tasks in crisis conditions (from the period of the implementation of the so-called anti-crisis shields aimed to mitigate the effects of restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic), the Polish Social Insurance Institution has become a body performing a significant part of the tasks imposed by special legislation, especially when concerning assistance for the families of Ukrainian refugees.

Key words: human rights, humanitarian aid, Polish Social Insurance Institution, public institutions, refugees from Ukraine

Działania polskich instytucji publicznych na rzecz uchodźców z Ukrainy, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zadań realizowanych przez ZUS

Wstęp: Agresja Rosji na Ukrainę 24 lutego 2022 r. spowodowała masowy napływ do Polski uchodźców wojennych. Rząd polski zdecydował o natychmiastowym otwarciu granic i uprościł procedury pomagające w legalizacji pobytu migrantów. W udzielaniu uchodźcom pomocy humanitarnej ogromną rolę odgrywa polskie społeczeństwo. Instytucje publiczne, rządowe i samorządowe, zgodnie z uchwaloną 12 marca 2022 r. ustawą o pomocy uchodźcom, przyjęły na siebie zadania związane z zagwarantowaniem migrantom dostępu do zabezpieczenia społecznego, rynku pracy, edukacji, ochrony zdrowia. W treści omówiono główne kierunki działań polskich instytucji publicznych wspierających uchodźców z Ukrainy.

Cel: Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na działania realizowane przez Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (ZUS) zarówno w ramach zadań statutowych, jak i dodatkowych zadań zleconych Zakładowi.

Materiały i metody: Przy przygotowaniu artykułu wykorzystano ilościowe dane rządowe, Zakładu Ubezpieczeń Społecznych oraz Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych. Do analizy wzięto pod uwagę również przepisy prawne polskiego oraz unijnego ustawodawstwa.

Wyniki: Od 24 lutego 2022 r. uchodźcy z Ukrainy uzyskali w Polsce pomoc w różnych formach. Szacuje się, że koszt wydatków publicznych i prywatnych na różne rodzaje wsparcia wyniósł 25,4 mld zł, w tym wydatki publiczne to 15,9 mld zł. Na podstawie pozytywnej oceny sprawności Zakładu w realizacji zadań zleconych w warunkach kryzysowych (z okresu realizacji tzw. tarcz antykryzysowych niwelujących skutki ograniczeń związanych z pandemią koronawirusa), Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych został wykonawcą znacznej części zadań specustawy, szczególnie dotyczących pomocy adresowanej do rodzin ukraińskich uchodźców.

Słowa kluczowe: prawa człowieka, pomoc humanitarna, Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, instytucje publiczne, uchodźcy z Ukrainy

Submitted: 14.10.2022

Accepted: 14.12.2022

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2159

Introduction

The violent escalation of Russia's hostilities in Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, has also brought huge challenges for neighbouring countries, including Poland. The refugee migration resulting from this aggression has been described by the European Parliament as one of the greatest humanitarian crises in recent European history. According to Eurostat, a third of all Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes. As of 6 July 2022, more than 5.6 million Ukrainian refugees were registered in Europe. Ultimately, they have ended up in various countries; the largest number in Poland (1,207,650), but there are also numerous groups in Germany (867,000), the Czech Republic (388,000), Turkey (145,000) and Italy (142,000). The majority of refugees (ca 90 per cent) are women and children, who require not only direct assistance but also increased protection due to their particular exposure to violence and exploitation. In addition to its military dimension, the involvement of each country unequivocally supporting Ukraine in this conflict has a significant economic – including financial – and social dimension.¹

Public institutions have launched their actions for Ukrainian refugees in accordance with the Council Directive 2001/55 EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof.² The Directive has set out a legal framework concerning, *inter alia*, a simplified registration process, access to the labour market, to the social security and social benefits system and many other solutions in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons, in this case from Ukraine. On this basis, on 4 March 2022, the European Council adopted the Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382³ establishing the existence of a mass influx of Ukrainian nationals and having the effect of introducing special measures under Article 5 of the aforementioned Directive.

Poland has been chosen by millions of Ukrainian refugees – most of all those fleeing the war after 24 February 2022 – as a destination or a place of temporary residence before moving on to another country. According to Eurostat, in May 2022, Poland had granted the temporary protection status to the biggest number of Ukrainians fleeing the war:⁴ to a total of 96,085 people. It was followed by Romania (20,435) and Bulgaria (19,860).

1 *Odpowiedź UE na kryzys uchodźczy w Ukrainie*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/headlines/world/20220324STO26151/> (14.10.2022).

2 OJ EU L 212, 7.8.001, p. 12.

3 OJ EU L UE L 71, 4.3.2022, pp. 1–6.

4 Such status provides immediate and collective (i.e. without considering individual applications) protection to displaced persons who are unable to return to their country of origin. Persons covered by this mechanism are granted the right of residence for one year, access to the labour market and accommodation, medical assistance, access to education for children.

Lines of action of public institutions in a situation of the mass influx of refugees from Ukraine and their selected determinants

Following the decision of the European Council of 4 March 2022, the Polish Parliament enacted a law containing specific legal solutions addressed to Ukrainian citizens (the Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that state (the so-called Special Law⁵). Its basic solutions include:

- granting legal residence rights to people arriving in huge numbers from Ukraine;
- emergency aid, access to the labour market and to social benefits and services, i.e. education, health care, family benefits, social assistance and funds for supporting people with disabilities;
- covering Ukrainian refugees by the PESEL (Personal Identification Number) register, which may be used to register the obligations and entitlements within the social security, social assistance and health care systems, as well as labour market benefits. PESEL also provides relevant institutions with information on the demographic structure of the population covered thereby, which can be used for objective research in this area.

Thanks to data from the PESEL register, we know that the demographic structure of refugees differs significantly from that which was typical of migrants from Ukraine entering the territory of Poland before 24 February 2022. Currently, most of them are women in the age of economic activity and children.⁶ By 25 August 2022, PESEL numbers had been assigned to 1,312,000 refugees from Ukraine, including 580,000 children.⁷

The influx of refugees is concentrated in the Podkarpackie region, i.e. in the direct vicinity of the border between Poland and Ukraine, and in Małopolska (Cracow region). However, places of refugees' further residence in Poland have been and still are various, unevenly dispersed across the country.⁸ This is important in the context of actions taken by public institutions; in particular in the case of a very large accumulation of migrants in certain areas, when it becomes a serious organisational and financial challenge for local and governmental institutions, requiring new legal solutions, the far-reaching coordination of actions and significant financial expenditure.

A government plenipotentiary has been appointed to coordinate the activities of all entities acting in support of refugees in all areas. By decision of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, the participation of non-governmental organisations (NGO)

⁵ Journal of Laws of 2022, item 583.

⁶ Women account for 71 per cent of this group, people under 18 years of age – 43 per cent, those aged 18–65 years – 53 per cent and people over 65 years – 4 per cent. Women aged 18–65 constitute the largest group, accounting for 54 per cent of all refugees from Ukraine covered by the PESEL register.

⁷ <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/2715,zarejestrowane-wnioski-o-nadanie-statusu-ukr> (14.10.2022).

⁸ Ibid.

in refugee support is coordinated regionally. Each voivod (provincial governor) has appointed its own coordinator/plenipotentiary for this task.

Table 1. PESEL numbers assigned to refugees by voivodship. The situation on 25 August 2022

Voivodship (province)	Refugees from Ukraine	
	in thousands	in %
Total	1312.1	100.0
Dolnośląskie	138.9	10.6
Kujawsko-pomorskie	43.2	3.3
Lubelskie	61.1	4.7
Lubuskie	40.2	3.1
Łódzkie	80.7	6.2
Małopolskie	127.9	9.7
Mazowieckie	272.2	20.7
Opolskie	30.1	2.3
Podkarpackie	44.3	3.4
Podlaskie	20.4	1.6
Pomorskie	92.3	7.0
Śląskie	128.7	9.8
Świętokrzyskie	21.9	1.7
Warmińsko-mazurskie	26.7	2.0
Wielkopolskie	120.6	9.2
Zachodniopomorskie	62.9	4.8

Source: <https://dane.gov.pl/pl> (14.10.2022)

The largest number of Ukrainian war migrants have concluded their journey in the Mazowieckie Voivodship, including Warsaw, which as a large city provides them with a greater sense of social and economic security. The second region with a high concentration of migrants from Ukraine is Dolny Śląsk, which has been home to a significant part of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland since the 1940s and was already (like Mazowieckie Voivodship) a labour migration destination for a large number of Ukrainian citizens

before 24 February 2022. The fewest refugees end their journey in the Świętokrzyskie, Podlaskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodships, which offer fewer opportunities to find employment outside of agriculture and more difficult contact with other migrants from Ukraine.

Humanitarian aid and residency legalisation⁹

From the first day of the escalation of hostilities in Ukraine, Poland has opened its borders to war refugees, allowing entry – in accordance with international and European Union (EU) law – also to those who did not have documents. The Border Guard (Straż Graniczna) has not required COVID-19 tests, proof of vaccination or quarantine. Extraordinary sanitary requirements for the transfer of belongings and animals across the border have been relaxed. Thanks to the huge societal commitment, hundreds of support and first aid points were immediately organised for refugees who had nowhere to stay in Poland.¹⁰ In accordance with the law, these points first of all provide social assistance, which, according to the Special Law, is the task of the voivod and the local government, though in practice is mainly provided by NGOs, local communities, private business and individuals. This assistance is geared towards providing the war refugees with:

- accommodation,
- mass catering,
- transport to places of accommodation or to appropriate residence centres,
- medical care,
- public security in the broad sense.

Ukrainian citizens who have fled to Poland as a result of the Russian aggression¹¹ may legally stay in our country for 18 months. Thanks to the legality of their residence they are provided with many entitlements under the same conditions as Polish citizens.

The PESEL number is a confirmation of legal residence and of the possession of many rights. It mainly provides refugees with access to the labour market, health care and medical assistance, education (children and adolescents) and social benefits.

The following are the characteristic features of the Polish policy towards war refugees from Ukraine: abandoning the organisation of refugee camps, which – based on the experience of mass migration movements in the first half of the 21st century – are assessed as ghettos that stigmatise migrants; and limited, very mild intervention in refugees' reallocation from their places of mass residence. Such a policy, however, is only possible

⁹ Unless otherwise stated, the source of information is the government website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ua/>.

¹⁰ <https://help.unhcr.org/poland> (14.10.2022).

¹¹ Entered Poland directly and the border crossing has been registered by the Border Guard, <https://www.gov.pl/web/ua/Lehalne-perebuwannya-v-Polshchi> (14.10.2022).

with the involvement of non-state actors, who have taken on the bulk of the burden connected with the refugees' stay in Poland.¹²

This new dimension of solidarity has gained government support in the form of a benefit for people who have provided shelter to refugees. The benefit, paid from the state budget, amounts to PLN 40 per person for each day of stay, and is payable for 120 days. A longer benefit payment period has been provided for persons with disabilities, their carers and their minor children, pregnant women and women taking care of a child under one year of age, persons aged 60/65 and single mothers with three (or more) children.¹³

The realities of war, which were the cause of the mass flight of Ukrainian citizens from their country, resulted in the need to resolve a number of issues in Polish law concerning the rights of a temporary guardian and foster care. The scale of problems and challenges in this area is extensive. The Special Law regulates their functions, which is extremely important because we are dealing with displaced persons, and this favours situations where children are left unattended by family or adults. According to the EU directive, the concept of family should be treated broadly in the case of refugees and not just in the literal meaning of this term in national legislation. Indeed, war is conducive to the separation of families. In addition, children who stayed in orphanages in Ukraine (approximately 160,000 children) have also come to Poland. In their case it was important to regulate foster care.

Access to the labour market

According to the Special Law, Ukrainian citizens were guaranteed the right to take up legal employment in Poland. Within 14 days from the date of taking up employment by a Ukrainian citizen, the employer must report him/her to the relevant labour office.¹⁴ It also reports such an employee or contractor to the social insurance system, similarly as in the case of Polish citizens, i.e. within 7 days of their taking up employment.

Thanks to the Special Law, progress has also been made in the access to business activity by Ukrainian citizens who have come to Poland because of the war. Those who have been assigned a PESEL number, may run business in Poland without additional formal and organisational restrictions that apply to non-EU foreigners.

According to data from the report of the Polish Economic Institute of July 2022,¹⁵ there were 450,000 Ukrainian refugees active on the Polish labour market, who have been covered by the social insurance system (with social insurance contributions being

12 *Gościnnia Polska 2022+*, eds. M. Bukowski, M. Duszczyk, Warszawa 2022, pp. 4–5.

13 Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 24 June 2022 amending the Regulation on the maximum amount of the monetary benefit for providing accommodation and meals to Ukrainian citizens and the conditions for granting this benefit and extending its payment (Journal of Laws 2022, item 1336).

14 This can be done remotely, via the praca.gov.pl portal.

15 Polski Instytut Ekonomiczny, *Pomoc polskiego społeczeństwa dla uchodźców z Ukrainy*, Warszawa 2022.

paid) and who pay taxes. The estimated monthly value of contributions paid into the Social Insurance Fund in this respect is PLN 450 million.

Access to health care benefits¹⁶

The Special Law provides access for Ukrainian refugees to health care benefits on the same basis as Polish citizens under the Act of 27 August 2004 on health care benefits financed from public funds.¹⁷ Thus, they may take advantage of free basic and specialised medical care, diagnostic tests ordered by doctors, hospital treatment, psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation (except in leisure centres) and dental services. They are also entitled to reimbursed medicines in Poland and are covered by the preventive vaccination programme.

In addition, by Order of 11 March 2022,¹⁸ the Minister of Health appointed a plenipotentiary for the transfer, for treatment continuation outside Poland, of Ukrainian patients residing on the territory of our country due to the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine. The plenipotentiary's tasks include the coordination of cooperation between the European Union and Poland on the transfer of Ukrainian patients residing in Poland for further long-term treatment in another EU Member State. Using EU mechanisms, the plenipotentiary coordinates the free transfer of patients and their families to an appropriate hospital in an EU Member State where the treatment will continue. The plenipotentiary and the Ministry of Health cooperate closely in this regard with the European Commission and the French Presidency and, on a bilateral basis, with individual EU Member States.

According to the data of the National Health Fund (Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia) as at the end of June 2022, PLN 113 million had been spent on health benefits for refugees from Ukraine. About 28,000 patients have received such benefits, at an average cost of PLN 4,054 per patient from this group of beneficiaries.

Social assistance¹⁹

Under the rules set out in the Special Law, refugees from Ukraine who have arrived in Poland after 24 February 2022 are entitled to social assistance support benefits, i.e. targeted assistance preceded with an assessment confirming their difficult social situation, food

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.pl/web/ua/> (14.10.2022).

¹⁷ Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1285.

¹⁸ Order of the Minister of Health of 11 March 2022 on the appointment of the Plenipotentiary of the Minister of Health for the transfer, for treatment continuation outside the borders of the Republic of Poland, of Ukrainian patients residing on the territory of the Republic of Poland due to the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine, Official Journal of the Minister of Health of 11 March 2022, item 30.

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.pl/web/ua/> (14.10.2022).

allowance, benefits in the form of social work, crisis intervention, specialist advice, care services and shelter/accommodation. Eligible persons are those who declare their intention to stay in Poland and have been entered into the PESEL register. They are entitled, *inter alia*, to a one-off cash assistance of PLN 300 per person, intended for subsistence. The assistance is provided by municipal social assistance centres with jurisdiction over the place of residence or another centre designated by the municipality in the place of residence. Refugees also have the right to free psychological assistance, which is organised by local governments. In addition, there is also free online professional psychological assistance for Ukrainian students, provided in Ukrainian. This project is implemented by the Parliament of Students of the Republic of Poland on behalf of the Minister of Education and Science.

Persons with disabilities legally residing in Poland may take advantage of assistance offered under the Solidarity Fund and the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych – PFRON). This aid can take the form of personal assistant services (participation in the “Personal Assistant of Persons with Disabilities” programme). They may also participate in a programme launched by the PFRON Supervisory Board, implemented with the participation of NGOs. Within the framework of this programme, it is possible to finance and refinance the resources spent by the district (powiat) government and the municipality to mobilise additional support for disabled Ukrainian citizens, including in the form of one-off cash assistance for social rehabilitation and reimbursement of funds connected with, *inter alia*, payment for housing, transport or access to necessary medical products.

About 273,000 different social assistance benefits had been paid out by the end of June 2022. Assistance in the form of meals at schools and kindergartens is provided to about 130 thousand children. The total cost of support provided to refugees by local governments amounted to more than PLN 38 million.

Access to education and higher education²⁰

The Special Law has introduced solutions to allow for the organisation of education for children and young people who are citizens of Ukraine, i.e. to provide them with education, upbringing and care, taking into account the adaptation of these processes to their needs and possibilities.

According to estimates, there are 700–800 thousand school-age Ukrainian children in Poland (the situation is dynamic; children come and go). Some of them study remotely. As of 1 September 2022, about 185 thousand Ukrainian children were enrolled at Polish schools.²¹

On the basis of the documents, or if there are none, on the basis of a parental statement, the total number of years of the child’s education in Ukraine is determined, as well

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset> (14.10.2022).

as the grade of primary or secondary school in which the child will continue education in Poland. The decision to admit the child to primary or secondary school is taken by the head of the institution concerned.

The child does not need to know Polish, as schools organise additional free Polish lessons for such pupils. Preparatory subjects of choice are also organised at schools.

Based on previously signed agreements between the governments of Poland and Ukraine, the recognition of a Ukrainian document as a document confirming a certain level of a child's education in Poland is possible by means of a decision of the school superintendent. Secondary school graduation certificates issued in Ukraine that provide eligibility for higher education in Ukraine, entitle *ipso jure* to apply for admission on to degree programmes in Poland.²² After 24 February 2022, more than 1,450 Ukrainian students have been registered at Polish universities, including 764 for the first time (data as of 12 September 2022).²³

All documents issued after 20 June 2006 are still recognised as equal to their Polish equivalents; exceptions being the diplomas of a doctor, dentist, pharmacist, nurse, midwife, veterinarian and architect. These require nostrification, but the process has been considerably simplified. The Ministry of Education and Science has issued recommendations to universities and academic institutions to exempt Ukrainian refugees from nostrification fees where possible or to introduce a minimum fee, and to reduce the duration of the nostrification procedure itself.

Actions for Ukrainian refugees carried out by ZUS²⁴

Just as in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, now also in the conditions of the crisis caused by the escalation of the armed conflict in Ukraine, which has triggered a mass influx of war refugees to Poland, the Social Insurance Institution (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – ZUS) has become a key entity performing the government's aid tasks – this time aimed at supporting migrants. This was determined not only by the scope of the tasks currently performed by ZUS (reaching into the area of social

22 The legal basis for documents issued before 30 September 2005 is the agreement signed in Warsaw on 10 May 1974 between the Government of the People's Republic of Poland and the Government of the USSR on the equivalence of education, documents, degrees and academic titles issued in these countries (Journal of Laws 1975, No. 4, items 14 and 15). The legal basis for the recognition of certificates, diplomas, degrees and academic titles obtained in Ukraine before 20 June 2006, in accordance with the Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of Ukraine on the temporary settlement of mutual recognition of the equivalence of documents of secondary school, secondary vocational school and higher school completion, as well as documents on the awarding of degrees and academic titles, drawn up in Warsaw on 18 May 1992 (unpublished), is the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 28 September 2006 on the nostrification of diplomas of the completion of higher education institutions abroad and confirmation of the completion of studies in a higher education institution at a specific level (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1881).

23 <https://dane.gov.pl/dataset> (14.10.2022).

