

**LIVES ON HOLD:
INTENTIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES
OF REFUGEES
FROM
UKRAINE**



REGIONAL INTENTIONS REPORT # 2

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Acknowledgements

Data used in this report was collected through a partnership between UNHCR and IPSOS SA, who implemented online and phone-based surveys with refugees from Ukraine across Europe and beyond. These were complemented with face-to-face surveys led by UNHCR country offices in Belgium, Czech Republic (in partnership with Sociofactor) and Spain (in collaboration with the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations).

The analysis was coordinated and drafted by the Data, Identity Management and Analysis Unit (DIMA) in UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Europe (RBE).

We are grateful for the extensive involvement and support of UNHCR's partners, local authorities, civil society, international organizations, refugee volunteers and donors. Most importantly, UNHCR would like to acknowledge the resilience and strength of refugees from Ukraine, who continue to share with us the challenges they face, their fears and hopes and directly contribute to promoting and supporting data collection activities.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

*Poland. Refugees from Ukraine wait to be registered at UNHCR's cash enrolment centre.
UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa*

Executive summary

Following the [first intentions survey](#) done in **6 countries neighbouring Ukraine** between **May and June 2022**, this report presents updated findings regarding intentions of refugees from Ukraine, in-depth analysis of the factors influencing their decisions, and key insights into their current

socio-economic situation and profiles, based on the second round of UNHCR's intentions survey covering **43 countries across Europe and beyond** between **August and September 2022**, with over **4,800** surveys completed.

Key findings

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

13%

of refugee respondents across all countries report plans to return permanently to Ukraine in the next three months. However, an overall uncertainty about the future is still evident, considering that **43%** have not yet made their mind about returning in the next three months.

22%

of respondents who reported plans to return to Ukraine within the next three months had already been back to Ukraine at least once. Among those planning to return, the majority intend to do so with all their household members (**76%**), and to the same place where they were living before the war (**79%**).

79%

of those not planning to return or who are undecided about return in the next three months are planning to stay in their current host country, with only **4%** planning to move to another country.

81%

of respondents express their continued hope to return to Ukraine one day, with an additional **15%** not yet decided and only **4%** reporting no hope to return.

2 THE MAIN IMPEDIMENT TO RETURN REPORTED BY REFUGEES IS THE SAFETY AND SECURITY SITUATION IN PLACES OF ORIGIN, ALONG WITH CONCERNS ABOUT LACK OF ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES AND ADEQUATE LIVING CONDITIONS.

88%

of those refugees who report no intention to return or who are undecided on whether or not to return in the next three months indicate safety and security concerns in places of origin as the main impediment, and **31%** are also concerned about the lack of work or livelihoods opportunities.

49%

of respondents planning to return within the next three months report reasons related to their desire to go back to their home country and reunite with family members, and around **32%** want to go back to their usual cultural environment. About **11%** want their children to be enrolled in the Ukrainian education system back home; **15%** report the need to access employment or livelihood opportunities; and **8%** report the fact that their savings had been depleted.

3 ONLY A QUARTER OF REFUGEES SURVEYED ARE RENTING ACCOMMODATION ON THEIR OWN AND THERE ARE ALSO IMPORTANT GAPS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION, PARTICULARLY AROUND EMPLOYMENT. RESULTS DEMONSTRATE DIFFERING INTENTIONS OF PARENTS RELATED TO THE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS THEY PREFER FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

25%

of respondents are renting accommodation on their own while **41%** are staying in hosted accommodation and **18%** in collective site/hotels. **27%** say they will need to find another accommodation in the next six months.

28%

of respondents are currently employed or self-employed (compared with **63%** prior to leaving Ukraine) and **4%** are doing professional training, apprenticeships or volunteer work. **68%** are not economically active, including **36%** who are unemployed, **17%** who are engaged in family responsibilities, **6%** who are retired, and **2%** who are students.

73%

of respondents across all countries said they will send their children (5 to 17 years old) to formal schools in their current host country while **18%** of respondents reported a preference for their children to continue with online / remote learning of the Ukrainian curriculum. Results demonstrated wide discrepancies across countries as to which system refugees want their children to be educated in.

47%

of households reported that one of their main current sources of income is social protection benefits / cash assistance, and only **35%** reported salaries or earnings from work. Other sources of income mentioned are savings (cited by **31%** of respondents), pensions and transfers from relatives or friends in Ukraine (cited by **12%** of respondents each).

Key recommendations



Refugees should be continually supported to make free and informed decisions on their future. There is a continued need for proper information dissemination and communication with communities about the situation in their places of origin. Refugee participants in focus group discussions highlight the need for information around the security situation, status of their property and the availability of basic services or alternative accommodation in their home communities, which are all strongly aligned with the main impediments to return raised by refugees. The provision of counselling, targeted support for persons with specific needs and information on access to available assistance in areas of origin are all necessary to enable well-informed decision-making.

Areas of origin in which return of refugees is already taking place in higher numbers should be prioritized for inclusive area-based reintegration and early recovery programming, including underserved areas outside the main urban hubs where marginalized and more vulnerable communities often reside.



Host countries and host communities require continued support to ensure refugees have access to adequate assistance and support, to ensure the sustainability of their stay. Refugees from Ukraine acknowledge the warm reception by host countries. Factors such as links with family or friends, security and stability, availability of medical services, access to education, and the overall economic situation, are positively highlighted. However, new needs have emerged as the duration of displacement has increased, and refugees require support for inclusion into labour markets to reduce their dependency on social assistance. They also require support in securing more stable accommodation arrangements. Access to language courses, recognition of work skills and access to childcare are the main barriers to be addressed in this regard. Access to language classes and extra-curricular activities were also highlighted by children, adolescents and their mothers, to support in their successful inclusion in local education systems and in building relationships with their peers.



Specific attention must be paid to persons with specific needs.