24 Compiled from information at www.zus.pl and unpublished data from ZUS departments.

security and not only social insurance), but also by the staff and institutional potential of ZUS, the possibilities of functioning in a remote mode, developed and used in practice (numerous e-solutions and the ZUS Electronic Services Platform (Platforma Usług Elektronicznych), which facilitate and accelerate the submission of claims for benefits, verification of the claimants' data and payment of benefits) and having at its disposal the Complex Information System (Kompleksowy System Informatyczny) with its huge potential for collecting and processing information.

Based on an earlier, extremely positive, assessment of ZUS efficiency in the performance of commissioned tasks in crisis conditions (from the period of the implementation of the so-called anti-crisis shields aimed to mitigate the effects of restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic), the Polish Social Insurance Institution has become a body performing a significant part of the tasks provided for by the special law, especially concerning assistance geared towards the families of Ukrainian refugees.

For the purposes of the efficient implementation of support, ZUS has launched a helpline in Ukrainian. And it is there that refugees can obtain information on various benefits payable by ZUS (mainly the child-support benefit of PLN 500 per month per child), as well as information on, for example, taking up employment and starting business activity in Poland, including relief programmes available to Ukrainian refugees (relief for start-up, unregistered activity, small business and the so-called 2-year lower ZUS contributions). Already on the first day of the hotline's operation, the consultants received nearly 850 calls.

From the first days of the escalation of the war in Ukraine, interpreters speaking Ukrainian were waiting in ZUS offices. Information materials printed in this language have been also prepared. In addition, information on all aid solutions has been made available in Ukrainian on the Social Insurance Institution's website. The website includes up-to-date information on the requirements for obtaining family benefits, health insurance, old-age and disability pensions. A profile in Ukrainian on the ZUS Electronic Services Platform has been launched.

The Social Insurance Institution has also organised a nationwide information campaign: "Weekend for Ukraine". In various places in Poland, ZUS offices were open to Ukrainian refugees who wanted to obtain information on the assistance they were entitled to or to apply for benefits. A special point has been also set up at the National Stadium in Warsaw.

From the beginning of April 2022, Ukrainian citizens may take advantage of online consultations at ZUS in their native language. On the side of the Polish Social Insurance Institution, such an e-visit is attended by a ZUS expert and a Ukrainian interpreter. During the e-visit, a refugee may receive assistance in submitting claims for family benefits and in setting up a profile on the ZUS Electronic Services Platform.

Refugees whose Polish pension had been paid by ZUS into an account in a Ukrainian bank, and who were unable to collect their benefit in Ukraine due to the war, were given the opportunity (at their request) to transfer this benefit to an account in Poland or in another country where they are currently living.

In the first two months of the Special Law's validity (between 12 March and 19 May 2022), 227,000 Ukrainian citizens were registered for social insurance. Almost 150,000 of them had not been previously insured in Poland. Women predominated among them, accounting for 69 per cent of the total. Half of these women were employed in menial jobs. In turn, 38 per cent of men are usually employed as industrial workers or craftsmen. The remaining 78,000 were re-registered persons already working in Poland before the outbreak of the war.

The number of foreigners registered with ZUS has been steadily increasing for years. The number of insured persons arriving from Ukraine is also growing. In 2008, there were 16 thousand of them, or 25 per cent of all foreigners registered in ZUS databases, and in April 2022 – 699 thousand people, or 72 per cent. This is an almost 44-fold increase. In the second quarter of 2022, ZUS statistics recorded 729 thousand Ukrainians who have taken up legal work in Poland and pay contributions to the Social Insurance Fund. During these three months of 2022, the number of legally employed Ukrainians increased by 62 thousand.

Currently, women account for 39 per cent of insured Ukrainians. Besides, 57 per cent of Ukrainians work on the basis of an employment contract, while 42 per cent have found a job based on a mandate contract, with women more often than men working on a contract of mandate and less often on the basis of an employment contract.

Ukrainian nationals and their Polish employers have often used the simplified procedure of work legalisation on the basis of a declaration of entrusting work to a foreigner.

The Special Law provides Ukrainian citizens with broad access to family benefits. They are entitled to them on the same bases as Polish citizens. These include family benefits payable by local government, as well as benefits payable by ZUS, which are more attractive to Ukrainian citizens. These are the following:

- “Family 500+” (“Rodzina 500+”) child-care benefit,
- family care capital (*rodzinny kapitał opiekuńczy*, so-called RKO-U),
- co-financing of nursery fees,
- “Good Start” (“Dobry Start”) benefit.

Thanks to the far-reaching automation of customer service, ZUS has adapted its IT systems in a very short time to accept applications for family benefits in Ukrainian.

These measures have brought excellent results: by 25 August 2022, refugees had submitted 714,000 applications for family benefits, including applications for child-care benefits for 806,000 children. Benefits for the families of refugees from Ukraine are only available to refugees residing in Poland. Any departure for more than 30 days must be reported to ZUS. As of 19 August 2022, a form for notifying departures had been made available on the ZUS Electronic Services Platform, which by the end of August had been used by 1,300 people. Departures may also be notified by telephone or in person at a ZUS facility.

So far, 63,000 benefits have been withheld on the basis of notifications of departures. An obligation to monitor benefit entitlements results from the responsibility for public funds management. These funds are significant: by 25 August 2022, the cost of

government assistance to refugees from Ukraine paid out by ZUS in the form of family benefits amounted to almost PLN 1.1 billion. 868,000 benefits were granted for about 500,000 children.

ZUS employees were also directly involved in helping Ukrainian refugees. With the approval of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, ZUS received the first refugee families as early as the end of February and the beginning of March, making the facilities of its training base available for them as a place of residence. In addition, ZUS employees organise collections of the most necessary items for Ukrainian citizens. The collected products are handed over to the Mazovian Regional Branch of the Polish Red Cross.

Conclusion

Starting from 24 February 2022, refugees from Ukraine have received assistance in Poland in various forms. It is estimated that the cost of public and private spending on various types of support has amounted to PLN 25.4 billion, of which public expenditure was PLN 15.9 billion.²⁵

With the involvement of public and non-public entities, it has proved extremely important to coordinate the activities of governmental, local-governmental and non-governmental institutions and to seek solutions optimising the assistance provided, while respecting the principle of equal treatment, as well as to exchange information with other countries on the possible reallocation of refugees and on various forms of support, including financial.

In the situation of decreasing inflows of new refugees, the effectiveness and efficiency of the support provided is being successively verified and some rules and entitlements are being modified accordingly. Systemic solutions are also being developed, the need for which is most evident in the organisation of education for children and young people from Ukraine.

The Social Insurance Institution is consistently, efficiently and on an ongoing basis fulfilling its obligations under the Special Law. As a result, aid quickly reaches people in need.

The next step in public institutional activities to support refugees from Ukraine should result not only from an assessment of the hitherto actions in terms of achieving the intended purpose of this assistance, but also in terms of assessing the impact of the instruments used. This applies, for example, to the recognition of refugees' situation on the labour market (in terms of the legality of employment, working conditions, equal treatment, placement of labour resources and their optimal use), the situation in educational institutions (mainly in terms of overcoming difficulties arising in the practice of

²⁵ Polski Instytut Ekonomiczny, op. cit., p. 4.

educational institutions), solutions to enable the professional activity of mothers of young children, or housing issues (assessment of the potential and the development of rules for making it available to refugees).

While being aware of the need to provide more than just material support to refugees, it should be noted that assistance to this community has put a heavy burden on the state budget and on citizens' budgets, which in the conditions of the growing economic crisis indicates a significant limitation of the possibility to continue to rely on these resources. Essential are additional sources of finance both from EU institutions as well as on the part of international aid organisations.²⁶

²⁶ Cf. Ibid., pp. 37–38, and *Gościenna Polska 2022+...*, op. cit., pp. 4–5.

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Immigrants, residents, employees. Refugees from Ukraine in local migration policy in Poland illustrated with the example of selected agglomerations

Authors contribution:

A – Research project
 B – Data collection
 C – Statistical analysis
 D – Data interpretation
 E – Manuscript preparation
 F – Literature analysis
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Introduction: The multi-million migration of Ukrainians, triggered by Russian aggression, has been one of the most serious challenges in Poland post 1989. The responsibility for refugees' reception and integration rests mainly with local governments. Before 2022, only some cities in Poland had autonomous local migration policy measures in place. The majority of cities in Poland started to introduce differentiated measures *ad hoc* in order to address the needs of the newly arrived migrants on the one hand, and to implement general social policy on the other.

Objective: The aim of this paper is to assemble and sum up the main activities and initiatives for which selected cities in Poland were responsible. Using the example of the largest agglomerations, i.e. Warsaw, Cracow and Gdansk, the paper presents the main groups of intervention measures implemented in the area of local migration policies in 2022. Particular attention has been paid to changes in the way forced migrants are perceived as a target population within the surveyed cities.

Materials and methods: The paper is mainly based on desk research, mostly on the analysis of information and materials published by municipal authorities or non-governmental organisations. In addition, conclusions from the largest questionnaire surveys have been presented, showing the context of migration and migrants from Ukraine who have arrived after 24 February 2022.

Results: The conducted analyses show that the largest cities in Poland were ready to respond to the crisis within hours, thanks to their previously implemented local migration policies. The measures they have implemented were primarily aimed at providing and organising humanitarian aid. Relatively quickly, however, steps have been taken to create conditions for Ukrainians to integrate. To a lesser extent, cities have been involved in measures aimed at enabling the refugees to enter the labour market. This does not mean, however, that the surveyed cities do not plan to integrate Ukrainian refugees into the labour market.

Key words: cities, crisis, local migration policy, Poland, refugees, Ukraine

Imigranci, mieszkańcy, pracownicy. Uchodźcy z Ukrainy w lokalnej polityce migracyjnej w Polsce na przykładzie wybranych aglomeracji

Wstęp: Wywołana rosyjską agresją wielomilionowa migracja Ukraińców stanowi jedno z najpoważniejszych wyzwań w Polsce po 1989 r. Odpowiedzialność za przyjęcie uchodźców oraz ich integrację spoczywa głównie na samorządach. Jedynie część miast w Polsce przed 2022 r. realizowała autonomiczne działania z obszaru lokalnej polityki migracyjnej. Większość miast w Polsce rozpoczęła *ad hoc* wprowadzać zróżnicowane działania, mające z jednej strony odpowiadać na potrzeby nowo przybyłych migrantów, z drugiej zaś strony realizować ogólną politykę społeczną miast.

Cel: Celem artykułu jest zebranie i podsumowanie głównych działań oraz inicjatyw, za które odpowiadały wybrane miasta w Polsce. Wykorzystując przykład największych aglomeracji, czyli Warszawy, Krakowa i Gdańska, tekst przedstawia główne grupy działań interwencyjnych, jakie były realizowane w obszarze lokalnych polityk migracyjnych w 2022 r. Szczególna uwaga została zwrócona na zmiany w zakresie postrzegania migrantów przymusowych jako docelowej grupy mieszkańców badanych miast.

Materiały i metody: W artykule wykorzystano głównie analizę danych zastanych, w większości informacji i materiałów publikowanych przez urzędy miast czy organizacje pozarządowe. Dodatkowo zaprezentowane zostały wnioski z największych badań kwestionariuszowych, ukazujące kontekst migracji i migrantów z Ukrainy, którzy przybyli po 24 lutego 2022 r.

Wyniki: Przeprowadzone analizy ujawniają, że największe miasta w Polsce, dzięki realizowanym wcześniej lokalnym politykom migracyjnym, były gotowe zareagować na kryzys w ciągu godzin. Wdrożone przez nich działania w pierwszej kolejności miały na celu niesienie i organizowanie pomocy humanitarnej. Relatywnie szybko jednak podjęto kroki w celu stworzenia dla Ukraińców warunków do integracji. W mniejszym stopniu miasta zaangażowały się w działania umożliwiające wejście uchodźcom na rynek pracy. Nie oznacza to jednak, że miasta te nie planują włączania uchodźców z Ukrainy w ten rynek.

Słowa kluczowe: miasta, kryzys, lokalna polityka migracyjna, Polska, uchodźcy, Ukraina

Submitted: 24.10.2022

Accepted: 8.3.2023

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2358

Introduction

We wish to assure you that our cities will be a safe haven for all your compatriots who choose to spend this extremely difficult period in our country.¹

Such a declaration appeared in the joint position of the Mayors of Voivodship City Councils published already on 25 February 2022. It was an immediate reaction to the unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. As it turned out a few weeks later, this day marked a whole new chapter in the history of migration in Europe. Russia's unprovoked invasion of sovereign Ukraine triggered a hitherto unknown scale of forced migration. Although increased refugee migrations had occurred in Europe over the past three decades, the present so-called refugee crisis significantly differs from previous ones. The study by the Union of Polish Metropolises (Unia Metropolii Polskich)² indicates that the forced migration from Ukraine after February 2022 is distinguished by, *inter alia*, a much higher scale of displacement, its pace, the socio-demographic profile of the refugees and, above all, the European Union approach to Ukrainians fleeing the war (thanks, *inter alia*, to the activation of the 2001 directive on temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons). Moreover, equally the response of individual policy-makers, both at governmental and central level, was remarkable and widespread, one incomparable to previous emergencies. Until now, no such dynamic involvement of cities has been encountered, which, as a sign of solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainians, arranged within hours the reception points, material assistance or other elements of urban infrastructure ready to receive thousands of refugees.³

Above all, Poland's larger and smaller cities have become the main space for organising and providing *ad hoc* support for hundreds of thousands of refugees. It was the authorities of local government units that faced the most serious challenge after 1989, namely to create an infrastructure for receiving foreigners.⁴ It is estimated that up to 7 million residents left Ukraine within the first six months (although some have returned to their country of origin or are travelling between countries⁵). A significant number of them have arrived in Poland, some decided to stay there, others went to

1 Związek Miast Polskich, *W imię wolności i pokoju – Stanowisko Przewodniczących Rad Miast Wojewódzkich RP*, 25.2.2022, <https://www.miasta.pl/aktualnosci/w-imie-wolnosci-i-pokoju-stanowisko-przewodniczacych-rad-miast-wojewodzkich-rp> (15.2.2023).

2 Unia Metropolii Polskich, *Miejska gościnność: wielki wzrost, wyzwania i szanse. Raport o uchodźcach z Ukrainy w największych polskich miastach*, 2022, https://metropolie.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/UMP_raport_Ukraina_20220429_final.pdf (15.2.2023).

3 Eurocities, *Cities build bridges for Ukrainian refugees*, 2022, <https://eurocities.eu/latest/cities-build-bridges-for-ukrainian-refugees/> (15.2.2023).

4 D. Wach, M. Pachocka, *Polish Cities and Their Experience in Integration Activities – The Case of Warsaw*, "Studia Europejskie" 2022, Vol. 2.

5 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *International Migration Outlook*, Paris 2022.

other countries.⁶ For the first time, it is no longer only Warsaw and other urban agglomerations that have become the main destination for Ukrainians. The spatial diversity of foreigners in Poland meant that practically every district (powiat) city faced the serious challenge of providing refugees with minimal assistance. The extent of these measures and the pace of their introduction were determined by a number of factors and conditions (e.g. financial, human resources, organisational factors), but no local government has refused Ukrainians hospitality. Although the central government took a unanimous decision to accept refugees, creating a completely new refugee migration policy, in reality the day-to-day responsibility for crisis management rested with local governments.⁷

The aim of this paper is to assemble information and sum up the main activities and initiatives for which selected cities in Poland were responsible, in view of the migration situation in 2022. Using the example of the largest agglomerations, i.e. Warsaw, Cracow and Gdansk, I attempt to show the intervention measures in the area of local migration policies. My main question relates to the evolution of these measures, in particular the solutions assuming their long-term continuation, which are supposed to result in the total integration of these new residents. Thus, I draw attention to the change in the way that forced migrants are perceived, i.e. as different target groups: first as refugee migrants requiring shelter and the meeting of their basic needs, then as residents who should be supported in the process of integration into socio-economic life, and then also as employees. I pay particular attention to the approach of local authorities and non-governmental organisations to the promotion of Ukrainians' activity and to their support in access to local labour markets. In the following section I argue that support in the employment of this new community of Ukrainians is one of the most important challenges and tasks facing local governments. Finding legal employment may represent the relatively high level of independence and proficiency of immigrants and thus be regarded as a success for local government in the process of immigrant population integration.

The paper refers to the theoretical background explaining the importance of the local level in the formulation and implementation of migration and integration policies. It contributes to the discussion on the role of cities during the emergencies and crises they increasingly have had to face. Drawing on the desk research, I try to organise and sum up the knowledge about the approaches of selected local governments during the first few months of managing the 2022 refugee crisis. The paper is intended as an overview and a contribution to the discussion of possible lines of intervention in the process of developing sustainable measures for the reception and integration of immigrants.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ M. Duszczyk, P. Kaczmarczyk, *The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges*, "Intereconomics" 2022, Vol. 57(3); Unia Metropolii Polskich, op. cit.

Local immigration policy – conceptual considerations

For at least two decades, researchers around the world have been paying increasing attention to the so-called local turn in migration policies.⁸ This is an element of a wider phenomenon of the increasing importance of the local dimension in the process of diagnosing and solving socio-economic problems, taking into account the participation of local actors and civil society.⁹ With regard to migration, the local turn generally refers to the involvement of local governments in the process of managing international migration, first of all in measures in favour of immigration to a given region and in favour of immigrants. Although it is still central governments that play a primary role in regulating the entry and residence of foreigners, actors at the local level are more and more often developing autonomous measures to attract or integrate immigrants.¹⁰ This is due to the well-known fact that most migrants in developed countries prefer to settle in cities. First and foremost, this is linked to the much greater opportunities offered by the so-called arrival infrastructures in cities, which makes it easier for migrants to find a job or gain support for integration (e.g. education or language courses, see Bruno Meeus, Bas van Heur, Karel Arnaut¹¹). Therefore, in view of the increasing scale of foreigner arrivals, cities, both agglomerations and smaller towns, are conducting diverse efforts to develop an adequate approach to migration and migrants.

It should be noted, however, that the extent of the introduced bottom-up initiatives and the possibility of their continuation depends, *inter alia*, on the degree of the administrative decentralisation, public openness to migration, the presence of foreigners or the tangible and intangible resources available to individual local governments.¹² However, although the cities do not have much influence on the formulation of the nationwide admission policy, it is mainly within their remit to address so-called immigrant policy issues. Summing up the development of local

8 Y. Ahouga, *The local turn in migration management: the IOM and the engagement of local authorities*, "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies" 2018, Vol. 44(9); P. Scholten, R. Penninx, *The Multilevel Governance of Migration and Integration* [in:] *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe*, eds. B. Garcés-Masareñas, R. Penninx, 2016; E. Ślęzak, A. Bielewska, *Cities' migration policies in a country with a deficit of migration policy. The case of Poland*, "International Migration" 2022, Vol. 60(3).

9 C. Ranci, T. Brandsen, S. Sabatinelli, *Local Welfare Systems in Europe in the Age of Austerity* [in:] *Social Vulnerability in European Cities. The Role of Local Welfare in Times of Crisis*, eds. C. Ranci, T. Brandsen, S. Sabatinelli, New York 2014; M. Theiss, *Lokalne obywatelstwo społeczne w koncepcjach lokalnej polityki społecznej – poszukiwania metodologiczne* [in:] *Lokalne obywatelstwo społeczne w polityce społecznej. Przykład wychowania przedszkolnego*, ed. M. Theiss, Warszawa 2018.

10 M. Duszczyk, D. Pszczółkowska, D. Wach, *Warsaw: A new immigration city in search of its integration policy towards newcomers* [in:] *The Routledge Handbook of the Governance of Migration and Diversity in Cities*, eds. T. Caponio, P. Scholten, R. Zapata-Barrero, 2018.