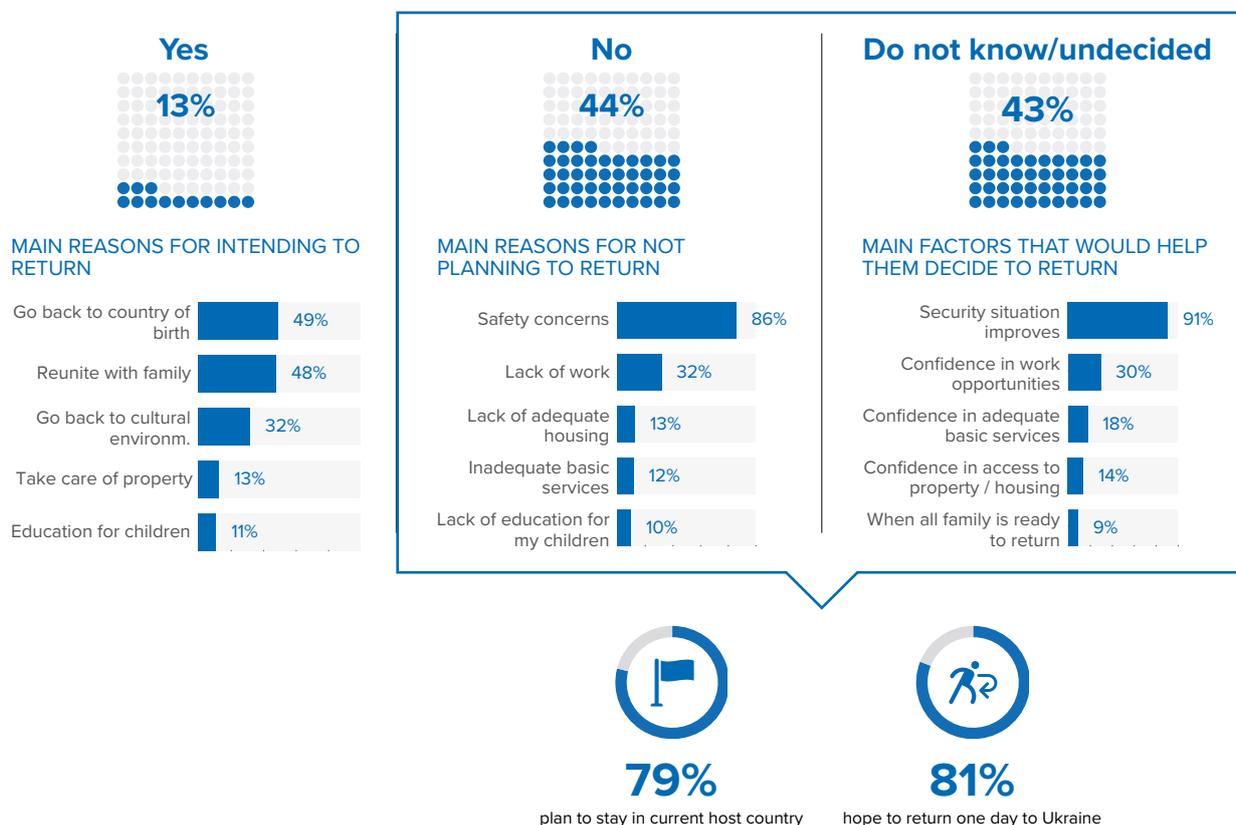
There is a high incidence of family separation and single-headed households amongst the Ukrainian refugee population (32 per cent of households are single adults with dependents) compounded with a significant proportion of households with at least one member with some or several specific needs. These include difficulties walking, seeing, hearing, remembering, communicating or difficulties with self-care. Therefore, it is critical to promote tailored programmes and interventions. Refugees have underlined that specific support is required, particularly psychological support to tackle mental distress, and special support for children with disabilities or other specific needs. Services for older persons are also required, from daily care to health and psychosocial support. This would also enable family members currently providing care to access the job market.

Results at a glance

REFUGEES' PROFILES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION



REFUGEES' INTENTION TO RETURN IN NEXT 3 MONTHS



Introduction

As a result of the international armed conflict in Ukraine, nearly one-third of Ukrainians remain forcibly displaced from their homes. This is one of the largest displacement crises in the world today. Within Ukraine, nearly 7 million people remain displaced by the war. As of 13 September 2022, UNHCR estimated that there were **over 7 million refugees from Ukraine present across Europe**.

Over 4 million refugees from Ukraine have registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in 34 countries across Europe.

To ensure the centrality of refugees' voices in discussions about their future, as well as to inform evidence-based inter-agency responses in support of host Governments, UNHCR is leading the regular

implementation of intentions surveys with refugees from Ukraine, collecting primary data on their profiles, their current situation and intentions, and the factors influencing their decision-making.

Complementing the first regional intentions report published in July 2022 ([Lives on Hold: Profiles and Intentions of Refugees from Ukraine](#)), this second regional report presents the main findings from the most recent round of data collection with refugees (August to September 2022), expanding the coverage to include not only countries neighbouring Ukraine but other host countries in Europe and beyond. In addition, this second report also includes a deeper analysis of the factors influencing refugees' decisions, as well as key insights into their current socio-economic situation.



Methodology

The second round of intentions surveys with refugees from Ukraine used a mixed methodological approach, combining different sampling approaches and data collection modes.

The overall combined sample included a total of over **4,800 surveys** completed using one of the three methods. All surveys used a harmonized questionnaire, which collected data on refugees' demographic profile, including about their place of origin, conditions in current host country and detailed intentions information. For the regional analysis, weights have been applied based on the most recent figures available of the number of individual refugees recorded in each country. Most

results are disaggregated between countries neighbouring Ukraine (**2,000 surveys**) and the rest of host countries covered in the survey (**2,800 surveys**), for the purpose of identifying differences in intentions and current conditions. A more detailed description of the sampling and weighting approach is included in Annex 1.