11 B. Meeus, B. van Heur, K. Arnaut, *Migration and the Infrastructural Politics of Urban Arrival* [in:] *Arrival Infrastructures. Migration and Urban Social Mobilities*, eds. B. Meeus, K. Arnaut, B. van Heur, 2019.

12 P. Scholten, R. Penninx, op. cit.

integration policies in Eastern Europe, Jochen Franzke and José Ruano de la Fuente conclude that institutional arrangements in the area of migration policies are more important in this region than the characteristics of the migrant population itself in a given country.¹³ This means that the implementation of local or municipal migration policies remains a highly politicised issue. However, as the past experience of European cities has shown, measures to integrate foreigners often contradict the official approach of a country's government to immigration issues.¹⁴ Karolina Łukasiewicz, Tanzilya Oren and Saumya Tripathi also draw attention to social innovations emerging in cities in response to the needs and problems faced by a growing foreign population.¹⁵

The adoption of specific long-term measures or *ad hoc* interventions by individual local governments is driven by a diversity of interests and values. Some local authorities see migration, especially economic migration, as a way to mitigate the negative consequences of depopulation or population ageing processes.¹⁶ It is primarily the intensity of influx processes that stands behind the development of autonomous migration policies at the local level. The larger the proportion of foreigners living in a given city or region, the more arguments policymakers have for taking into account the needs of this part of society.¹⁷ The recommendations and guidelines of international organisations, especially the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which emphasises the support of initiatives and the involvement of local authors in the process of managing contemporary migration, are also not without significance.¹⁸

However, by the time local decision-makers saw the need to create bottom-up measures for migrants, non-governmental organisations (NGO) already had years of experience in this area. It is the locally operating foundations, associations, migrant organisations, but also religious organisations that are most responsible for the process of integrating the immigrant population into the social fabric.¹⁹ Mikołaj Pawlak and Patrycja Matusz-Protasiewicz note that non-governmental organisations, beside complementing the measures taken by the state towards foreigners, also control and sometimes contest them.²⁰ However, these entities do not always actively and effectively carry out

13 J. Franzke, J.M. Ruano de la Fuente, *Conclusions: An Overview of Local Migrant Integration Policies in Europe* [in:] *Local Integration of Migrants Policy. European Experiences and Challenges*, eds. J. Franzke, J. M. Ruano de la Fuente, 2021, p. 338.

14 E. Ślęzak, A. Bielewska, op. cit.

15 K. Łukasiewicz, T. Oren, S. Tripathi, *Local welfare system response to refugees: between innovations, efficiency, and creating unequal opportunities*, "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies" 2023, Vol. 49(2).

16 M. Lesińska, K. Matuszczyk, *Działania samorządów wobec migracji w kontekście zmian demograficznych. Przykład trzech polskich województw*, "Studia Regionalne i Lokalne" 2019, Vol. 3 (77).

17 Y. Ahouga, op. cit.

18 Ibid.

19 B. Meeus, B. van Heur, K. Arnaut, op. cit.

20 M. Pawlak, P. Matusz-Protasiewicz, *Organizacje pozarządowe wobec cudzoziemców w Polsce: Od pomocy doraźnej do upowszechniania europejskiej ramy polityki integracji*, "Trzeci Sektor" 2015, Vol. 35(2).

tasks for the inclusion of immigrants.²¹ Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that such actors become involved at the initiation stage of the political process of addressing migrants' problems and then developing adequate solutions and implementing them.²² The experience of recent years reveals the involvement of other actors in this process as well, including employers or intermediaries, interested not only in integrating refugees, but also in profit-making in this area.²³

The scope of special instruments or measures for the benefit of foreign urban residents is often dictated by general legislation, conditioning the rules of access and use of, for example, social assistance.²⁴ However, with the local turn in migration policy, social policy researchers are also noticing the emergence of local welfare regimes for populations with special needs.²⁵ Increasingly, cities are taking responsibility for solving local social problems as well as for establishing institutions to support immigrants' integration.²⁶ Integration policies, whose implementation is entrusted to local governments, emphasise the provision of access to housing, education, language courses, material assistance or the labour market.²⁷ However, some researchers take the view that it is mainstreaming that should be a much more legitimate approach to managing international migration, not only at the local level. It proposes a shift from creating separate measures or solutions for individual groups of residents towards a universal approach for all, expressed, *inter alia*, in the removal of barriers for minority groups.²⁸

The importance of local solutions becomes apparent when crisis or emergency management procedures are implemented. This was well illustrated by the 2015 refugee crisis, during which it was cities located on the main migration routes or in the destination countries that were confronted with the need to provide an assistance infrastructure.²⁹ Without the measures implemented by the cities and without international support, it would have been impossible to minimise the impact of the humanitarian crisis in Europe at the time. The great adaptability and high level of flexibility of some local governments became apparent also during the COVID-19 pandemic, where additional measures were taken early to deal with the effects of the virus. Some local governments around the world proved to be effective centres for managing the health crisis and, with their resources, have become more effective players than central governments.³⁰

21 M. Mołęda-Zdziech, M. Pachocka, D. Wach, *Immigration and Integration Policies in Poland: Institutional, Political and Social Perspective* [in:] *Local Integration of Migrants Policy. European Experiences and Challenges*, eds. J. Franzke, J. M. Ruano de la Fuente, 2021, pp. 180–181.

22 E. Ślęzak, A. Bielawska, op. cit.

23 F. Hillmann, B. Toğral Koca, "By women, for women, and with women": on the integration of highly qualified female refugees into the labour Markets of Berlin and Brandenburg, "Comparative Migration Studies" 2021, Vol. 9(3).

24 C. Ranci, T. Brandsen, S. Sabatinelli, op. cit.

25 K. Łukasiewicz, T. Oren, S. Tripathi, op. cit.

26 C. Ranci, T. Brandsen, S. Sabatinelli, op. cit.

27 P. Scholten, R. Penninx, op. cit.; K. Łukasiewicz, T. Oren, S. Tripathi, op. cit.

28 D. Wach, M. Pachocka, op. cit.

29 Y. Ahouga, op. cit.

30 J. Askim, T. Bergström, *Between lockdown and calm down. Comparing the COVID-19 responses of Norway and Sweden*, "Local Government Studies" 2021, Vol. 48(2).

Immigration to Poland in the shadow of the war in Ukraine

As highlighted in the *Introduction*, Poland has become the country of first choice for Ukrainians fleeing the war and ensuing humanitarian crisis. This is explained not only by the direct vicinity of the two countries, but above all by the cultural proximity or the developed migration infrastructure in Poland. Not without significance is also the fact that already before 2022 Poland had become a so-called new immigration country due to the systematic and intensified influx of Ukrainians after 2014.³¹ That immigration was mainly characterised by its economic purpose and its temporary nature, as well as the dominance of Ukrainian nationals among all foreigners (more than 80% of all foreigners). Although a growing population of Ukrainians settled permanently in Poland, nevertheless, the majority shuttled between the two countries. Importantly, for a long period of time, immigration to Poland had an “insular” nature.³² This means that the main region attracting foreigners was the Mazovian Voivodship, especially Warsaw. It is only in the last few years that immigrants have started to move to other parts of Poland, although mainly to voivodship cities (in particular Cracow, Lodz, Wrocław, Poznan or Tricity (the Tricity of Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia)).

However, it is worth emphasising that despite the increasingly visible change in Poland’s migration status – from a typically emigration country to an emigration-immigration one – the central government has not developed a coherent migration doctrine or a document outlining an action plan for immigration and immigrant policy. Most of the tasks in this area have been delegated to the local government level.³³ Thus, there has been a development of non-governmental organisations working for broadly understood integration, support and stimulation of activity of the selected nationality groups. Researchers point out that it is these types of entities that are responsible for integrating immigrants into society or the economy.³⁴ However, even before 2022, their capacity for action was being gradually limited, mainly through unstable funding, operating in a project system or minor participation in the development of urban policies.³⁵

This policy was confronted in February 2022 with a new reality, i.e. the influx of hundreds of thousands of more Ukrainians. At the beginning of March, 800,000 people crossed the Polish borders on a weekly basis. Already on the fifth day of assigning PESEL (Personal Identity Number) numbers to Ukrainian citizens (14 March), more than 125,000

31 M. Kindler, *Poland’s Perspective on the Intra-European Movement of Poles. Implications and Governance Responses* [in:] *Between Mobility and Migration. The Multi-Level Governance of Intra-European Movement*, eds. P. Scholten, M. van Ostijen, 2018; M. Duszczyk, K. Matuszczyk, *Non-salary employment conditions as a factor shaping migration decision-making: an example of workers from Ukraine in Poland*, “Migration Letters” 2022, Vol. 19(6).

32 M. Kindler, op. cit., p. 199.

33 M. Molęda-Zdziech, M. Pachocka, D. Wach, op. cit.; E. Ślęzak, A. Bielawska, op. cit.

34 M. Pawlak, P. Matusz-Protasiewicz, op. cit.

35 D. Wach, M. Pachocka, op. cit.

people were reported to have registered in Poland, with their number exceeding 600,000 by the end of March 2022. At the end of the school year, more than 182,000 children and youth who had arrived as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine were enrolled in the Polish education system. Thanks to the special law,³⁶ nearly 271,000 migrants from Ukraine found employment in Poland in the period from March to June alone. Although the largest number of people decided to stay in the area of the Masovian Voivodship, immigration of Ukrainians on a hitherto unknown scale was also recorded in other regions.

From the very beginning of this new migration wave, experts noticed significant differences in the socio-demographic profile of refugees, which had particular implications for the type of support provided in Poland.³⁷ Among those fleeing Ukraine, there were mainly women of working age who came to Poland with their children, less often with older persons or other relatives aged 60 and over.³⁸ According to the results obtained from the first empirical surveys conducted among the refugees, on average every second person declared themselves as having a higher education. About 20–25% of Ukrainians have a technical or vocational education.³⁹ Before fleeing the country, most immigrants worked in the service sector, doing mostly higher-skilled jobs.

In most cases, Ukrainian refugees had no experience of migration or links with Poland before 2022. According to the EWL survey,⁴⁰ as many as 45% of Ukrainians have no or limited knowledge of the Polish language, with only 4% declaring themselves as fluent. Nevertheless, as many as 55% of refugees speak English and 90% speak Russian. The surveys by the National Bank of Poland (Narodowy Bank Polski)⁴¹ revealed that 53% of refugees had no previous experience of Poland, only 14% had stayed or worked in Poland. Despite numerous legal facilities, the openness of the Poles and the public administration or the removal of barriers, Ukrainians experienced numerous difficulties during their initial period of residence. It is worth noting that for as many as 40% of the Ukrainians surveyed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),⁴² the issue of employment was perceived as an urgent need (right after receiving cash for living expenses). Almost every second (45%) respondent had a problem finding a job in Poland. These results can therefore be interpreted (despite numerous methodological reservations) as an expression of refugees' interest in economic activity in Poland and the need to become independent by entering the labour market.

36 Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that state, Journal of Laws 2022, item 583.

37 M. Duszczyk, P. Kaczmarczyk, op. cit.

38 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Lives on Hold: Profiles and Intentions of Refugees from Ukraine*, 2022, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/94176> (15.2.2023).

39 Ibid. and EWL, *Raport specjalny "Uchodźcy z Ukrainy w Polsce"*, 2022, <https://ewl.com.pl/raport-specjalny-uchodzcy-z-ukrainy-w-polsce/> (15.2.2023).

40 Ibid.

41 Narodowy Bank Polski, *Sytuacja życiowa i ekonomiczna uchodźców z Ukrainy w Polsce. Raport z badania ankietowego zrealizowanego przez OO NBP*, 2022, <https://www.nbp.pl/publikacje/migracyjne/sytuacja-uchodzcow-z-Ukrainy-w-Polsce.pdf> (15.2.2023).

42 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, op. cit.

Methods, data sources and case study analysis

This paper is based on an analysis of measures taken in three agglomerations in Poland. The selection of these case studies was deliberate. Warsaw, Gdansk and Cracow are the largest cities in Poland with an above-average presence of immigrants before 2022. In Cracow, for example, the migrant population was estimated at 60–70 thousand, while in Warsaw the actual scale could exceed 150 thousand people. These included both wage earners, foreign students and family members. Moreover, these cities are forerunners of bottom-up initiatives to develop migration strategies.⁴³ In Gdansk, on the initiative of Mayor Paweł Adamowicz, an Immigrant Integration Model was successfully developed in 2016. In the same year, the “Open Cracow” Act was also adopted in Cracow on the strength of the City Council resolution. Although Warsaw has yet to develop a coherent strategic document on migration policy, elements related to the integration of foreigners have been included into the city’s general strategic documents. What is however important, these cities differ in the progress in the development of institutionalised measures for foreigners, as well as models for their integration. Among refugees who have been assigned a PESEL number, those registered in Warsaw prevailed (104 thousand), with less than 17 thousand in Gdansk and about 30 thousand in Cracow.

To best explain the response process of these locations to the situation after 24 February 2022, a secondary analysis of publicly available data (desk research) has been applied. These include, primarily, information published on the websites of the city authorities, as well as materials from the Association of Polish Cities or the Paweł Adamowicz Union of Polish Metropolises, to which the three analysed cities belong. Additional research material is also provided by the white paper summing up the Local Government Roundtable, which took place on 8 and 9 May 2022. In addition, articles published in the local press, mainly in the city biweekly “Kraków.pl”, have been taken into account. These data are complemented with a qualitative analysis of the websites of the largest non-governmental organisations actively involved in helping foreigners before 2022, as well as during the refugee crisis. The data reported on the mapujpomoc.pl website, which provides a platform for sharing information on the type and scope of assistance offered in specific locations in Poland, are a valuable addition to this picture. Such extensive material provides an insight into the main lines of intervention introduced in the three cities in Poland since February 2022.

The analysis is limited to activities that took place in the first six months after the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The evolution of the policies of the three selected cities in the provision of material aid or services to refugees from Ukraine has been reproduced. The aim is not to explain all the complexities in the development of local migration policies. In analysing the materials, the general approach of the selected local authorities towards refugees from Ukraine has been highlighted. In addition to

43 M. Molęda-Zdziech, M. Pachocka, D. Wach, op. cit.

general aid initiatives, particular attention was paid to measures in the area of employment policy for Ukrainians.

Analysis

Humanitarian and reception activities at municipal level

As the analysis of the collected material shows, already on 24 February 2022, local governments began immediate activities to organise basic reception infrastructure for people from Ukraine fleeing the war. A review of the material published on the city websites shows that cities had been taking certain preparatory steps earlier, when international public opinion was first alerted to preparations by Vladimir Putin's regime for armed aggression against Ukraine.

Cities along the Polish-Ukrainian border, mainly Przemysl or Rzeszow, were on the front line of crisis management. From there, migrants were directed by volunteers to other locations in Poland (or abroad) or were provided with transport by friends, family members or unknown persons to other regions of Poland. As the aforementioned research has revealed, not all migrants had previous residence experience in Poland or had developed migration networks, so for many of them, the arrival in a foreign locality was associated with even more stress and challenges in terms of organising a temporary shelter.

Due to their greater autonomy of action, the analysed cities were able to start the organisation of assistance as early as the first hours after news of the shelling of Ukraine on the morning of 24 February 2022. It should be noted that Gdansk, Cracow and Warsaw had adequate resources to mobilise additional reserves or organise people and space, thus creating a temporary infrastructure to receive refugees. Most of the earliest activities were concentrated around train or bus stations, which became the main locations for organising aid. Volunteers in this space included both random individuals and non-governmental organisations with resources and experience in helping Ukrainians (i.e. speaking Ukrainian and/or Russian). The websites of the largest organisations providing support to immigrants displayed the necessary information about where, and exactly what, help could be obtained. What is important, from day one, there was a strong emphasis on removing the language barrier, which meant including persons speaking Ukrainian or Russian in activities co-organised by the cities.

From the very first days, municipal authorities and their subordinate institutions started to play the role of assistance coordinators. This was the case, for example, in Warsaw, where the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Foreigners (Branżowa Komisja Dialogu Społecznego ds. Cudzoziemców), with the support of other units, has launched a Coordination Support Centre in the Palace of Culture and Science (Pałac Kultury i Nauki). The city authorities were aware of the huge scale of the social

upsurge in the reception of people from Ukraine by local residents. Therefore, in order to coordinate this process and protect Ukrainians from dishonest people, cities have launched platforms where people interested in supporting Ukrainians could make such a declaration. The infrastructure belonging to the cities soon turned into warehouses with foodstuffs, clothes or other necessary materials for the refugees. Importantly, local governmental institutions have also recognised the need to monitor the relocation of refugees from Poland to other countries. For example, the authorities of Cracow have established cooperation in this area with, *inter alia*, Orléans or regions in France and Switzerland.

Various organisations have been involved in the preparation of humanitarian aid, both municipal and regional, as well as the aforementioned non-governmental organisations. For example, the Voivodship Public Library in Cracow has collected 300 prams, 80 children's highchairs and 70 cots in the first two weeks of the city's emergency management. Similar collections have been organised in each of the analysed cities. Significantly, the announcements made through the municipalities' websites focused on the specific needs of refugees in a particular location. As part of local crisis management, it has been ensured that the aid provided reached those in need of specific goods or services.

From the first days, the cities made efforts to provide the necessary psychological support to Ukrainians fleeing the war. As early as February, the first points of contact were organised for arriving migrants. Cities also set up helplines that they could use. Further groups of local actors were being involved, becoming an important support for the refugees and the municipalities. This is what Rafał Trzaskowski, Mayor of Warsaw, said on 26 February:

The city is constantly monitoring the situation related to the incoming groups of refugees. We are doing everything in our power to ensure that no one is left without care. We really want to help them by providing a roof over their heads, peace and security. Most people come here to stay with friends, acquaintances, but sometimes they don't have friends, so we find them accommodation. We also provide them with psychological support.⁴⁴

Also noteworthy are the symbolic actions expressing support for Ukraine and Ukrainians and showing openness to foreigners in the city. Free public transport has been provided in the three cities. Furthermore, the relevant city services took steps to adapt their websites, creating Ukrainian-language versions. The city councils also took steps to break cooperation with twin cities in Russia.⁴⁵ At the beginning, Ukrainian colours or flags were placed in public spaces. Also in public transport, Ukrainians were able to see manifestations of Polish solidarity. The cities also did not forget about their residents offering assistance to Ukrainians. In Gdansk, for example, a short guide has been

44 Urząd m.st. Warszawy, *Stołeczna pomoc dla uchodźców*, 26.2.2022, <https://um.warszawa.pl/-/stoleczna-pomoc-dla-uchodzcow> (15.2.2023).

45 Związek Miast Polskich, *Płock, Kraków – zawieszenie współpracy z miastami z Rosji i Białorusi*, 3.3.2022, <https://www.miaasta.pl/aktualnosci/plock-krakow-zawieszenie-wspolpracy-z-miastami-z-rosji-i-bialorusi> (15.2.2023).

prepared on what to talk about and what to do in contacts with families with children.⁴⁶ Thus, the city wanted to well prepare and involve local residents, who became equally important actors in providing humanitarian aid to refugees.

It is also worth emphasising here that the cities under review have not limited their engagement in helping refugees to the administrative area alone. A particular manifestation is the cooperation with other cities in the European Union to increase the volume of support for Ukrainians. In addition, in May 2022, the Warsaw authorities organised the transport of five buses with food and hygiene products, which were handed over to the authorities of Mykolaiv in Ukraine.⁴⁷ Similar assistance has been offered by the authorities of Cracow (five city buses for Lviv), as well as by Gdansk, which has provided Lviv with a bus belonging to the city's public transport company.⁴⁸

Towards integration at local level

It is difficult to indicate the precise point at which actions taken by various actors in a given locality cease to be of an *ad hoc* nature and become instead a long-term activity. The range of possible activities leading to integration is wide and mainly includes the provision of access to housing, education or social assistance. In the case of refugees, it will also include support for cultural adaptation, especially learning a new language. The following section outlines the approach of the three analysed cities to measures aimed to help turn Ukrainians into new residents.

First of all, urban policy actors in Gdansk, Cracow and Warsaw confirmed their awareness of the need for the long-term activity to integrate Ukrainian immigrants into the normal functioning of the cities. A coherent narrative emerges from the repeatedly evoked statements of city mayors, their deputies or directors of the various departments in municipal offices about the need to implement inclusive activities. For example, Julia Żylina-Chudzik, an expert from the Foreign Cooperation Office of City Hall in Cracow, wrote:

We are trying to develop systemic solutions that will allow us to support Ukraine and Ukrainians coming to Cracow in the long term.⁴⁹

It has been assumed that some refugees will remain in these cities, therefore a quick response and implementation of appropriate measures can foster their successful integration in Poland. Once the necessary support has been provided to those fleeing Ukraine, they should be offered space for social and economic integration. Cities hosting refugees

46 *Jak rozmawiać z rodzinami z Ukrainy, które gościsz u siebie?*, <https://ukraina.gdanskpomaga.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Jak-rozmawiac-z-rodzinami-z-Ukrainy-1.pdf> (15.2.2023).

47 Urząd m.st. Warszawy, *Stołeczne autobusy jadą do Ukrainy*, 11.5.2022, <https://um.warszawa.pl/-/stoleczne-autobusy-jada-do-ukrainy> (15.2.2023).

48 *Najdłuższa miejska trasa? Trójmiasto–Lwów. Autobusy z Gdańska i Gdyni służą już na Ukrainie*, [gdansk.pl 2.4.2022, https://www.gdansk.pl/wiadomosci/Najdluzsza-miejska-trasa-Trojmiasto-Lwow-Autobusy-z-Gdanska-i-Gdyni-sluzajuz-na-Ukrainie,a,217215](https://www.gdansk.pl/wiadomosci/Najdluzsza-miejska-trasa-Trojmiasto-Lwow-Autobusy-z-Gdanska-i-Gdyni-sluzajuz-na-Ukrainie,a,217215) (15.2.2023).

49 https://www.krakow.pl/wydania_w_pdf/259646,1896,komunikat,krakow_pl_nr_7__304__27_04_2022_r_.html?_ga=2.250634753.628217595.1666566831-773346777.1666467273 (15.2.2023).

have become their home, as evidenced, for example, by the statement of the Mayor of Gdansk, Aleksandra Dulikiewicz, on the occasion of Easter:

That is why I am glad that we can be here together, although I dream that each of you will be able to spend Easter together with your loved ones, at home. But also know that as long as this is possible, the city of Gdansk will be home to you. All the best to you, to your loved ones. I am glad that you are here.⁵⁰

A particular manifestation of thinking about the long-term presence of foreigners in urban spaces is the establishment of institutions to be responsible for particular aspects of their integration. In Cracow, a “Children’s Haven” (“Dziecięca Przystań”) was set up at the Tauron Arena on the city’s initiative, where, in addition to a range of educational, entertainment or physical activities for children, support was also provided for parents. Cities have also established cooperation with non-governmental organisations, both at local and international level (e.g. Cracow’s cooperation with “Save the Children”).⁵¹ This type of activity is also taking place in Warsaw, as mentioned by Renata Kaznowska, deputy mayor of the city of Warsaw:

Since the first day of the war we have been helping our guests from Ukraine. We know that helping refugees is a long-term, well-thought-out activity that actually supports them in finding their way in the new reality. We have taken special care of children and youth, and thanks to the huge financial support from UNICEF, together we can take care of their future. We have also prepared a wide range of support drawing on the knowledge and experience of that organisation. It is extremely important in this process to learn Polish, as not knowing it is one of the barriers to education and finding a job.⁵²

Most of the implemented solutions were not a manifestation of the cities’ innovation, they rather expressed a general approach towards foreigners, which was reflected, *inter alia*, in local strategic documents. Many of the actions in this area were justified by invoking urban programmes, which had been mainly developed after 2016. This current approach to immigrants was characterised by a much greater awareness of the socio-demographic profile of the new residents. Many measures were addressed directly to women. Cities also took care of the cultural dimension, for example by organising city tours for refugees from Ukraine. In Gdansk, walks around the city were organised in May–August 2022.⁵³ Also in Cracow, inter-generational walks based on Ukrainian themes were organised. Presented also was an offer of integration for refugees aged 60 and over, who were invited by local senior activity centres.

50 “Gdańsk jest dla Was domem”. Uchodźcy z Mariupola na świątecznym obiedzie z prezydent Dulikiewicz, gdansk.pl 24.4.2022, <https://www.gdansk.pl/wiadomosci/Uchodzczy-z-Mariupola-na-swiatecznym-obiedzie-z-prezydent-Dulikiewicz,a,218772> (15.2.2023).

51 Samorządowy Okrągły Stół, *Biała księga. Wyzwania systemowe wsparcia uchodźców na poziomie lokalnym*, Wrocław 2022, https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Okragly_stol_Biala-ksiega_www_S.pdf (15.2.2023).

52 Urząd m.st. Warszawy, *Otwarcie Centrum Edukacji i Rozwoju dla uchodźców*, <https://um.warszawa.pl/-/otwarcie-centrum-edukacji-i-rozwoju-dla-uchodzcow> (15.2.2023).

53 <https://ukraina.gdanskpomaga.pl/ukraina-poznaje-gdansk/> (15.2.2023).

Children and youth proved to be the group in need of special care. However, already before February 2022, the described cities were struggling to guarantee sufficient care facilities. The local government administration was therefore faced with an even greater challenge of reorganising the public education institutions in the middle of the school year. However, there were assurances in the messages that the cities were prepared to receive more refugees, for whom there would be room in the education facilities. In Cracow alone, 50 persons from Ukraine were employed in March 2022 to support children's adaptation. The city has also provided Ukrainian language courses for teachers. Among other things, Cracow has prepared a guide for parents, describing the most important principles of the education system in Poland, as well as the rights and duties of pupils. In the three analysed cities, preparatory wards for children have been successfully opened.

Labour market integration policy

The previous experience of cities in which large-scale refugee immigration was recorded shows that issues related to the employment of foreigners have never been a priority for intervention. The experience of war and flight, the associated stress and trauma, as well as the language barrier impede refugees' rapid entry into the labour market.⁵⁴ Moreover, according to the current regulations, persons undergoing a refugee procedure, waiting for one of the forms of international protection, are being prevented from entering the labour market for a certain period of time. As a rule, this is 6 or 12 months, during which migrants may not take up (legal) employment.

However, migrants from Ukraine in Poland are an exception, they do not have the problems usually faced by refugees in host countries. This is mainly due to the European Union Directive, mentioned in the *Introduction*, enabling temporary, "free" movement within the territory of Member States, as well as national solutions abolishing the requirement for a work permit or employer's declaration of intent to employ a foreigner. Paradoxically, people fleeing Ukraine were not perceived through the prism of refugees in need of large-scale support. Already on the first day of the war in Ukraine, the narrative in the national press suggested that the Polish economy was capable of offering jobs to up to 700 thousand foreigners.⁵⁵ In the weeks that followed, there were also deliberations about the condition of the labour market in the face of the refugee crisis, which highlighted, *inter alia*, the challenges in terms of the large supply of women and the lower level of economic activity than among the earlier population of Ukrainian employees.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ F. Hillmann, B. Toğral Koca, op. cit.

⁵⁵ A. Cieślak-Wróblewska, *Z ofertami pracy dla Ukraińców w Polsce nie powinno być problemu?*, "Rzeczpospolita" 24.2.2022, <https://www.rp.pl/rynek-pracy/art35754721-z-ofertami-pracy-dla-ukraincow-w-polsce-nie-powinno-byc-problemu> (15.2.2023).

⁵⁶ R. Wszyński, W. Łątkowski, *Polski rynek pracy w obliczu fali uchodźczej z Ukrainy*, "Gazeta Prawna" 30.4.2022, <https://praca.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/8410564,polski-rynek-pracy-w-obliczu-fali-uchodzczej-z-ukrainy-obszernosc-finansowy.html> (15.2.2023).

Has a similar narrative taken place in the cities under discussion? An analysis of the available material, with data from the first few months of the new migration reality, reveals that the topic of refugee employment was not a major theme in the general discourse on Ukrainian refugees. It is worth noting that the challenge of the exodus of thousands of men who had been filling deficits in strategic sectors for the economy (e.g. construction, industry) before 2022 was also ignored. Within the framework of the local migration policy, which is being developed on an ongoing basis, only a few references can be found to measures aimed to support women in entering the labour market.

Teachers from Ukraine could count on employment in the early days of the war. Due to the appearance of thousands of school-age children and absence of systemic solutions in education policy, cities were faced with the challenge of finding assistance to teach Ukrainian-speaking children. As early as March 2022, local governments (e.g. in Cracow) were already advertising dozens of employment offers for multicultural assistants, who would be an excellent support for Polish teachers as well as for new Ukrainian pupils.

In Gdansk, Cracow and Warsaw, refugees from Ukraine, similarly to the general foreign population before them, can count on support in the process of professional reintegration. Analysing the packages of measures and instruments introduced after February 2022, one has the impression that employment issues have not been a priority for cities so far. Although this is due to a lack of competence in the field of the labour market policy, it is in the interest of cities to manage the immigrant potential. Most of the solutions in supporting Ukrainian women have been indirect, stemming, *inter alia*, from widespread measures to provide childcare. This is aptly illustrated by an example described in the biweekly “Kraków.pl”, which noted that the established “Children’s Haven” had become a place where parents could get help with writing a CV or having their photo taken for documents. Although not explicitly stated, other initiatives providing parents with the opportunity to place their children in childcare facility can also be considered as pro-employment measures.

Labour offices were in charge of the main tasks in support of the employment of Ukrainian workers. On the website gdanskpomaga.pl, interested persons can only find information about the Helpdesk for Foreigners, which operates at the Gdansk Labour Office. For example, by 1 June, the Grodzki Labour Office in Cracow had helped 2,400 Ukrainian citizens to find a job. The Office has also issued more than 2.5 thousand information packages.⁵⁷

The responsibility for supporting refugees in the process of entering the labour market fell mainly on non-governmental organisations. Many of them (e.g. the “Nasz Wybór” Foundation in Warsaw) have extensive experience in organising vocational courses as well as career counselling. In terms of the number of institutions providing assistance in finding a job, Warsaw again prevailed. According to information from the mapujpomoc.pl

⁵⁷ *Kraków pomaga Ukrainie – podsumowanie działań*, 1.6.2022, https://www.krakow.pl/aktualnosci/258246,29,ko-munikat,krakow_pomaga_ukrainie___podsumowanie_dzialan.html?_ga=2.114320451.576031196.1653424779-2081310489.1637307878 (15.2.2023).

pl website, there were 29 entities operating in the capital city of Warsaw, most of which provided information, career counselling, offered psychological assistance or language courses. Notably, none of the institutions reported to the database focused exclusively on support related to the economic integration of Ukrainians, rather they provided a diverse range of material assistance and services. The situation was similar in Cracow or Gdansk, where, however, the infrastructure of support organisations is much smaller. Accordingly, 11 and 5 entities offered their services of support in finding a job.

Summary

The aim of this paper was to organise the existing knowledge on the approach of the largest cities in Poland to the development of local migration policies in the context of refugee migration from Ukraine. It was the individual local governments that were the first (and in many areas the only) actors responding to the challenges posed by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of foreigners in such a short period of time. Although Gdansk, Cracow and Warsaw had been already undertaking voluntary bottom-up activities to integrate foreign residents for several years, the new migration context brought unprecedented problems and challenges. The approaches developed and institutions and solutions created were confronted with a crisis with far-reaching consequences for the functioning of individual local authorities.

Certainly, the cities have coped with the task set before them to manage the refugee crisis. This applies mainly to immigrant cities, where foreigners had already made up a growing population of residents before February 2022. Thanks to the resources at hand and the developed cooperation networks within the city and with other local authorities (in Poland and abroad), it was possible to organise assistance on a mass scale. The desk research made it possible to capture the three-tier approach of the three agglomerations in managing the refugee crisis. First of all, the cities took a number of measures to provide emergency aid, developing infrastructure to prevent the emergence of a serious humanitarian crisis in Poland. Within a short period of time, the local governments also started implementing tasks aimed at integrating new residents. These activities included a wide catalogue of measures that were quite universal in nature. When the new approach of local migration policies was being developed, the issue of labour market inclusiveness was not sufficiently taken into account. The lack of measures to support refugees in quickly entering the labour market does not necessarily mean that this area is left off the local migration policy agenda. This may be due, *inter alia*, to the belief that this type of support offered by local labour offices was not very popular among foreigners.

The conducted analysis, although it organises the existing knowledge on local migration policies in the context of refugee migration, is not without its limitations. First of all, the presented considerations are limited to the three largest cities in Poland, where foreigners constitute an increasing proportion of the population. A different picture

emerges from research into smaller towns and cities where, until recently, immigrants constituted a marginal part of the population. Therefore, at a further stage of research, it is necessary to take into account smaller localities that are also experiencing a change in migration status. Further empirical work is also necessary, especially interviews with key urban policy actors and NGO representatives. A special area of academic inquiry should be the economic integration of the new population of Ukrainians in Poland, primarily with regard to their working conditions and social security issues. What is lacking in the existing literature in the area of local migration policies is deliberation on the role and involvement of actors at this level in solutions to provide refugees with legal employment that guarantees access to the social insurance system.

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Pension and disability protection for Ukrainian refugees on the basis of the Polish–Ukrainian Agreement on social security in the situation of armed conflict in Ukraine

Authors contribution:

A – Research project
B – Data collection
C – Statistical analysis
D – Data interpretation
E – Manuscript preparation
F – Literature analysis
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Introduction: In view of the armed conflict in Ukraine after 23 February 2022, the Polish social security system has faced the challenge of providing adequate assistance to all groups in need, while maintaining social justice and taking into account the financial capacity of the Polish state.

Objective: The article examines the status of Ukrainian citizens in terms of pension entitlements on the basis of the Polish–Ukrainian Agreement on social security in the context of Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine.

Materials and methods: The article has been drawn up based on ZUS data on benefits handling as well as on a review of legal provisions and procedures in the field of social protection, with a particular focus on Ukrainian citizens in Poland.

Results: Polish social insurance law offers sufficient guarantees of social insurance protection to persons from Ukraine and other foreigners. The Polish social insurance system is characterised by rights egalitarianism. The Social Security Agreement and the Special Law provide important complementary protection to migrants whose careers are based on insurance periods in Poland and in another state party to the Agreement. Practical cooperation between the pension authorities of Poland and Ukraine is also important. Based on good cooperation between social security institutions, it is possible to establish solutions for customers which would facilitate them to acquire rights or to transfer benefits in a war situation.

Key words: agreement on social security, armed conflict, Pension Fund of Ukraine, Social Insurance Institution, Ukraine

Ochrona emerytalna i rentowa uchodźców z Ukrainy na gruncie polsko–ukraińskiej umowy o zabezpieczeniu społecznym w sytuacji konfliktu zbrojnego w Ukrainie

Wstęp: Wobec konfliktu zbrojnego w Ukrainie po 23 lutego 2022 r. polski system zabezpieczenia społecznego stanął przed wyzwaniem zapewnienia adekwatnej pomocy wszystkim grupom osób potrzebujących, przy jednoczesnym zachowaniu sprawiedliwości społecznej oraz uwzględnieniu możliwości finansowych państwa polskiego.

Cel: W artykule zbadano status obywateli Ukrainy w zakresie uprawnień do emerytur i rent na gruncie polsko–ukraińskiej umowy w dziedzinie zabezpieczenia społecznego w kontekście zbrojnej inwazji Rosji na Ukrainę.

Materiały i metody: Przy opracowaniu artykułu wykorzystano dane ZUS dotyczące obsługi świadczeń oraz dokonano przeglądu przepisów prawnych oraz procedur w zakresie ochrony socjalnej, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem obywateli Ukrainy w Polsce.

Wyniki: Polskie prawo ubezpieczeń społecznych w dużym stopniu gwarantuje ochronę z zakresu ubezpieczeń społecznych osobom z Ukrainy oraz innym cudzoziemcom. Polski system ubezpieczeń społecznych cechuje egalitaryzm praw. Umowa o zabezpieczeniu społecznym oraz specustawa stanowią istotną ochronę uzupełniającą, w odniesieniu do osób migrujących, których kariera zawodowa budowana jest w oparciu na okresach ubezpieczenia w Polsce i innym państwie będącym stroną tej umowy. Ważna jest też praktyczna współpraca między organami rentowymi Polski i Ukrainy. Bazując na dobrej współpracy instytucji zabezpieczenia społecznego, udaje się wypracować rozwiązania dla klientów, które ułatwiają im uzyskanie uprawnień lub transfer świadczeń w sytuacji wojennej.

Słowa kluczowe: umowa o zabezpieczeniu społecznym, konflikt zbrojny, Fundusz Emerytalny Ukrainy, Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, Ukraina

Submitted: 14.10.2022

Accepted: 14.12.2023

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2355

Introduction

Following the 23 February 2022 the armed conflict in Ukraine has had a number of effects in various areas of social life. From the point of view of social protection, the most important of these being the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees in Poland, as well as disruption in the normal functioning of the social security administration in Ukraine.

In view of the situation, in order to provide protection for those in need, it was necessary to rely on the relevant institutions of social security, or more narrowly, social insurance law. As a result, the Polish Social Insurance Institution (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – ZUS), as an administration body in charge of social insurance, has employed both standard, already existing legal acts and special legal solutions, including, above all, the Special Law of 12 March 2022¹ aimed at helping refugees who have come from Ukraine.

One of the legal instruments that has passed the aptitude and adequacy test was the international agreement on social security between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine. This Agreement was signed on 18 May 2012 and entered into force on 1 January 2014.² It is worth adding that it had already passed a smaller-scale test during the military operations taking place since 2014 in Crimea or the Donbas (i.e. on a limited area). At that time, the provisions of the Agreement, the inter-institutional arrangements and the purposive interpretation of the Agreement met expectations and allowed protection to be provided to those affected by hostilities in the context of their social entitlements in the area of the right to, and the payment of, old-age and disability pensions.

This time, however, war has covered a large part of Ukraine's territory and hundreds of thousands of refugees have appeared within Poland's borders with different types of social insurance status. Here were mothers with children, pensioners, employees or persons permanently or temporarily working in Poland, the disabled, orphans and others.

The Polish social security system was faced with the challenge of providing effective and adequate assistance to all groups of people in need while respecting the principle of social justice and taking into account Poland's financial capacity. Polish society has also shown great solidarity with war refugees from Ukraine, by providing them with shelter and material and psychological support.

Special statutory regulations have been also drawn up and enacted to protect personal rights in the field of social insurance. These regulations are complementary to the legal solutions already in place, including laws in the field of social insurance and the Social Security Agreement concluded between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine.

1 Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that state (Journal of Laws 2022, item 583, as amended); hereinafter: the Special Law.

2 The Agreement between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine on social security, concluded in Kiev on 18 May 2012 (Journal of Laws 2013, item 1373; hereinafter referred to as: the Agreement) and the Administrative Arrangement on the application of the aforementioned Agreement (Administrative Arrangement on the application of the Agreement on social security between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine, signed in Kiev on 18 May 2012; Journal of Laws of 2013, item 1375).

What is the subject matter of the international Social Security Agreement

As a preliminary point, it is necessary to answer the question of how the social insurance regulations may be applied to refugees. In Polish–Ukrainian relations we are dealing both with the application of domestic law, i.e. Acts of the Polish Parliament, and the Polish–Ukrainian Social Security Agreement, i.e. international law.