Most of the survey respondents were **female (89 per cent)**, with around **a third** between 18 and 34 years of age, **more than half** between 35 and 59 years of age, and **one tenth** 60 years of age or older. The majority of respondents left Ukraine between **February and March 2022 (74 per cent)**.



Phone-based surveys: using the lists of refugees enrolled with UNHCR for cash assistance in **Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania** and **Slovakia** as a sampling frame, a stratified random sample of 400 households per country was selected and interviewed over the phone, with a total of **1,600 surveys completed** using this approach. This allowed for estimates with a margin of error up to $\pm 5\%$ at a 95% confidence interval per country, and $\pm 2.5\%$ for the combined sample. Sampling design and data collection was conducted by IPSOS SA.



Web-based surveys: using IPSOS SA's Ukrainian online panels to identify individuals who fled their country since 24 February 2022 an invitation to fill a web-based survey was sent; a quota sampling of 400 surveys in countries neighbouring Ukraine (to complement phone-based sample) and 1,600 surveys in other European countries was defined, for a total of **2,000 surveys completed** with this approach. The sample covered refugees across most European countries, with the highest number of completed surveys occurring in **Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain** and **Türkiye**.



Face-to-face interviews: to complement the above approaches, UNHCR offices in **Belgium, Czech Republic** (in partnership with **Sociofactor**) and **Spain** (in collaboration with the **Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations**) led face-to-face surveys, with interviews carried out in multiple fixed locations (including reception centres, collective sites and community centres), where respondents were randomly selected. A quota sampling was defined per country, for a total of **1,245 surveys completed** with this approach.

To complement the quantitative component, a series of **focus group discussions (FGDs)** with refugees from Ukraine were conducted in **Belgium, Poland, Slovakia** and **Spain**, to capture participants' experiences in their host countries and understand the factors influencing their plans, which helped bring refugees' voices to the centre, and interpret some of the quantitative results. Data collection, storage and processing followed UNHCR's data protection standards and policies.

The results presented in this report must be interpreted according to the limitations of the methodology and given the context of ongoing movements. In particular, due to the lack of complete sampling frames, the study used different sampling strategies, each with some limitations:

- The phone-based survey sample is only representative of the refugees enrolled for multi-purpose cash assistance with UNHCR in neighbouring countries, which in total covers over **420,000 persons**. This represents almost **a quarter** of the total estimated number of refugees in those countries, reducing the risk of potential bias towards particular profiles or groups.
- The web-based survey is not based on a probabilistic sample and is not necessarily representative of all refugees living in other European countries, considering also that online samples tend to over represent individuals with higher levels of education. However, the distribution of the final sample was found to be similar to the distribution of refugees across main host countries.
- Finally, the face-to-face sample is also not based on a probabilistic sample and could over represent individuals currently staying in collective sites.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

4,814

surveys completed

89%

of respondents are females

42yrs

average age of respondents

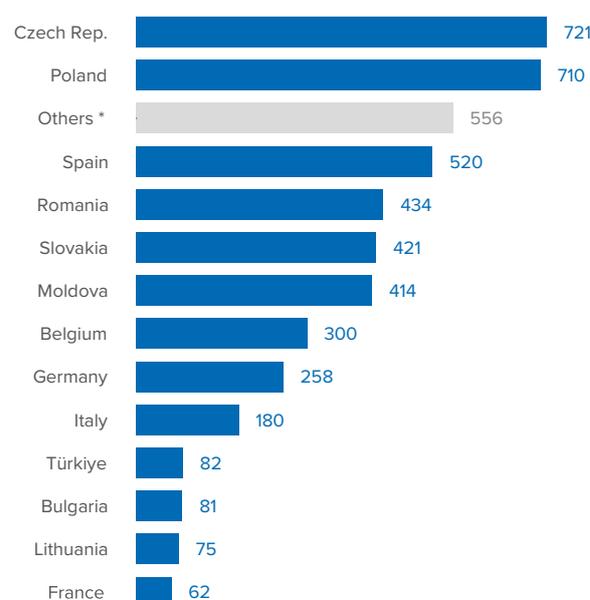
74%

of respondents left Ukraine between February and March 2022

It is worth noting that a comparison of key indicators per different data collection mode and sampling strategy was conducted, and results have shown no significant differences, enhancing confidence in the overall combined sample analysis.

Other limitations relate to the fact that surveys were administered mainly in Ukrainian and Russian languages, which could have limited interviews with refugees of other nationalities. Likewise, results reflect refugees' situations and intentions at the time of data collection, which may have subsequently changed depending on a wide range of factors and contextual changes.

COMPLETED SURVEYS PER COUNTRY



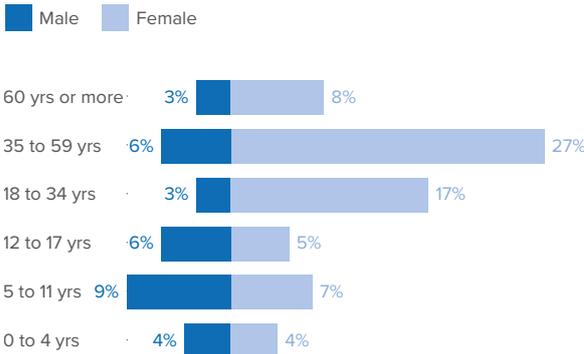
* Includes other 28 European countries as well as Canada and the United States of America.

Refugees’ profiles and socio-economic situation

Socio-demographic characteristics

The vast majority of respondents are **citizens of Ukraine (99 per cent)**. Confirming the findings from previous surveys, the sample is largely composed of women travelling with dependants (infants, children and older persons). **Women and children represent 87 per cent** of all family members, with a slightly higher proportion in neighbouring countries compared to the rest of the sample (**90 vs 86 per cent**). More than a fifth of respondents (**22 per cent**) reported having at least one household member aged 5 years or above **with a specific need, namely some difficulty** walking, seeing, hearing, remembering, communicating or with self-care, and a further **5 per cent** reported household members **with a lot of difficulties**.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



87%

of household members are women and children

11%

of household members are older persons (60 years or more)