First of all, it is necessary to indicate the type or level of protection offered and the legal act it results from. This will allow one to understand the practical application of legal regulations to particular groups arriving from Ukraine.

In order to clarify the type of social protection provided by the Social Security Agreement, it is necessary to refer to its material, personal and regulatory scope. This Agreement covers social insurance, or more broadly, social security situations with a cross-border element, in other words, an international situation concerning the states-parties to the Agreement.³

On the Polish side, the Polish–Ukrainian Social Security Agreement applies to the following benefits from the social insurance system:

- sickness and maternity benefits,
- old-age, disability and survivors' pensions,
- benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases (including one-time indemnity payments and pensions awarded as a result of work accidents and occupational diseases),
- funeral grants.

The Agreement concerns the general social insurance system and the social insurance for farmers (the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (Kasa Rolniczego Ubezpieczenia Społecznego – KRUS)).

The remainder of this article will refer to the system administered by the Social Insurance Institution. More specifically, it should be pointed out that, as regards pension benefits administered by ZUS, the Agreement concerns the following benefits:

- 1) from the pension and accident insurance of the Social Insurance Fund (Fundusz Ubezpieczeń Społecznych):
 - a) old-age pensions,
 - b) pensions in respect of incapacity for work due to a general health condition,
 - c) pensions in respect of incapacity for work due to an accident at work or an occupational disease,
 - d) survivors' pensions,
 - e) nursing allowances to the benefits listed in points (a) to (d) and supplementary allowances to survivors' pensions for double orphans and the supplementary allowance for an injured veteran,

³ A. Szybkie, *Implementation of the Polish–Ukrainian Agreement on Social Security by the Social Insurance Institution. The experience of the first years of applying this regulation*, "Ubezpieczenia Społeczne. Teoria i praktyka" 2020, No. 1.

- f) one-time indemnity payments in respect of work accidents and occupational diseases,
 - g) funeral grants,
- 2) funded pensions.

On the Ukrainian side, the Agreement applies to general state social insurance concerning:

- 1) sickness (temporary incapacity for work), pregnancy and childbirth (maternity),
- 2) accidents at work, occupational diseases and/or death due to these causes,
- 3) unemployment,
- 4) old-age pensions and pensions in respect of: disability, loss of a breadwinner, seniority, in accordance with the legislation on the general state pension insurance,
- 5) funeral grants.

Pension protection under Polish domestic law

Pension protection for persons moving between Ukraine and Poland is already based on the internal regulations of the domestic law in force in Poland, i.e. Polish Acts of Parliament.⁴ It is at the level of Polish Acts of Parliament that certain rights are guaranteed and obligations are created in the field of social insurance, and this applies not only to Polish citizens, but also to foreigners entitled to such insurance coverage in Poland.

These regulations apply not only to economic migrants, but also to refugees.

Their regulatory scope takes into account, on the one hand, the rules for social insurance coverage and, on the other hand, the rules for acquiring the right to benefits from this insurance.

It should be stressed that to be covered by the social insurance a specific entitlement is needed. The basic and most common way to acquire the right to social insurance is to be in an employment relationship on the territory of the Republic of Poland, because social insurance is addressed primarily to economically active persons, including employees, and provides them with protection upon the occurrence of a specific insurance event.

In the light of the Polish Social Insurance System Act, a foreigner undertaking economic activity in Poland which entitles them to social insurance is covered by insurance under the rules of this Act.

A certain exception is introduced by Article 5(2) of the Act, which provides that social insurance, as defined in the Act, does not cover foreign nationals whose stay in the Republic of Poland is not permanent and who are employed in foreign diplomatic representations, consulates, missions, special missions or international institutions, unless international agreements provide otherwise. This exception has been repealed within the personal scope of the Polish–Ukrainian Social Security Agreement, based on Article 4 of the Agreement.

⁴ First of all it is the Act of 13 October 1998 on the social insurance system (Journal of Laws 1998, No. 137, item 887, as amended), hereinafter: the Social Insurance System Act.

Citizens of Ukraine and other persons covered by the Agreement are therefore subject to social insurance in Poland on the same basis as Polish citizens.⁵

Persons entitled to social insurance must be registered for insurance. Employees are reported by their employer, who is at the same time the payer of insurance contributions. As a consequence of being covered by social insurance in Poland, the right to social insurance benefits is acquired upon the occurrence of a risk.⁶ In particular, these are:

- short-term benefits in respect of sickness, maternity and paternity,
- benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases,
- benefits of a pension nature, in respect of long-term incapacity for work,
- old age benefits,
- survivors' pensions,
- funeral grants.

In order to acquire the right to these benefits, it is irrelevant whether the person concerned has Polish citizenship, is a foreigner or a refugee. The egalitarianism of Polish social insurance guarantees benefits to all insured persons, and this rule is reinforced by the principle of equal treatment of the insured persons expressed not only in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Article 32), but also in the Social Insurance System Act (Article 2a of the Act).

Ukrainian citizens, and refugees in particular, may benefit from the Polish social insurance system to the full extent. This level of protection refers to the guarantees arising from the regulations of the domestic social insurance law.

In certain situations with a cross-border element, the Polish–Ukrainian Social Security Agreement is applicable, as discussed later in this publication.

The key legal act which has facilitated, to some extent, the introduction of groups of refugees taking up employment in Poland into the Polish social insurance system, is the aforementioned Special Law.

Article 2(1) of this Law stipulates that the stay of a Ukrainian citizen in Poland is considered legal for a period of 18 months, starting from 24 February 2022, if he or she has legally arrived on the territory of the Republic of Poland in connection with the hostilities in Ukraine and declares his or her intention to stay in this country.

The Law introduces a number of entitlements and facilities for war refugees from Ukraine, *inter alia*, persons whose stay in Poland has been legalised in accordance with the provisions of the Special Law are entitled to benefits for families provided for in government programmes: “Family 500+” (“Rodzina 500+”), “Good Start” (“Dobry Start”),

5 This topic is discussed in more detail in: A. Szybkie, *Podleganie w Polsce ubezpieczeniom społecznym przez cudzoziemców w świetle zasady równego traktowania wynikającej z prawa UE i umów o zabezpieczeniu społecznym*, “Praca i Zabezpieczenie Społeczne” 2016, No. 6.

6 Detailed regulations are included, *inter alia*, in the Act of 17 December 1998 on pensions from the Social Insurance Fund (Notice of the Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of 28 January 2022 on the announcement of the consolidated text of the Act on pensions from the Social Insurance Fund; Journal of Laws of 2022, item 504), Act of 30 October 2002 on social insurance in respect of accidents at work and occupational disease (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 199, item 1673, as amended), Act of 25 June 1999 on cash social insurance benefits in respect of sickness and maternity (Journal of Laws of 1999, No. 60, item 636, as amended).

family care capital (so-called RKO (*rodzinny kapitał opiekuńczy*)) and nursery subsidies, and which are paid by the Polish Social Insurance Institution.

The Law has facilitated for this group of people an access to healthcare benefits in Poland, as well as to the local labour market.

The latter is particularly important from the point of view of the possibility for persons fleeing the war in Ukraine to take up employment in Poland. Such persons may obtain means of subsistence in Poland, in particular by taking up employment or becoming self-employed. The legalisation of Ukrainians' residence under the Special Law allows them to work without the need to obtain a work permit. They also have access to labour market institutions: they may register at district labour offices, take advantage of job placement programmes, vocational guidance or training. Gaining access to the labour market means, in most cases, coverage by the Polish social insurance system, which entails the obligation to pay contributions and the right to benefits, such as allowances or old-age, disability and survivors' pensions.

The entry of thousands of new employees into the Polish social insurance system has, on the one hand, guaranteed insurance protection for some refugees and, on the other hand, increased the scale of financial revenues from social insurance contributions paid on their income to the Social Insurance Fund.

Mechanisms for pension rights coordination under the Social Security Agreement

The Social Security Agreement concluded by the Republic of Poland and Ukraine⁷ supplements domestic law with additional mechanisms for the social protection of migrants subject to social insurance.⁸ These mechanisms include a number of regulations coordinating coverage by applicable legislation: either Polish or Ukrainian, as well as regulations coordinating the provision of social insurance benefits in cross-border situations involving these countries. It should be noted that this is an international agreement, and its position in the hierarchy of sources of law in the Republic of Poland is high – in the light of Article 91 of the Polish Constitution.

In terms of determining the legislation applicable to the person concerned, the Agreement with Ukraine indicates in which country: in Poland or in Ukraine, a person performing a specific economic activity is subject to social insurance.

The basic principle is the rule of one applicable legislation, with a made more specific by the conflict-of-law rule, *lex loci laboris*, i.e. *de facto* indication of the legislation of the place of work.⁹

7 I. Kryśpiak, *Wzorcowe postanowienia umowy międzynarodowej o zabezpieczeniu społecznym*, "Ubezpieczenia Społeczne. Teoria i praktyka" 2022, No. 4.

8 Cf.: A. Szybkie, *Rola umów międzynarodowych o zabezpieczeniu społecznym w ochronie osób migrujących*, "Zabezpieczenie Społeczne. Teoria, Prawo, Praktyka" 2019, No. 9.

9 Article 6 of the Agreement.

Pursuant to this rule, a person coming from Ukraine to Poland and taking up employment here is subject to social insurance only in Poland. In this case, contributions are paid into the Polish system. In turn, a person coming from Poland to Ukraine and employed there by a Ukrainian employer is subject to the Ukrainian social insurance system.

On the other hand, a person posted by an employer registered in one country (e.g. Poland) to perform work temporarily in another country (Ukraine) may still be subject to Ukrainian legislation (posting),¹⁰ provided that:

- the work is still performed on the account of that employer,
- the anticipated duration of that work does not exceed 24 months.

There is a possibility to extend such a posting beyond 24 months, but not more than for another 36 months, pending agreement from the competent authority of the other state or an institution authorised to give such consent.

Under the Agreement, there is also a legal possibility of so-called self-posting, i.e. temporary transfer of activity from one state to another, and the continuation of social insurance coverage in the former state. The Agreement provides that¹¹ a self-employed person normally pursuing his or her activity in the territory of one contracting party who temporarily transfers this activity to the territory of the other party shall be subject to the legislation of the former State for the duration of his or her activity, but for no longer than 24 months.

The Agreement also indicates conflict-of-law rules of a specific nature relating to certain categories of economically active persons, such as:

- travelling personnel of a transport undertaking operating in the territories of both contracting parties – the Agreement provides that such personnel shall be subject to the legislation of the state-party in whose territory the undertaking is registered;¹²
- the crew of a seagoing vessel – the Agreement provides that such a crew shall be subject to the legislation of the party whose flag the vessel is flying under (flag state law);¹³
- civil servants and persons treated as such – the Agreement provides that they shall be subject to the legislation of the party whose administration employs them;¹⁴
- members of the staff of diplomatic missions and consular posts – the Agreement provides that they shall be subject to the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 24 April 1963.¹⁵

The parties have also provided for the possibility of regulating the applicable legislation in a manner different from that adopted in the Agreement. This follows from the wording of Article 8 of the Agreement, which provides for the so-called exceptional

¹⁰ Article 7(1) of the Agreement.

¹¹ Article 7(2) of the Agreement.

¹² Article 7(3) of the Agreement.

¹³ Article 7(4) of the Agreement.

¹⁴ Article 7(5) of the Agreement.

¹⁵ Article 7(6) of the Agreement.

procedure or so-called exceptional Agreements. Pursuant to this provision, the competent authorities of both contracting parties or their designated institutions may, by mutual agreement, determine exceptions to the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 in paragraphs 1 to 5 of the Agreement in respect of any person or group of persons, acting in their interest.

Reference should be also made to the principle of equal treatment¹⁶ resulting from the Agreement, according to which persons covered by this Agreement shall be subject to the obligations and enjoy the rights arising from the legislation of the other contracting party under the same conditions as its nationals.

It can be pointed out that, through the application of this principle, for example, Article 5(2) of the Polish Social Insurance System Act does not apply to Ukrainians, which, as mentioned earlier, implies equal treatment of Ukrainian and Polish citizens in the context of the social insurance coverage principles and the insurance entitlements under Polish law. Discrimination is also prohibited in the determination of the right and the amount and payment of benefits covered by the Agreement.

The following principles are crucial for granting the right to benefits and their payment:

- the principle of the protection of rights in the course of acquisition, together with the technique of aggregating periods and the technique of equalising events,
- the principle of the protection of acquired rights with the transfer of benefits and the abolition of territorial clauses.¹⁷

The technique of the aggregation of periods, linked to the principle of the protection of rights in the course of acquisition, is crucial for the acquisition of the right to benefits depending on insurance periods (including the duration of periods). A person who has been subject to social insurance successively in Ukraine and Poland may face difficulties in meeting the conditions for acquiring the right to benefits dependent on insurance periods. For example, a person interested in a Polish disability pension whose incapacity for work has occurred after that person has reached the age of 30 years and who had previously worked and was subject to social insurance in Ukraine and Poland, may fail to meet the condition of demonstrating at least 5 years of contributory and non-contributory periods falling within 10 years prior to claiming the pension or prior to the date on which the incapacity arose, on the basis of only Polish contributory and non-contributory periods. In such cases, the insured person is assisted by the Social Security Agreement: it introduces a legal technique for taking into account, when establishing the right to benefits in one country, insurance periods from the other country.

Thus, under the Agreement, as regards unemployment benefits, insurance periods completed under the legislation of one of the contracting parties shall be taken into account if necessary and if they do not overlap when establishing the right to

¹⁶ Article 4 of the Agreement.

¹⁷ Article 5(1) of the Agreement.

unemployment benefits under the legislation of the other party, if the person concerned can prove insurance periods completed immediately before the loss of work, under the legislation of the latter contracting party.¹⁸

And in the area of sickness and maternity benefits, insurance periods completed in accordance with the legislation of each party shall be taken into account where necessary for establishing the right to benefits and their duration, provided that they do not overlap.¹⁹ This is important for fulfilling the condition of the required qualifying periods necessary to obtain, for example, sickness allowance in Poland.

Pursuant to Article 4 of the Act of 25 June 1999 on cash benefits from social insurance in the event of sickness and maternity,²⁰ the insured person acquires the right to sickness allowance:

- 1) after 30 days of uninterrupted sickness insurance, if he/she is subject to compulsory insurance;
- 2) after 90 days of uninterrupted sickness insurance – if he/she is insured voluntarily.

Previous insurance periods are reckoned towards these periods of sickness insurance if the interval between them does not exceed 30 days or was due to child-care leave, unpaid leave, or active military service by a non-professional soldier.

The advantages of the Agreement can be illustrated by the following example; a person who has been employed for some time and has been subject to social insurance in Ukraine, and then took up employment and was insured in Poland, may, at the time when incapacity for work (sickness) occurred, not meet the above conditions of the required number of days of insurance in Poland, e.g. when the incapacity arises on the 20th day after taking up employment in Poland. In such a situation, the person may refer to insurance periods in Ukraine, whose reckoning will allow the condition under Article 4 of the Polish Act on cash benefits from social insurance in the event of sickness and maternity to be deemed fulfilled.

In the pension area, the technique of aggregating periods also plays an important role. According to the Agreement, if the legislation of one of the parties makes the acquisition, retention or recovery of the right to a pension conditional on insurance periods, the competent institution of that party shall take into account, to the extent necessary, the insurance periods completed under the legislation of the other party as if they were insurance periods under the legislation of that institution, insofar as these periods do not overlap. This means that if the domestic law (in Poland or in Ukraine) provides that relevant insurance periods are a condition for granting the right to a benefit, and a person cannot prove them, then the insurance periods completed in the other state shall be taken into account. This is done in order to “open up” the right to benefits, i.e. periods from both countries are added up to check whether the condition of showing sufficient periods has been fulfilled.

¹⁸ Article 9(1) of the Agreement.

¹⁹ Article 10 of the Agreement.

²⁰ Journal of Laws of 1999 No. 60, item 636, as amended.

In practice in Poland, this is most relevant for the acquisition of old-age pension rights from the current old-age pension system for persons born before 1 January 1949 and for investigating the entitlement to disability and survivor's pensions.

The Agreement also provides for the aggregation of periods for the purposes of acquiring the right to old-age pensions for work in special conditions. Namely, if the legislation of one of the parties makes the acquisition of the right to a pension conditional on insurance periods in an occupation covered by a special system or in a specific employment, the insurance periods in that occupation or in that employment under the legislation of the other party shall be aggregated for the award of the pension. This regulation can, in practice, help to obtain, for example, an old-age pension from mining or teaching work.

A rather interesting regulation, which in practice provides increased protection in the area of benefits, is the one concerning the aggregation of periods from third countries. Namely, the Polish-Ukrainian Agreement also regulates cases in which a person, applying for benefits based on the condition of demonstrating the appropriate duration of periods, may show insurance periods in Poland and Ukraine, but after aggregating them, the conditions related to the duration of periods, those necessary for obtaining a pension, are still not met. In this case, if the person concerned has additionally certified insurance periods in other countries, it will also be possible to take them into account in certain situations. Pursuant to the Agreement, if, after the aggregation of the Polish and Ukrainian periods, the insured person does not acquire the right to a pension, the competent institution of the contracting party takes into account the period of insurance completed in a third country with which both Ukraine and Poland are bound by international agreements providing for aggregation of insurance periods.

With regard to Poland, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which regulates the aggregation of periods in Article 48, is also recognised as an agreement providing for aggregation of insurance periods. Pursuant to this provision, The European Parliament and the Council shall, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, adopt such measures in the field of social security as are necessary to provide freedom of movement for workers; to this end, they shall make arrangements to secure for employed and self-employed migrant workers and their dependants:

- 1) aggregation, for the purpose of acquiring and retaining the right to benefit and of calculating the amount of benefit, of all periods taken into account under the laws of the several countries concerned,
- 2) payment of benefits to persons resident in the territories of Member States.

Thus, if insurance periods from Poland and Ukraine were missing for the acquisition of the right to benefits, insurance periods from the Member States of the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), with which Ukraine has concluded social security agreements, can also be taken into account. This provides quite significant additional coverage to migrants.

The Polish-Ukrainian Agreement also contains regulations on the principle of the export of benefits, otherwise known as the principle of the transfer of benefits. According

to Article 5(1) of the Agreement, benefits due under the legislation of one contracting party may not be reduced, suspended, withdrawn or withheld on the grounds that the beneficiary resides in the territory of the other party.

This regulation does not apply:

- 1) with respect to Ukraine: to unemployment benefits,
- 2) with respect to the Republic of Poland: to unemployment benefits and benefits granted under special procedure or under exceptional circumstances.

In turn, according to Article 26 of the Agreement, the competent institutions of each party shall pay cash benefits under this Agreement directly to the entitled persons residing on the territory of the other party in the official currency of its state or, if that currency is not convertible, in another freely convertible currency.

The above regulations imply the right to receive benefits from one state when the person concerned resides in the other state. A person entitled, for example, to an old-age pension from Ukraine who resides in Poland has the right to receive a Ukrainian benefit in Poland. The right to the benefit is not suspended just because the pensioner lives in the other country. A Polish institution is obliged to transfer, at the request of an entitled person residing in Ukraine, a pension from the Polish system. The payment of benefits is usually made in the form of transfers to a bank account in the country of residence. The Agreement expressly provides for the principle of the so-called direct transfer, which means that the institution of the pensioner's state of residence is not involved in the process of transferring the pension to the pensioner residing in the other state. In practice, this means that a Ukrainian institution pays, at the request of an entitled person residing in Poland, the Ukrainian pension to which he or she is entitled, by transfer to a bank account in a Polish bank, without the participation of the Polish authority, i.e. the Polish Social Insurance Institution, in this payment process.