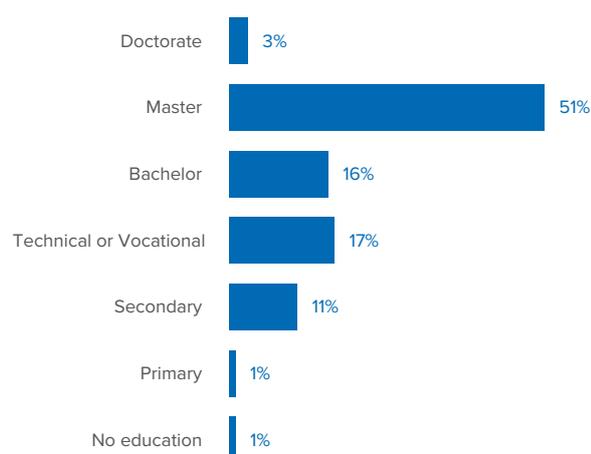
2.8

average household size

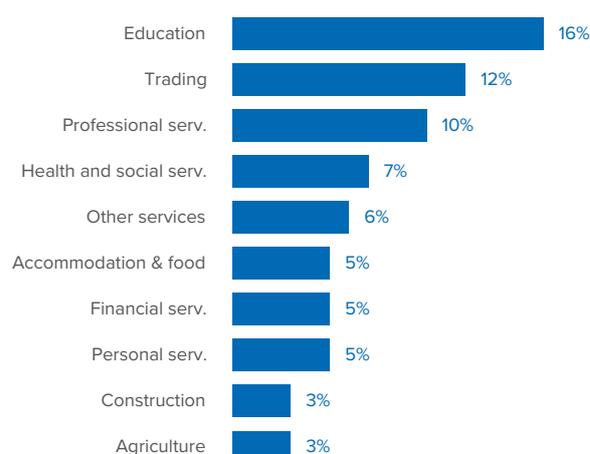
Confirming the results from previous surveys, most respondents have completed higher levels of education (**70 per cent with bachelor or higher studies**), with a higher proportion observed among those hosted in countries not neighbouring Ukraine (**73 vs 62 per cent**), though this result could be partly due to different sampling approaches used (web-based surveys tend to overrepresent individuals with higher levels of education). In addition, most of the respondents were **employed or self-employed before leaving Ukraine (63 per cent)**, with diverse professional and occupational backgrounds, notably in sectors such as **education (16 per cent), trade (12 per cent), professional and administrative services (10 per cent), and health and social service (7 per cent)**.

Around **half** of the respondents reported speaking at least one other language beyond Ukrainian and Russian, with **English (38 per cent) and Polish (13 per cent)** the most frequently reported (the latter mostly among those hosted in Poland). Regarding knowledge of the local language among those hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine, those in **Poland (35 per cent) and Slovakia (26 per cent)** showed the highest proportion of refugees speaking the national language fluently, in contrast to those hosted in **Moldova (8 per cent) and Romania (4 per cent)**.

RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL



SKILLS BACKGROUND (TOP-10) *



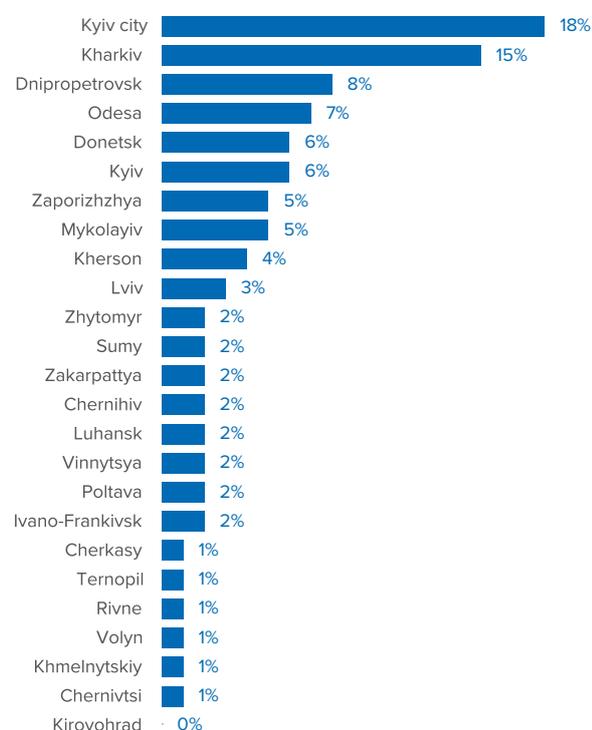
* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

Places of origin

The majority of respondents come from **eastern Oblasts (37 per cent)** - particularly Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk-, followed by **Kyiv city (18 per cent), southern Oblasts (16 per cent)** particularly Odesa and Mykolayiv Oblasts, and from **northern and western Oblasts (12 per cent each)** - particularly

Kyiv and Lviv Oblasts. Among those hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine, a lower proportion of respondents originate from **Kharkiv Oblast and Kyiv city (24 per cent)** compared to the rest of the sample (**39 per cent**).

PLACES OF ORIGIN



Around **60 per cent** of respondents come from **13 cities**. Beyond **Kyiv city with 19 per cent**, other main cities of origin are **Kharkiv city with 12 per cent** of the sample, followed by **Odesa, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro and Mariupol (3 to 5 per cent)**, and to a lesser extent **Kherson, Lviv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Zhytomyr** and **Cherkasy (1 to 2 per cent)**.