The Agreement provides for a number of other coordination mechanisms that may in practice apply to persons migrating between Ukraine and Poland. These include the assimilation of circumstances and events, including the assimilation of the condition of termination of the employment relationship under Article 103a of the Act on pensions from the Social Insurance Fund, resulting in the need to terminate also the employment relationship in Ukraine in order for the Polish institution to undertake the payment of the old-age pension due from the Polish social insurance system.

The Agreement and the Administrative Arrangement also provide for a procedure for the submission and processing of a pension claim for a person who was subject to social insurance in Poland and Ukraine. The procedure is regulated in detail in Article 6 of the Administrative Arrangement to the Agreement. The regulations indicate that:

- the competent institution of a contracting party which receives a claim for benefits payable under the legislation of the other contracting party shall, by means of a liaison form, send the claim to the competent institution of the other Contracting Party in accordance with Article 24 of the Agreement, together with all the available

documentary evidence and information that the competent institution of the latter contracting party may require to establish the claimant's eligibility;

- the competent institutions of both parties shall use the appropriate forms and shall immediately exchange the available documents and information required to make a final decision on the claim for benefits, and shall inform each other of any circumstances affecting the entitlement, amount or payment of benefits;
- upon request, the competent institution of either contracting party shall furnish free of charge, to the competent institution of the other contracting party any information and medical documentation in its possession relevant to the invalidity (incapacity for work) of the claimant or beneficiary;
- the competent institution of the contracting party with which a claim for benefits has been filed, shall verify the information pertaining to the claimant and his/her family members. The type of information to be verified shall be agreed upon by the liaison bodies of the two contracting parties.

These are very important procedural regulations. A person who was covered by social insurance in Ukraine and now lives in Poland, therefore, does not need to apply for an old-age pension from Ukraine in person at a Ukrainian institution. The pension claim may be submitted in Poland, i.e. in the country of residence, to the competent institution, i.e. the Polish Social Insurance Institution or the Agricultural Social Insurance, respectively. To investigate pension entitlements, the institutions provide each other with information, data and confirmations of insurance periods completed in their respective country. Each institution issues a decision on the pension due from the state in question.

A person who has worked and been subject to social insurance in Poland and Ukraine may therefore count on two old-age pensions: one from Poland and one from Ukraine. Each of these benefits shall be calculated for the insurance periods from the respective state.

If the right to a benefit from Poland exists without the need to take into account insurance periods in the other state, the benefit shall be calculated solely on the basis of Polish insurance periods. If, on the other hand, the Polish institution, i.e. ZUS, has to take into account also Ukrainian insurance periods in order to grant the right to a pension from Poland, the benefit amount shall be calculated in proportion to the duration of Polish insurance periods. This calculation is done in two steps:

- in the first step, ZUS will calculate the theoretical amount of the old-age pension that would be due if all insurance periods, including Ukrainian periods, had been completed in Poland;
- in the second step, ZUS will calculate the pension in the actual amount, according to the so-called *pro rata temporis* principle, multiplying the theoretical amount of the benefit by a rate representing the quotient of the duration of Polish insurance periods and the total duration of Polish and Ukrainian periods.

The benefit amount calculated in this way is the amount due to the person concerned.

Insurance institutions of Poland and Ukraine and their cooperation

For the cooperation in the processing of individual cases, i.e. for granting old-age and disability pensions, other benefits, for the determination of applicable legislation, social security administration institutions have been designated, which perform specific functions in the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement and the Administrative Arrangement. In practice, these institutions cooperate, e.g. in the processing of an old-age pension claim of a person who has worked and been subject to social insurance both in Poland and in Ukraine, applications for the transfer of benefits to a place of residence in the other country, in posting of employees from one state to another, in granting allowances, pensions and other benefits.

The roles of these institutions are also different. Under the Agreement, a distinction is made between liaison bodies and competent institutions. The former provide support to insured persons and establish the procedures and detailed manner in which the Agreement is to be performed and supervise its performance by the executing bodies. Therefore, the role of the liaison body is usually performed by ministries or head offices of institutions; in the case of the Polish–Ukrainian Agreement, this includes units of ZUS Headquarters. Competent institutions, on the other hand, are the institutions that handle specific individual cases, work on pension files or issue certificates on the legislation applicable to a given person. In the case of ZUS, these are usually ZUS branches, i.e. local organisational units.

Turning to the Polish–Ukrainian Agreement, on the Ukrainian side the liaison body for the implementation of the Agreement in the area of pension determination is the Pension Fund of Ukraine (Pensyiynyi Fond Ukrainy (Пенсійний фонд України)) in Kiev. The function of the Ukrainian institution competent for establishing pension benefits administered by the Pension Fund of Ukraine is performed by the Main Board of the Pension Fund of Ukraine in the Lviv Region. The function of the liaison body in the area of determining legislation for the implementation of the Agreement is performed by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. The institution competent for determining the applicable legislation is the Pension Fund of Ukraine with its seat in Kiev.

The function of the Polish liaison body cooperating with the Pension Fund of Ukraine in the area of general social insurance is performed by the units of the Headquarters of the Social Insurance Institution, namely:

- Foreign Pensions Department – for determining the applicable legislation and for pensions, benefits in respect of accidents at work, occupational disease and funeral grants, insurance and contributions,
- Allowances Department – for short-term benefits,
- Medical Certification Department – for certifying incapacity for work.

As part of ZUS, the function of the Polish competent institution is fulfilled by:

- for determining the applicable legislation:

- Foreign Pensions Department in matters of concluding exceptional agreements on the basis of Article 7(1) second sentence and Article 8 of the Agreement, of an individual and collective nature,
- Insurance and Contributions Divisions in individual ZUS branches in matters of determining the applicable legislation,
- Insurance and Contributions Division at the ZUS Branch in Jasło in matters of confirmation of insurance periods completed in Poland in response to enquiries from a Ukrainian institution for purposes other than pensions;
- Division for Implementation of International Agreements in Rzeszów, which is entrusted with the implementation of the provisions of the Polish-Ukrainian Social Security Agreement in the area of determining pensions for persons residing in Ukraine and those who can demonstrate a recent period of insurance in Ukraine in the course of their employment abroad, as well as in the area of transferring Polish pensions to persons residing in Ukraine;
- granting of cash benefits in the event of sickness and maternity from sickness insurance and sickness benefits from accident insurance, as well as funeral grants, excluding funeral grants falling within the jurisdiction of the Divisions for the Implementation of International Agreements.

Corresponding roles also exist on the Polish side in the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund. Cooperation between ZUS and the Pension Fund of Ukraine in the area of pensions is very successful.

Detailed rules for the processing of individual cases on the basis of the Agreement were agreed during talks between Polish and Ukrainian liaison institutions on agreeing procedures and liaison forms to be used in the implementation of the Agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland on social security: in Warsaw on 17–20 June 2013 and additionally in Lviv on 4–5 February 2014. Arrangements are also made by correspondence, which has been particularly the case during the war period.

Thanks to very good cooperation and a flexible approach to persons insured and beneficiaries, it has been possible to successfully implement the provisions of the Polish-Ukrainian Agreement over the years and, as a result, to provide insurance protection to the maximum extent also to refugees from war zones.

Impact of the hostilities in Ukraine on the pension entitlements of persons migrating between Ukraine and Poland

The war in Ukraine is resulting in a change in the nature of migration from that country to Poland, from purely economic to additionally non-economic, i.e. humanitarian or of a refugee nature.

In the context of ZUS's implementation of the Social Security Agreement and domestic law during the military operations, a number of risks have been diagnosed that can yet arise and those that have in part already materialised. ZUS has also taken measures to minimise them. As early as the beginning of the hostilities, in February 2022, ZUS noted that they could cause problems in the implementation of the Polish–Ukrainian Social Security Agreement.

These problems may relate to various aspects of the listed regulations and legal institutions under this Agreement, covering the areas of determining the applicable legislation or granting social insurance benefits.

In order to illustrate the situation or to make it more specific, it is worth noting that these problems may relate e.g. to a lack of possibility:

- to transfer correspondence from Ukraine to Poland, including pension claims, certificates confirming insurance periods completed under Ukrainian legislation, documents necessary to establish benefits and calculate their amount, acknowledgements of receipt of medical certificates for the purpose of establishing their validity. In practice, this may make it impossible to process applications of persons who have worked on the territory of Ukraine for the establishment of a Polish pension in the application of the Polish–Ukrainian Social Security Agreement, or it may prolong their processing or limit the scope of any possible application of the Agreement and domestic law;
- for ZUS to deliver correspondence to persons residing in Ukraine, including decisions, orders, summonses, letters, etc. With regard to decisions on benefits, this would mean that the person concerned would not know the content of the ZUS decision and would not be able, for example, to appeal against it or to inquire about its content in the context of, for example, benefit calculation;
- for ZUS to cooperate with the Pension Fund of Ukraine in view of the lack of local cooperation of the Fund's branch in Lviv with regional units of this Fund from the war area aimed to confirm Ukrainian insurance periods (completed under Ukrainian legislation), including the lack of the possibility to obtain paper pension files. The Lviv branch of the Pension Fund of Ukraine, which uses data received from local units throughout Ukraine, is cooperating with the Rzeszów branch of ZUS. There may be difficulties in obtaining this data during hostilities, resulting in the failure to provide confirmations of Ukrainian insurance periods to ZUS. This may result in problems with determining the right to Polish benefits, for which it is necessary to take into account Ukrainian insurance periods (this mainly concerns the right to a disability pension and to the increase of the pension to the level of the statutory minimum in Poland);
- for ZUS to cooperate with the person insured or the claimant for other reasons beyond the control of the authority and the person concerned;
- to transfer Polish benefits to Ukraine and the possible increase in costs related to their handling (in particular, reimbursements of benefits). In practice, there may be cases where ZUS has granted a pension on the basis of available documents, but there is no possibility to deliver the benefit to a person residing in Ukraine;

- to transfer Ukrainian benefits from the Pension Fund of Ukraine to Poland. In practice, there may be cases where the Pension Fund of Ukraine has granted a benefit on the basis of available documents, but – due to the occupation – the Ukrainian benefit is not delivered to a person residing in Poland. Such a person will not receive the Ukrainian benefit and may not have any income in Poland or may only receive a Polish benefit. This may result in a person not having the right to medical treatment in Poland if, in addition to the Ukrainian benefit, the person is not entitled to Polish pension benefits (has not worked in Poland or is not of pensionable age in Poland and therefore does not have Polish benefits entitling them to health insurance);
- for refugees to demonstrate identity documents – some persons who are ZUS beneficiaries and who, due to occupation, suddenly leave the territory of Ukraine and arrive in Poland or another country may not have documents confirming their identity, which will hinder their contact with ZUS (no possibility of identity verification);
- to implement the provisions of the Agreement regarding the determination of the applicable legislation. ZUS issues a certificate of Polish applicable legislation on the basis of the Agreement with Ukraine. Hostilities may frustrate the use of these certificates in Ukraine and the application for such certificates. On the other hand, the armed conflict may prevent the Ukrainian authorities from issuing certificates under Ukrainian applicable legislation. The inability to implement the posting provisions will result in the need to pay contributions in the country of employment (if this is at all feasible in the case of Ukraine). If the situation is normalised in the future, there is a possibility for ZUS and the corresponding Ukrainian institution to retrospectively verify and determine the applicable legislation to put in order the factual and legal situation in this respect.

ZUS's response to the identified risks

On the day of the outbreak – 24 February 2022 – the following were noted in ZUS:

- 50 initiated (pending) pension proceedings with the Ukrainian Fund, i.e. cases in which, without Ukrainian periods, the right to a Polish benefit could not be established by ZUS,
- 25 applications for Ukrainian benefit (to be completed),
- 329 proceedings for a Ukrainian pension pending a decision from a Ukrainian institution – most of them relating to cases in which the benefit should be increased to the level of the statutory minimum.

The risk of the inability to complete these proceedings due to the armed conflict has been identified.

As seen above, the scale of the implementation of the Social Security Agreement is not huge in this respect. However, as soon as the risks were identified, ZUS took

operational measures to minimise or eliminate them. These included, in particular, the following measures:

- temporary acceptance of Ukrainian periods for proceedings at ZUS on the basis of indirect evidence, including documents held by clients. In such a situation, ZUS adopted the principle of the possibility of taking decisions, if necessary, to temporarily take into account Ukrainian insurance periods on the basis of documents submitted by the applicant and, due to *force majeure*, to take into account Ukrainian qualifying periods on the basis of workbooks or other documents proving employment in Ukraine submitted by the applicants (instead of on the basis of a certificate issued by a Ukrainian institution). Such a solution had been implemented previously by ZUS (it had been approved by the Ukrainian side) and proved effective in connection with the conflict that took place in 2014 in the area of Crimea and the Donetsk region;
- adoption of the principle of suspending pension proceedings that may not be conducted due to external reasons, i.e. the armed conflict, and then resuming them immediately as soon as the grounds for suspension do not exist;
- ensuring the payment of ZUS benefits to persons entitled under the Agreement, taking into account the potential movement of refugees from Ukraine to Poland and the diversion of payments from Ukraine to bank accounts in Poland (concerns refugees who will reside in Poland);
- organisation by ZUS of support for refugees from Ukraine on the territory of Poland: counselling on Polish social insurance and the Social Security Agreement; preparation of notices for the website and the establishment of a pathway for reporting on pensions and other issues.

In order to streamline and accelerate the processing of benefit claims under the Agreement, ZUS has agreed with the Pension Fund of Ukraine to introduce for refugees a temporary, simplified application procedure for Ukrainian benefits (including the transfer of these benefits to Poland). Applications are being completed at the Rzeszów Branch of ZUS (Division for the Implementation of International Agreements), with the majority of them requiring the explanatory proceedings with the client and, once completed, the applications are forwarded to the Pension Fund of Ukraine. Most of them are handwritten in Ukrainian, requiring the text to be translated.

ZUS has also developed and made available a special bilingual application form for the transfer of Ukrainian benefits to facilitate their submission and handling. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the number of applications for Ukrainian benefits (filed in Poland and Ukraine) is higher compared to the period before 24 February 2022.

At the end of April (after a break of more than a month), the Ukrainian institution resumed sending applications in paper form. At that time, ZUS received 40 benefit claims, including 16 for confirmation of Polish insurance periods. ZUS also received from the Pension Fund of Ukraine correspondence on more than 60 cases, being a response to ZUS enquiries about the beneficiaries served.

ZUS has launched various forms of support for refugees on many levels. The daily handling of queries to ZUS by telephone, e-mail and so-called e-visits has involved an average of about 65 pension cases in the context of the current situation in Ukraine.

Questions asked included:

- applying for the transfer of Ukrainian benefits to Poland;
- taking over the payment of Ukrainian benefits by ZUS (refugees asked whether ZUS would pay them Ukrainian benefits);
- the possibility to obtain the right to a Polish old-age pension for the period of residence in Poland after the UKR PESEL number has been assigned on the basis of Article 2 of the Special Law;
- the possibility of obtaining confirmation from a Ukrainian institution of the foreign qualifying period that is necessary for acquiring the right to benefits (such questions are asked by persons who have filed their applications earlier, i.e. before 24 February 2022).

ZUS has paid and is paying Polish pension benefits on an ongoing basis to persons residing in Ukraine. Happily, it has not recorded an increased number of refunds of Polish benefits transferred to Ukraine.

After receiving information from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the inability to pay special benefits to Polish veterans residing in Ukraine by the Polish consular posts in Vinnitsa, Kharkov and Lutsk (which suspended their activities due to the hostilities), ZUS has introduced a special procedure notifying beneficiaries by letter about the inability to pay benefits in the current form and the possibility of paying them in the form of a transfer to a bank account. If problems with arranging payments are reported by diplomatic missions in other countries, a similar procedure will be applied to beneficiaries residing in those countries.

The Polish legislator has also addressed the needs of persons insured and beneficiaries. The Special Law contains appropriate regulations solving a number of identified problems in the field of international social insurance, which may arise in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine.

These regulations – which are precedent-setting within the Polish legal order – should be assessed as very useful and complementary to domestic social insurance law and the Social Security Agreement. It is worth mentioning the selected important legal institutions introduced by this Law.

These are the provisions of Articles 71a to 71f of this Law, which include solutions providing that:

- The Social Insurance Institution or ZUS President may waive the institution of *ex officio* proceedings if, for reasons arising from the hostilities conducted on the territory of Ukraine, during the period of their duration and no longer than three months after the cessation of the reason justifying the waiver of the institution of *ex officio* proceedings, it is not possible to institute these proceedings by serving a notice of the institution of proceedings on a Ukrainian citizen who is not resident in Poland at his/her place of residence on the territory of Ukraine. In such a case,

ZUS or its President shall issue a decision on the renouncement of the institution of the proceedings, which shall be left in the case file with the effect of service. The provision of Article 83b(2) of the Act on Social Insurance System shall apply accordingly. ZUS or its President shall subsequently institute proceedings *ex officio* if the reason for which the proceedings have been waived ceases to exist. In such cases, the running of the limitation period, as set out in special provisions, shall not commence, and if commenced shall be suspended from the date of the decision on the renouncement of the institution of the proceedings until the date of its re-institution.

- Proceedings before the Social Insurance Institution or its President instituted:
 - 1) before 24 February 2022 and not concluded before that date,
 - 2) from 24 February 2022
 may be suspended for reasons arising from the hostilities on the territory of Ukraine. The suspension of the proceedings shall last no longer than until three months after the reason justifying the suspension ceases to exist. If it is not possible to serve the decision on the suspension of proceedings on the citizen of Ukraine and to take up the suspended proceedings referred to in paragraph 1, it shall be left in the case file with the effect of service. ZUS or its President shall resume the proceedings *ex officio* or upon request when the reasons justifying their suspension have ceased. During the period of suspension of the proceedings, the running of the limitation period, as set out in special provisions, shall not commence, and if commenced shall be suspended.
- In the case where a citizen of Ukraine provided the Social Insurance Institution with information on the number of a payment account in the Republic of Poland or the number of a payment instrument issued in Poland within the meaning of the Act of 19 August 2011 on payment services (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1907, 1814 and 2140), ZUS may pay to that account or payment instrument also other cash benefits than those for the purpose of payment of which they have been provided. This is a rather interesting regulation based on a pragmatic approach to the application of the law. Namely, when the authority is in possession of some bank account number of a beneficiary for one type of benefit, this number may be used for the purpose of the payment of another benefit, if the party concerned is not able to provide the account number for the purpose of this other benefit. In this way, the authority will pay the benefit and thus provide the person concerned with means of subsistence. This regulation should be evaluated as very positive.
- If, due to hostilities in the territory of Ukraine, an abbreviated copy of the child's birth certificate or a copy thereof, to be certified as a true copy by the contribution payer or by the Social Insurance Institution, cannot be submitted to ZUS or to the contribution payer, the right to maternity allowance for Ukrainian citizens may be established based on a certificate stating the date of delivery issued by a hospital. This regulation significantly facilitates the exercise of rights to maternity allowance.

- If, due to hostilities in the territory of Ukraine, a medical certificate issued in a foreign medical institution or by a foreign doctor cannot be submitted to the Social Insurance Institution or to the contribution payer, the right to sickness allowance or care allowance for citizens of Ukraine may be established based on the information carriers allowing one to become acquainted with the content of the medical certificate.
- If the claim for a funeral grant was not possible within the time limits set out in Article 81(1) and (2) of the Act of 17 December 1998 on pensions from the Social Insurance Fund (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 504) due to hostilities in the territory of Ukraine, the right to a funeral grant for citizens of Ukraine shall expire three months after the expiry of the reason justifying the failure to file the claim.
- If, due to hostilities in the territory of Ukraine, it is not possible to establish, on the basis of an identity document or a copy of the civil status record, the degree of kinship or affinity between the person claiming a funeral grant and the deceased, the right to a funeral grant for Ukrainian citizens may be established on the basis of a statement of the degree of kinship or affinity between the deceased and the person claiming a funeral grant. The statement shall be made under the penalty of criminal liability for making a false statement.