DWELLING STATUS BY PLACE OF ORIGIN

	Kyiv city	Centre	East	North	South	West	All
Intact	82%	85%	54%	70%	69%	93%	70%
Partially damaged	4%	3%	13%	10%	11%	2%	9%
Fully damaged / uninhabitable	3%	1%	13%	7%	5%	1%	7%
Other	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Do not know	9%	7%	18%	11%	15%	3%	12%

Decisions about return are largely driven by perceptions about safety conditions in places of origin, but also refugees' perspectives regarding available accommodation and infrastructure, among others. The survey captured data about refugees' knowledge of the status of the dwelling they were living in before being forced to leave Ukraine, showing that while **12 per cent reported not having any information**, the majority reported their house or apartment is **intact (70 per cent)**, though with a higher proportion among those hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine (**76 vs 67 per cent**). Among the rest, **16 per cent reported partial or full damage / destruction** of their dwelling, and **7 per cent reported full damage or uninhabitable conditions**.

Significant differences were found when looking at the situation per Oblast of origin, with those from **eastern Oblasts** reporting a higher proportion of partially or fully damaged dwellings (**54 per cent** for those from **Donetska** and **Luhanska** Oblasts). In contrast, those from **Kyiv city or central and western Oblasts** reported a higher proportion of dwellings status as **intact (between 82 and 93 per cent)**.

A **fifth** of respondents reported expecting other household members (relatives or close friends) to join them in their current host country within the next three months.

Situation in their current host country

This second round of intentions surveys aimed at providing a better understanding of the current situation of refugees in host countries, particularly in key areas like accommodation, education for children, employment, and income sources. Most refugees have been displaced for five or six months by now and adequate access to basic needs and socio-economic inclusion are key factors influencing their ability to remain in host countries while considering if return is possible.

Legal status

Most respondents had registered for **temporary protection** in their current host country (**72 per cent**), while a smaller proportion indicated having registered for a residence permit or visa (**16 per cent**) or for asylum / refugee status (**10 per cent**). Another **4 per cent** said they hadn't registered for either but were planning to, and **5 per cent** said that they were not planning to register for any of those.

It is worth noting that a higher proportion of refugees hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine were registered for temporary protection compared to other countries (**77 vs 69 per cent**), with the highest proportions in countries like **Romania and Slovakia**. In contrast, a higher proportion of refugees hosted in countries not neighbouring Ukraine had registered for a residence permit or visa (**23 vs 4 per cent**).

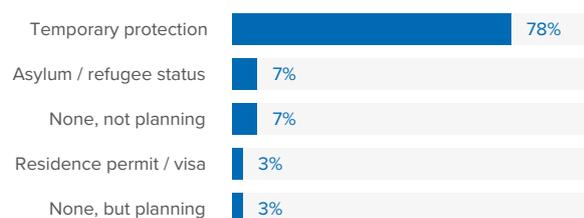
Accommodation

The survey shows that the majority of refugees are staying in hosted accommodation (**21 per cent with relatives or friends** and another **20 per cent with a local family**), while **25 per cent are renting on their own**. Just **18 per cent are staying in collective sites or hotels / hostels** and **9 per cent are sharing accommodation with other refugees**. It is worth noting that a slightly higher proportion of refugees in countries neighbouring Ukraine are renting on their own (**33 vs 20 per cent**), which in part might be due to the fact that refugees in neighbouring countries generally arrived earlier than those who moved onwards to other countries, as well as a difference in rental costs between countries.

Some important differences are observed between countries neighbouring Ukraine, with respondents in **Poland** reporting a higher proportion than average renting on their own (**36 per cent**), those in **Moldova** with a higher proportion being hosted by relatives (**44 per cent**), and those in **Romania** with a higher proportion sharing apartments (**20 per cent**).