The legislator has thus responded to the challenges of the war by supporting social insurance bodies in the application of international and domestic social insurance law. These regulations help protect the entitlements in this area, bring order to the legal situation and provide clear guidance for social insurance bodies and insured persons. They also complement the legal solutions already in place, including the Social Security Act and the International Social Security Agreement, and are relevant to the practice of implementing the rights guaranteed by social insurance law.

Data showing the scale of implementation of the Social Security Agreement

Information on pension benefits and applicable legislation is presented below to illustrate the scale of the implementation of the Social Security Agreement. The number of claims for Polish pension benefits filed by persons residing in Ukraine was at the level of:

- approx. 202 per year in 2019,
- approx. 255 per year in 2020,
- approx. 454 per year in 2021,
- approx. 123 in the first quarter of 2022.

The number of claims requiring first-time decisions filed by persons residing in Ukraine was at the level of approx. 207 per year in 2021, and the number of claims

requiring recalculation decisions was approx. 247 per year. In the first quarter of this year, the number of first-time claims filed in Ukraine was 44 and 79 claims required recalculation decisions.

In turn, approx. 287 claims for Ukrainian pensions were filed through ZUS in 2021 and 157 in the first quarter of 2022 (these claims, once completed and supplemented with information necessary for the award of a Ukrainian benefit, are forwarded by ZUS to the Ukrainian institution for processing).

The average monthly number of payments of Polish pension benefits transferred to Ukraine is at the level of approx. 340. And so, in 2021:

- the average monthly number of persons to whom Polish benefits were transferred to Ukraine was 340,
- the average monthly amount of Polish benefits transferred to Ukraine was PLN 253,063.25,
- the total amount of Polish benefits transferred to Ukraine was PLN 3,036,759.01 (on a yearly basis),
- the average amount of a benefit paid to Ukraine was PLN 743.39.

Within the framework of the Social Security Agreement between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine, 947 certificates on the applicable legislation were issued in 2021, which represents 43.78 per cent of the total number of certificates issued by ZUS under all the bilateral agreements on social security that ZUS implements. In turn, in the first quarter of 2022, 45 such certificates were issued, representing 10.27 per cent of the total number of certificates issued at that time.

The scale of cooperation in concluding exceptional agreements is small, given the total number of PL-UA 1 forms issued in recent years (only 14 forms in total). The main reason for requesting such an agreement is the need to extend the period of posting beyond the allowed 24 months (in the case of posting under Article 7(1) of the Agreement). Article 7(1), second sentence, of the Agreement is the basis for concluding the agreement, which is only aimed to give the consent to extend the posting period by 36 months.

Conclusions

Polish social insurance law offers sufficient guarantees of social insurance protection to persons from Ukraine and other foreigners. The Polish social insurance system is characterised by rights egalitarianism. The central notion is that of the “person insured” and not that of the “person’s relation to the state consisting in the person’s nationality (citizenship)”. Thus, the majority of rights are guaranteed to the insured person, who may be, among others, a foreigner. This includes both access to the Polish social insurance system, i.e. insurance coverage, use of compulsory and voluntary insurance, and access to social insurance benefits.

Social security agreements provide complementary protection to migrants whose careers are built on insurance periods in Poland and in another state, one party to the given agreement. Other situations covered by the agreement are: the posting or export of benefits. This is also the case with the Agreement with Ukraine.

The Agreement regulates the situation of persons performing cross-border work by determining the applicable legislation. In addition, it introduces legal mechanisms to facilitate the acquisition of rights to benefits and their exercise, including mechanisms for benefits export to the other country.

The war situation in Ukraine has made it necessary to introduce specific solutions to protect the rights in the area of social insurance of persons migrating from Ukraine to Poland, with a fundamental change in the nature of this migration from labour migration to refugee (war) migration. These solutions provide for the use of already existing legal regulations of Polish domestic law and the Social Security Agreement by bodies implementing this Agreement, as well as the introduction of new legal solutions into the legal order, with the aim of the complementary protection of insured persons' rights.

Looking at the scale of cooperation between ZUS and the Ukrainian Fund after the outbreak of the war, only a slight increase in interest in benefits is observed. Thus, there is no "flood" of pension cases. This was due to the territorially limited scope of hostilities and, above all, to the heroic maintenance by the Ukrainian administration of the continuity in the performance of social insurance tasks, including in the area of pensions and applicable legislation.

The new legal solutions contained in the Special Law meet the needs of refugees and are a good complement to the Social Security Agreement and social insurance laws. They effectively provide refugees with legal protection in the area of social insurance.

Also important is the practical cooperation between the pension bodies of Poland and Ukraine, which is very successful. Based on good cooperation between social security institutions, it is possible to establish solutions for customers which would help them to acquire rights or to transfer benefits during the war. At the date of the completion of this publication, hostilities on the territory of Ukraine are still ongoing. However, the risks identified may materialise in the future. Therefore, it is good to have legal and practical solutions in place, and those that are currently in place and functioning can be regarded as very good and useful, significantly reducing the identified risks. Thus, the social protection of migrants in connection with hostilities is ensured.

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Activities in the European Union for Ukraine

Authors contribution:

A – Research project
B – Data collection
C – Statistical analysis
D – Data interpretation
E – Manuscript preparation
F – Literature analysis
G – Fundraising

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Introduction: Ukraine's efforts to join the European Union date back to the first half of the 1990s. After Russia's unprovoked invasion of the Ukrainian state, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for Ukraine's candidate status, and the same day the European Council approved it. Throughout the invasion, the European Union authorities provide assistance to Ukraine and its inhabitants, including refugees fleeing the war.

Objective: Presentation of information on actions taken by states and European Union authorities in response to the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Materials and methods: Review of the websites of the European Commission, EU legislation, analysis and presentation of statistical data from the Central Statistical Office and Eurostat.

Results: After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the European Union took a number of effective actions to improve the situation of that country and its inhabitants. Refugees, 90% of whom are women and children, were given special care. The scope of support includes, among others: medical care, access to education, psychological assistance, access to temporary accommodation and housing, as well as financial instruments such as macro-financial assistance or the European Peace Facility.

Key words: Directorate-General of the European Commission, European Commission, European Union, refugees, war in Ukraine

Działania w Unii Europejskiej na rzecz Ukrainy

Wstęp: Starania Ukrainy dotyczące członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej sięgają pierwszej połowy lat 90. XX w. Po niesprobowanej inwazji Rosji na państwo ukraińskie Parlament Europejski przyjął rezolucję wzywającą do udzielenia Ukrainie statusu kandydata i jeszcze tego samego dnia Rada Europejska rozstrzygnęła ją pozytywnie. Przez cały okres inwazji organy Unii Europejskiej dostarczają pomoc Ukrainie i jej mieszkańcom, w tym uciekającym przed wojną uchodźcom.

Cel: Prezentacja informacji o działaniach podjętych przez państwa oraz organy Unii Europejskiej wobec skutków inwazji Rosji na Ukrainę.

Materiały i metody: Przegląd stron internetowych Komisji Europejskiej, ustawodawstwa unijnego, analiza i prezentacja danych statystycznych Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego oraz Eurostatu.

Wyniki: Po wybuchu wojny na Ukrainie Unia Europejska podjęła szereg skutecznych działań na rzecz poprawy sytuacji tego państwa i jego mieszkańców. Szczególną opieką objęto uchodźców, z których 90 proc. stanowią kobiety i dzieci. Zakres wsparcia obejmuje m.in.: opiekę medyczną, dostęp do edukacji, pomoc psychologiczną, dostęp do zakwaterowania tymczasowego i mieszkań, a także instrumenty finansowe, jak np. pomoc makrofinansową czy Europejski Instrument na rzecz Pokoju.

Słowa kluczowe: Dyrekcja Generalna Komisji Europejskiej, Komisja Europejska, Unia Europejska, uchodźcy, wojna w Ukrainie

Submitted: 14.10.2022

Accepted: 23.2.2023

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0016.2795

Introduction

Ukraine gained independence during the collapse of the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), i.e. on August 24, 1991. As an independent state, until the outbreak of the conflict in 2014, it had a land area of 603,000 km², which made it the second largest country in Europe (after Russia). According to data from January 2021, Ukraine had a population of 41 million. In 2020, according to purchasing power parity, its GDP was equal to USD 430 billion (USD 10.3 thousand per person), which meant that it was one of the poorest countries on our continent.¹

Work on an association agreement with the European Union (EU) began in 2012² and was signed a year later on 21 November 2013. However, contacts between the parties took place much earlier. Already in 1993, the first declaration from the Ukrainian side as to a willingness to work on joining the EU appeared. In the 1990s, however, there were serious obstacles to the actual consideration of these plans. There was no democracy in Ukraine at that time, the economy was falling apart, switching from a command-and-distribution system to a market system, corruption was rampant. Nevertheless, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1994. The European Union also supported the democratization processes in Ukraine. After Viktor Yushchenko took power in 2005, contacts with the EU intensified and Ukraine joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), which was an opportunity to improve the economic situation. On January 13, 2005, the European Parliament almost unanimously decided to intensify cooperation with Ukraine. From the beginning of the Orange Revolution, Polish diplomacy unequivocally and very strongly supported Ukraine's chances for potential membership of the EU.

The main problem on Ukraine's path to the European Union has always been issues related to the economy and corruption. An additional element, however, were also significant inequalities in the development of individual areas of Ukraine.³ Some areas, such as Kiev or (before the start of the conflict in 2014) the Donetsk Coal Basin, have experienced significant development, but many others have remained very backward.

In 2014, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea and supported the separation of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions from Ukraine. It is estimated that population losses amounted to approx. 12–15% at that time, while the economic damage included mines from the Donetsk Coal Basin and disrupted supply chains. Internal supply chains have been broken. This worsened the economic situation of Ukraine. In addition, the strange position in which the Ukrainian state found itself – a state of limbo between war and peace – for more than seven years caused complications in contacts with international

1 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Rocznik Statystyki Międzynarodowej 2012 r.*, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-statystyki-miedzynarodowej-2012,10,2.html> (6.2.2023).

2 Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States on the one hand and Ukraine on the other, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A22014A0529%2801%29> (6.2.2023).

3 H. Nehring, *A short history of Ukraine's relationship with the European Union*, The Conversation.com 10 March 2022, <https://theconversation.com/a-short-history-of-ukraines-relationship-with-the-european-union-178350> (1.10.2022).

organizations, including the European Union. Despite the ongoing quasi-war, however, negotiations with these entities continued. This allowed for the cooperation agreement to enter into force on 1 September 2017.⁴

On February 24, 2022, the situation changed fundamentally – the Russian Federation attacked the entire territory of Ukraine without declaring war. The state of quasi-war has become a real war. Already on February 28, 2022,⁵ Ukraine, with the unambiguous support of Poland, submitted an application for full accession to the group of members of the European Union. On June 17, 2022,⁶ the European Commission (EC) recommended granting Ukraine candidate membership status, while on June 23, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for Ukraine to be granted candidate status, and on the same day the European Council resolved it positively. Considering the support that Ukraine receives from Poland and the Baltic states, the accession process could have been much faster.

It should be emphasized that Poland (the state and its citizens) provided unprecedented assistance to refugees from Ukraine following February 24, 2022. The Polish government provided them with most social benefits, such as the benefit from the “Family 500+” (“Rodzina 500+”) program, medical care, and enabled them to register in PESEL (Personal Identification Number) database.⁷ Polish citizens gave Ukrainians accommodation in their homes and it is estimated that they spent about PLN 10 billion of their own money to help Ukrainians.

European Union activities for Ukraine before 2022 – Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership programme has been in operation since 2009 and was launched in Prague, when the Czechs held the EU Presidency.⁸ The Eastern Partnership members are: Member States of the European Union, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It is implemented mainly on the commercial level, but also includes visa facilitations and assistance programmes. Ukraine has been a member of the programme since its inception and its authorities have always strongly supported cooperation within this group. Under this programme, Ukraine used both multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Its

4 Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe, *EU relations with Ukraine*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/ukraine/> (1.10.2022).

5 European Commission, *Ukraine: EU report notes important steps taken in the implementation of the reform agenda*, 26 July 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news/ukraine-eu-report-notes-important-steps-taken-implementation-reform-agenda-2022-07-26_en (1.10.2022).

6 European Commission, *Ukraine: EU report...*, op. cit.

7 European Labour Authority, *Overview of national measures regarding employment and social security of displaced persons coming from Ukraine. Country fiche for Poland*, 2022, p. 323.

8 European Council, Council of the European Union, *Eastern Partnership*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/policies/eastern-partnership/> (6.2.2023).

most important areas are: border management, energy efficiency, the natural environment and sanitary standards. Customs duties on 95% of industrial products and 83% of food products were abolished. Ukraine's trade in goods with the EU has increased significantly, and Poland has become Ukraine's largest trading partner in the EU (USD 3.2 billion in 2018). The Eastern Partnership enabled in 2017 the introduction of 90-day visa-free travel within the Schengen area for Ukrainians. In turn, the implementation of EU standards focused on the following areas: civil society, gender equality and strategic communication. Ukraine's participation in the Partnership has also made it possible to take advantage of many aid programmes, such as: "EU4Business", "EU4Energy", "EU4Youth", "EU4Climate", "EU4Environment", "Creative Europe", "Culture and Creativity", "Mayors of Cities for Economic Growth", "Erasmus" and "Erasmus+", "Horizon 2020", "Integrated Border Management".

Even before the outbreak of war (February 24, 2022), there was a lively discussion in the EU on improving the forms of action within the Eastern Partnership.

EU response to the events in February and March 2022

From the very first days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, European leaders stood in solidarity with those attacked. Poland played a special role in this, conducting a large-scale information campaign aimed at providing Western societies with reliable information about the situation in Ukraine. Therefore, the Polish authorities visited all European countries and held talks with leaders.

The European Union immediately implemented concrete measures to help Ukraine, the most important of which concerned helping refugees, especially children. Poland took in about 2–3 million people permanently and provided emergency assistance for about 1–1.5 million people. According to the Directive on Temporary Civil Protection, EU Member States hosting refugees are to ensure: the right of residence, access to the labour market and accommodation, medical assistance, social assistance and children's access to education.⁹ A special role is played by the protection of children, who are to be protected against: conscription, human trafficking, illegal adoption, sexual exploitation, separation from their family. They are also to be provided with medical, legal assistance and education.

Other areas covered by EU support are humanitarian aid and civil protection. EUR 335 million has been donated to humanitarian aid – these funds have been allocated to food, water, healthcare and shelter improvements. Out of the EUR 9 billion assembled by the end of August 2022, EUR 1 billion had been spent. All EU Member States, Norway and Turkey offer Ukraine as part of civil protection: medical supplies, protective clothing, accommodation, fire-fighting equipment, power generators, water pumps. On economic aid, the European Council on 24 May 2022 adopted a regulation

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe, *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/eu-solidarity-ukraine/> (1.10.2022).

allowing for the temporary liberalization of trade with Ukraine, under which all tariffs provided for in Title IV of the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement are to be suspended for one year, anti-dumping duties on imports from Ukraine, common transportation rules for imports from Ukraine. In addition, EUR 2.2 million was allocated to support Ukraine's financial stability. Its armed forces have been supported with EUR 2.5 billion in support of peace. In addition, European leaders condemned attacks on civilians and pledged assistance in prosecuting war crimes.¹¹

European Union structural actions and legal solutions guaranteeing constant support for Ukraine and its citizens

For people fleeing the war in Ukraine, a special website was created with information on where to get help. The information is published in Ukrainian and Russian and in every official language of the European Union. First of all, indicated are the possibilities of contacting the EU and the contact details of national authorities and organizations helping these people, especially in the field of temporary protection, free travel in individual EU countries, healthcare and assistance in finding a job. Information on reception, transfer and information centres for travelling and staying in the EU is also there.¹²

Legal acts of the European Union and aid instruments for Ukraine

It is estimated that as a result of the war, 1/3 of Ukrainian citizens were forced to leave their homes, including about 5–6 million who went abroad.¹³ On March 24, 2022, the European Parliament adopted the CARE (Cohesion's Action for Refugee in Europe) solidarity aid package for Ukraine, financed by the cohesion policy,¹⁴ later expanded and updated.¹⁵ The European Parliament also extended the operation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for Ukraine until mid-2024. The purpose of the Fund is to increase national capacities to cope with the influx of refugees from Ukraine, to improve migration management

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² European Commission, *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019–2024/stronger-europe-world/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-assistance-ukraine/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine_pl (1.10.2022).

¹³ European Parliament, *Odpowiedź UE na kryzys uchodźczy w Ukrainie*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/headlines/world/20220324STO26151/odpowiedz-ue-na-kryzys-uchodzcy-w-ukrainie?xtor=SEC-169-GOO-\[Ukraine\]-\[Responsive\]-S-\[pomoc%20dla%20ukrai%C5%84c%C3%B3w\]](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/headlines/world/20220324STO26151/odpowiedz-ue-na-kryzys-uchodzcy-w-ukrainie?xtor=SEC-169-GOO-[Ukraine]-[Responsive]-S-[pomoc%20dla%20ukrai%C5%84c%C3%B3w]) (6.2.2023).

¹⁴ European Commission, *Pakiet pomocy solidarnościowej*, 29 June 2022, https://poland.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/pakiet-pomocy-solidarnosciowej-2022-06-29_pl (6.2.2023).

¹⁵ Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 as regards additional flexibility to address the consequences of the military aggression of the Russian Federation FAST (Flexible Assistance for Territories) – CARE (1.10.2022).

procedures, and to support solidarity and responsibility-sharing between Member States, in particular through emergency assistance and the relocation mechanism.¹⁶ The EU Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU) was also used as part of the assistance activities. On March 1, 2022, the previously mentioned Temporary Protection Directive was launched. Ukrainian driving license holders were also allowed to use them within the EU.

European Peace Facility (2021–2027)

As of 22 March 2021, the European Union has a Peace Facility of EUR 5 billion for the period 2021–2027.¹⁷ It covers external action in the field of common foreign and security policy. Under the Facility, military and defence related expenditure can be financed. In general, it is intended to strengthen the EU in preventing conflicts and in maintaining peace and stability in the world. Until July 22, 2022, a total of EUR 2.5 billion had been allocated in five tranches to the Ukrainian armed forces. Of the last tranche – approved on 22 July 2022, amounting to EUR 500 million – EUR 490 million was allocated for military equipment and EUR 10 million for medical protection equipment.¹⁸

Macro-financial assistance to Ukraine after the outbreak of war

Macro-financial assistance (MFA) operations are another manifestation of the EU's wider involvement in the situation of neighbouring countries and are intended to be a unique EU crisis response instrument. They are available to countries neighbouring the EU that are facing serious balance of payments problems. The EU has provided significant assistance to Ukraine in recent years through its macro-financial assistance programme. Since 2014, it has provided over EUR 5 billion through dedicated programs (MFA I, MFA II, MFA III, MFA IV, Emergency MFA) to support the reform agenda in areas such as the fight against corruption, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, improving the conditions for the development of the business environment.

In connection with the war in Ukraine, the European Commission decided to provide additional financial aid to the attacked state and to pay out funds.¹⁹ On 18 May 2022, the EC presented long-term plans for Ukraine's reconstruction and announced actions aimed at regulating its financial liquidity, in particular through an extraordinary package of macro-financial assistance worth up to EUR 9 billion (Exceptional MFA). In addition, Ukraine was granted a low-interest loan of EUR 1.2 billion on favourable terms.

¹⁶ European Commission, *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2021–2027)*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021–2027_pl?ettrans=pl (1.10.2022).

¹⁷ Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe, *UE creates a European instrument for peace*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/press/press-releases/2021/03/22/eu-sets-up-the-european-peace-facility/> (1.10.2022).

¹⁸ Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe, *The European instrument for Peace: the EU increases support for Ukraine to 2.5 billion Euro*, 22 July 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/press/press-releases/2022/07/22/european-peace-facility-eu-support-to-ukraine-increased-to-2-5-billion/> (1.10.2022).

¹⁹ European Commission, *Pierwsza transza pomocy makrofinansowej dla Ukrainy*, 1 August 2022, https://poland.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/pierwsza-transza-pomocy-makrofinansowej-dla-ukrainy-2022-08-01_pl (1.10.2022).

The European Commission proposed in September 2022 a further EUR 5 billion in loans to Ukraine. These measures constitute the second part of the emergency macro-financial assistance package discussed above. The remaining EUR 3 billion will be transferred as soon as possible.

The discussed forms of support are intended to help Ukraine meet its rapidly growing financial needs as a result of the war. The MFA support programme for Ukraine has totalled EUR 7.2 billion since the beginning of the war, and could reach as much as EUR 10 billion if the entire package is launched later this year.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism in the context of Ukraine

Within the European Union, humanitarian aid and civil protection is handled by the Directorate-General of the European Commission.²⁰ The EU Mechanism for Civil Protection was established in 2001 to coordinate rescue and humanitarian aid. This mechanism covers 34 countries, and apart from EU countries, the following states participate: Great Britain, Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.²¹ Any country in the world can ask the EU for help under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism when the situation is beyond its own capacity to respond to disasters. According to the estimates of the European Commission, more than 15 million people in Ukraine require assistance due to the war.²² This is most needed close to the front lines, in Donbass and Kherson Oblast, as many locals have had to leave their homes. EU Mechanism for Civil Protection also maintains media pressure on Russia, i.e. the aggressor state, and reminds the international community of the need to help the victims. According to the data of the European Commission, aid for Ukraine is the largest operation under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism so far. By the end of July, the transport hubs established in Poland, through which the aid route for Ukraine runs, accepted over 46,000 tons of humanitarian aid, which was further transported on to those in need. The total value of this aid is EUR 24 million and covers mainly medical assistance, but also includes, among others, equipment related to the adaptation of rooms for living purposes and power generators.

EU humanitarian aid in Ukraine

As part of humanitarian aid projects, the European Union has so far allocated more than EUR 700 million in aid to Ukraine. Food, water, medical care, accommodation and cash assistance have been provided.²³ Already on February 15, 2022, the government of Ukraine submitted an application to the European Commission for humanitarian aid in connection

20 <https://op.europa.eu/pl/web/who-is-who/organization/-/organization/ECHO> (6.2.2023).

21 Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, *Unijny Mechanizm Ochrony Ludności*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/mswia/unijny-mechanizm-ochrony-ludnosci> (1.10.2022).

22 European Commission, *Ukraine. Factsheet*, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/europe/ukraine_en (1.10.2022).

23 *Ukraine: EU announces additional €205 million in humanitarian aid as Commissioner Lenarčič visits Ukraine*, 9 June 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-eu-announces-additional-eu205-million-humanitarian-aid-commissioner-lenarctic-visits-ukraine> (1.10.2022).

with impending aggression.²⁴ On February 24, the day of the invasion, Ukraine applied for a civil protection programme. On February 28, the European Commission allocated 90 million euros for humanitarian aid to Ukraine. On that day, Poland also launched the protection mechanism, and six countries immediately provided assistance to Ukrainian citizens who found themselves in Poland. On March 1, 2022, the first tranche of humanitarian aid from the EU was sent. The very next day, the number of countries supporting Ukraine within the EU increased to 26. On March 13, 2022, people who required medical intervention began to be evacuated from the territory of Ukraine. On 22 March, the EU Humanitarian Representation was opened in Lviv, and on 19 April the EU provided EUR 45 million in humanitarian aid to those directly affected by Russia's invasion. By 3 June 2022, 500 people had been relocated to hospitals across the EU under the protection mechanism.

Solidarity corridors

In order for Ukraine to be able to export grain, but also import essential goods and receive humanitarian aid, the European Commission and Ukraine's neighbouring EU Member States established on 12 May 2022 solidarity corridors between the EU and Ukraine in response to Russian aggression. These are key corridors intended for the export of agricultural products from Ukraine, as well as for the export and import of other goods.

Additionally, on June 29, commodity agreements were signed with Ukraine and Moldova to facilitate transit and transportation between these countries.²⁵

Since the creation of the solidarity corridors, more than 15 million tonnes of Ukrainian agricultural goods (cereals, oilseeds and related products) have been exported – by land, rail and through ports on the Black Sea and the Danube.

These corridors are the only option for exporting all other non-agricultural Ukrainian goods to the rest of the world and for importing the goods that Ukraine needs, such as fuel or humanitarian aid. The solidarity corridors have become the driving force of the Ukrainian economy, generating more than EUR 15 billion of income needed by Ukrainian farmers and businesses.

Protection of Ukraine's cultural heritage during the war

The protection of cultural heritage is not as critical as the protection of human life, but it is fundamental to the survival of Ukraine as a nation, society and state. Only during the first two months of the war, 242 cases of war crimes against Ukraine's cultural heritage were documented.²⁶ The Russian Federation deliberately destroys monuments, and museums. The Center for Rescuing Cultural Heritage has been operating in Lviv since March.

²⁴ European Commission, *Ukraine...*, op. cit.

²⁵ European Commission, *EU Assistance for Ukraine*, https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-assistance-ukraine_pl (1.10.2022).

²⁶ Instytut Europy Środkowej, *Ochrona dziedzictwa kulturowego Ukrainy w czasie wojny*, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/ochrona-dziedzictwa-kulturowego-ukrainy-w-czasie-wojny/> (1.10.2022).

Since the beginning of the war, foreign partners from Poland, Slovenia, Latvia, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, Finland and other countries have been actively involved in preserving Ukrainian cultural heritage and museum collections, providing financial, material and technical assistance. Representatives of Polish museums brought into being the Committee for Assistance to Ukrainian Museums, whose aim is to offer support to all Ukrainian museums and cultural institutions in securing collections, the most valuable souvenirs and monuments of Ukrainian culture, and in digitizing and inventorying collections.

In addition, all cultural heritage objects of Ukraine are digitally archived by volunteers from the international project Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online (SUCHO). The team consists of over 1,300 programmers, librarians, archivists, researchers and amateur IT specialists.²⁷

In the name of solidarity with Ukraine, the Center for Aid for Culture in Ukraine was established in Poland at the end of February as the main coordination centre for government aid. The Center operates within the structure of the National Heritage Board of Poland (Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa). Its primary task is to support activities aimed at protecting Ukrainian cultural heritage threatened by warfare.²⁸

European External Action Service

The European External Action Service (EEAS) has existed since 2011 and deals with the EU's diplomatic relations and security policy.²⁹ In numerous countries outside of the EU proper, the EU operates delegations, which perform a similar role to embassies. In addition to the diplomatic service, the EEAS deals with the provision of development and humanitarian aid in crisis conditions, crisis response, combating climate change and the protection of human rights. The EEAS has developed a concept for the protection of cultural heritage during conflicts and crises, which sets specific political goals and contributes to building lasting peace in conflict-affected areas.³⁰ The EEAS is involved in ensuring security in Europe, Africa and the Middle East with 11 civilian and 7 military missions and operations, and is also active during the war in Ukraine.

The main assumption is not only the physical protection of cultural assets in a situation of armed conflict, but also the reconstruction of peaceful existence and understanding among communities on the basis of a common history. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the EEAS, through its EU Representations and Delegations, has

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Zachowanie dziedzictwa kulturowego w objętej wojną Ukrainie – konferencja w ramach obchodów jubileuszu 60-lecia misji Narodowego Instytutu Dziedzictwa*, 8 June 2022, <https://www.gov.pl/web/kultura/zachowanie-dziedzictwa-kulturowego-w-objetej-wojna-ukrainie--konferencja-w-ramach-obchodow-jubileuszu-60-lecia-misji-narodowego-instytutu-dziedzictwa> (1.10.2022).

²⁹ European Union, *European External Action Service (EEAS)*, https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/eeas_en (1.10.2022).

³⁰ Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, *Rosnące zaangażowanie UE w ochronę dziedzictwa kulturowego podczas konfliktów*, 13 August 2021, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/rosnace-zaangazowanie-ue-w-ochrone-dziedzictwa-kulturowego-podczas-konfliktow> (1.10.2022).

been active in its efforts to help the attacked country. The main activities of the EEAS focused on the following aspects: material assistance and diplomatic support for Ukraine, imposing sanctions on Russia and those responsible for the attack on Ukraine (regime officials and oligarchs), humanitarian assistance to refugees.

Help from EU Member States

According to research conducted by the European Statistical Office (Eurostat),³¹ Poland has done the most among EU Member States to help Ukraine – when assessing the scale of assistance, actions such as moral support, diplomatic actions aimed at persuading other EU countries to help, and finally the involvement of ordinary citizens in activities to help Ukrainians.

The EU introduced a temporary protection mechanism for people fleeing the war in Ukraine in March. It provides immediate and collective – i.e. without examining individual applications – protection for displaced persons who are unable to return to their country of origin. Temporary protection does not equate to refugee status. People covered by this mechanism are granted the right of residence for a year, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance and access to education for their children.

According to data from the European Statistical Office, Poland granted temporary protection to the largest number of refugees from Ukraine.³² In May 2022, among the EU Member States for which data are available, Poland granted the largest number of temporary protection statuses to people fleeing Ukraine (96,085). It is followed by Romania (20,435) and Bulgaria (19,860). The vast majority of people enjoying temporary protection were Ukrainians, but this group also includes citizens of other countries, e.g. 825 Nigerians in Portugal or 205 Russians in Poland.

In May 2022, the number of Ukrainians under temporary protection increased in four EU Member States, with the largest increases recorded in Romania and Denmark (9,575 and 1,040 more respectively compared to April). By contrast, for April, numbers fell in eighteen EU Member States, with the largest decreases observed in Poland (329,535), followed by Bulgaria (41,610) and France (14,535).

In terms of the population of each Member State, the highest proportion of Ukrainian citizens granted temporary protection in May 2022 was recorded in Lithuania (6.1 cases of temporary protection granted per thousand inhabitants), followed by Cyprus (3.5) and Bulgaria (2.9).

The largest number of Ukrainian children (those under 18) under temporary protection were recorded in Poland (30,170 children, or 31% of Ukrainians granted protection in Poland in May), followed by Romania (8,235, or 40%) and Bulgaria (7,175, i.e. 36%).

³¹ Eurostat, *Ukrainians granted temporary protection in May*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/Ddn-20220707-2> (1.10.2022).

³² Ibid.

In the EU Member States for which data are available, the majority of Ukrainian citizens granted temporary protection are women, including those under the age of 18. The largest number of women who received temporary protection received it in Poland (67,465, or 70% of Ukrainians who took advantage of protection in Poland in May 2022), Romania (13,785 or 67%) and Bulgaria (13,475 or 68%). Of the men granted temporary protection in EU Member States, at least one-third are under the age of 18.

According to data available on 31 May 2022, the largest number of Ukrainians enjoying temporary protection in the EU was recorded in Poland (1,142,375 Ukrainians covered by temporary protection). Poland was followed by Bulgaria (111,895) and Slovakia (76,510).

Figure 1. Temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine



Source: Eurostat, *Ukrainians granted temporary protection in May*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/Ddn-20220707-2> (6.2.2022)

Assistance in border management

The EU has also allocated funds for financial management. The European Commission has presented operational guidelines to help Member States' border guards effectively manage incoming people and reduce waiting times at the borders with Ukraine, while maintaining a high security level. In addition, EU agencies support Member States with additional staff and expertise. The guidelines recommend that EU countries create priority corridors (lanes) for the delivery of humanitarian aid, and recall the possibility of allowing entry into the EU on humanitarian grounds.

In view of the above, Member States' border guards have the following tools at their disposal when carrying out border controls:

- Simplification of border controls at the EU borders with Ukraine. According to the provisions in force in the Schengen area, border guards may, in exceptional circumstances, temporarily simplify and shorten border checks for certain categories of persons. The guidelines set out criteria to help Member States decide who may be affected, taking into account the needs of vulnerable travellers such as children. Instead of at the border crossing point itself, checks may be carried out during or after passengers are transported to a safe place.
- Flexibility in terms of entry conditions. Under the Schengen rules, border guards may allow non-EU nationals to enter the territory of a Member State for humanitarian reasons, even if they do not meet all the entry conditions (e.g. they do not have a valid passport or visa).
- Permission to cross the border at temporary border crossings, apart from official border crossings. This may shorten the waiting time at the border in the current situation, e.g. in the case of abandoned cars blocking access roads to official border crossings.
- Easy access for emergency services and humanitarian aid. Member States should put in place special organizational measures to facilitate the entry and exit of emergency services, police and fire brigades, including to provide medical assistance and food and water supplies to people waiting to cross the border. These countries should also create privileged corridors (lanes) at border crossing points to allow organizations providing humanitarian assistance to the population in Ukraine to enter and return.
- Personal belongings and pets. Displaced persons from Ukraine can import personal belongings duty-free. The guidelines also explain what facilities are available for people bringing their pets.

The guidelines strongly recommend Member States make use of the support that EU agencies can provide – the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) can help identify and register arrivals and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) can deploy officers to assist Member States in secondary checks.³³

³³ Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection (OJ L 71 4.3.2022, p. 1, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/382/oj) (1.10.2022).

Support for the health care systems of Ukraine and the countries hosting refugees

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the European Union has supported medical care in this country, and has also decided to provide assistance to countries hosting refugees. By August 8, 2022, the EU coordinated the adoption of around 1,000 so-called medical evacuations from Ukraine,³⁴ it also allocated EUR 9 million for the psychological assistance of refugees. In Poland, free hotlines for Ukrainians have been launched, also in their language. Refugees can also use free the medical assistance of all specialties at all health care facilities in Poland.

In September, the EU opened a medical evacuation hub in Poland to facilitate transfers of Ukrainian patients. This hub will provide a safe place for these people before being airlifted to a hospital in another country in Europe.

Protection of children from Ukraine

From the very beginning of the conflict, the European Commission has also taken care to provide assistance to Ukrainian children.³⁵ The most important thing is to guarantee all children their basic rights, such as health care, education and psychological support. Special care is given to children who came from Ukraine without their parents. Immediately after arrival, refugees have the right to register at the border – they provide their identity (if the child is too small, the registration is done by the border service itself), they receive immediate medical assistance and are directed to the appropriate people who will help them start learning within the Polish education system, receive full knowledge of the decisions taken in their case. If a child has entered the EU alone, a legal guardian should be appointed immediately.

The European Commission supports and finances access to medical care and psychological assistance, as well as special centres for children with disabilities. It helps to implement the European Strategy for the Rights of the Child. The European Union also supports the search for families separated as a result of war, in particular children. Using the new Schengen IT system, the Commission is tackling child abduction and child trafficking phenomena. Procedures for the transfer of unaccompanied children have also been developed.

34 ML, *Ewakuacje medyczne chorych z Ukrainy. Ile osób już przemieszczono? Jakie wsparcie UE?*, <https://www.rynekzdrowia.pl/Polityka-zdrowotna/Ewakuacje-medyczne-chorych-z-Ukrainy-Ile-osob-juz-przemieszczono-Jakie-wsparcie-UE,235502,14.html> (1.10.2022).

35 European Commission, *Refugees from Ukraine – child protection*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019–2024/stronger-europe-world/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-assistance-ukraine/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine/fleeing-ukraine-protection-children_pl (1.10.2022).

Access to education for refugees from Ukraine

Already at the beginning of the war, the European Commission was actively involved in helping refugees in the field of education. According to estimates, almost half of the refugees are children and other people eligible to be taught.³⁶ Attending school is especially important, because the lack of contact with peers has a bad effect on children's psyche. The European Commission finances support for schools through its programs such as "Erasmus+". The European Union has been trying to identify problems and channel aid from the beginning. The EC has made available online the educational materials necessary to start learning. It also supported teachers through "eTwinning" programmes. In addition, through the European Training Foundation, people interested in deepening their studies and choosing a career path have an access to knowledge. A special programme was also created to support Ukrainian science. A portal was created to combine efforts in the field of scientific research.

Poland has also provided access to education: all children from Ukraine (aged 7–18) can attend Polish schools for free.

Access to temporary accommodation and housing for refugees from Ukraine

The European Commission supports EU Member States in providing accommodation and housing assistance to refugees from Ukraine. It is very important to provide housing at an appropriate level, appropriately safe and suitable for children. This policy is to be supported by European funds in the field of cohesion policy and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. In the longer term, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) should play a leading role. The European Social Fund (ESF), in turn, is to ensure that refugees' living problems are solved.

Access to the labour market for Ukrainian citizens in the EU after the outbreak of war

Pursuant to Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Art. 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC and resulting in the introduction of temporary protection,³⁷ Ukrainians who entered the territory of the European Union after the start of the war on February 24, 2022, have the right to work throughout

³⁶ European Commission, *Fleeing Ukraine: support for education*, https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine/fleeing-ukraine-support-education_en (1.10.2022).

³⁷ Council implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, Legal Gazette EU L71/ 2022.

the EU.³⁸ Nevertheless, it is also worth emphasizing that the European Commission supports activities aimed at helping refugees on the labour market. Using funds falling, for example, within the scope of the cohesion policy, the EC finances job counselling, adaptation and language training for refugees.³⁹ Trainings related to the digitization of life and work in the EU are also organized (in most of Ukraine, the digitization process is at a less advanced level than it is in the EU). The Ukrainian language has been added to the EU's skills profile tool for third-country nationals to help Ukrainian job seekers and those who want to continue their education. The EC recommends that Ukrainian certificates, diplomas, degrees and titles be recognised. Special websites have been created where employers can be found – also in the budgetary sphere of the Member States and in the institutions and bodies of the European Union.

Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, it should be emphasized again that both before and immediately after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the European Union did an immense amount to improve the situation of that country and its inhabitants. Refugees, 90% of whom are women and children, were given special care. It is worth noting that Poland is one of Ukraine's closest neighbours, which had an impact on the refugee situation – both state structures and ordinary citizens provided immediate assistance. However, much remains to be done, military assistance in the field of military equipment has turned out to be insufficient. The international community should exert constant pressure on countries withholding aid and on the European Commission.

The most important thing is that we, as the Union, remain united in our action. To coordinate support for those in need, the Commission has set up a solidarity platform bringing together Member States and EU agencies. This platform helps both in organizing transfers of people who reside in the EU, both to other Member States that have places for new arrivals, and to countries where large Ukrainian communities already live, such as Canada or Great Britain. The priority is to help people in the most difficult situation, especially children.

In advocating respect for international humanitarian law and effective access for humanitarian actors in Ukraine, everyone recognizes the determination of EU Member States to meet such needs and to protect the rights, freedoms and well-being of those who seek help. Necessary is a unified approach, drawing on all the tools discussed in

38 Labour Mobility Institute, *Zgoda na pracę w całej UE dla obywateli Ukrainy, którzy wjechali do Unii po wybuchu wojny*, 7 March 2022, <https://inicjatywa.eu/16354/zgoda-na-prace-w-calej-ue-dla-obywateli-ukrainy-ktorzy-wjechali-do-unii-po-wybuchu-wojny/> (1.10.2022).

39 European Commission, *Fleeing Ukraine: access to jobs*, https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/information-people-fleeing-war-ukraine/fleeing-ukraine-access-jobs_en (1.10.2022).

this article and mutual support within the European Union. In the authors' opinion, the available tools and the attitude of many people will certainly help to cope with these difficult times.

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