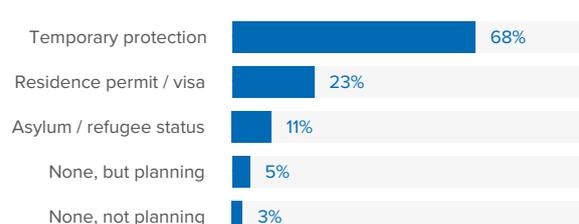
In terms of stability of current arrangements, the majority of refugees reported that they would be able to stay in their current place for **six months** (from the time of interview) or **beyond (52 per cent)**, while **27 per cent** indicate that they would need to find another accommodation in the next six months, and around a **quarter** was not sure of how long they would be able to stay in their current accommodation. Those renting on their own or staying with relatives or friends had a higher proportion reporting longer periods than those in

LEGAL STATUS: COUNTRIES NEIGHBOURING UKRAINE *



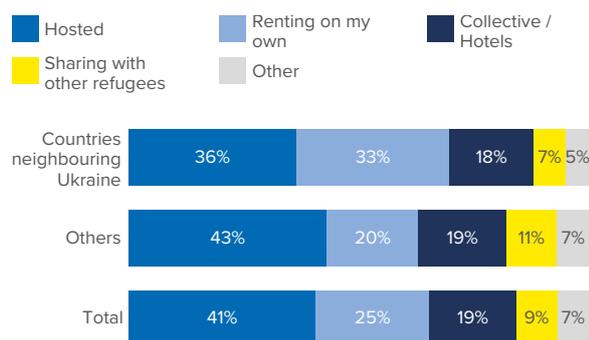
* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

LEGAL STATUS: OTHER COUNTRIES *



collective accommodation or being hosted by local families. The most frequent reason for those who could only stay for three months or less is that the free accommodation programme they were benefiting from would end, that the rental / lease period is running out, or that they have been directly asked to leave.

ACCOMMODATION IN HOST COUNTRIES



Education for children

The survey was conducted just prior to / at the time of the start of the 2022-2023 school year, which allowed to capture information about intentions or self-reported choices made with regard to school enrolment for children (5 to 17 years of age) among households with at least one school-aged child, which corresponds to half of the sample.

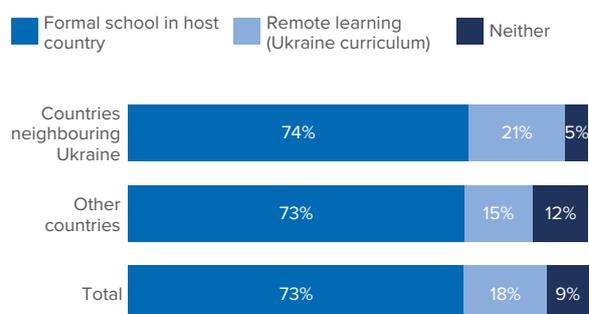
73 per cent reported that they will send their children to formal school within their current host country, while **18 per cent** reported a preference for their children to continue with **online / remote learning in the Ukrainian curriculum**. In addition to reporting a general preference for their children to continue with on-line learning according to the Ukrainian curriculum, those not intending to enrol their school-age children in formal school within their host country indicated that their intention not to stay in the host country is a factor for not enrolling their children in a host country school (**21 per cent**), as well as language barriers (**15 per cent**).

Some important differences exist between countries neighbouring Ukraine: while the majority of respondents in **Poland and Slovakia** say they prefer

to send their children to formal schools in the country, those in **Moldova and Romania** report a preference for online / remote learning.

Currently it is not possible to determine whether the results of this survey point toward an uptick in the enrolment of Ukrainian children in formal schools in host countries. Updated administrative and population data showing actual enrolment rates of Ukrainian refugee children in schools in host countries for the school year 2022-2023 are not yet available or are incomplete.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN HOST COUNTRIES



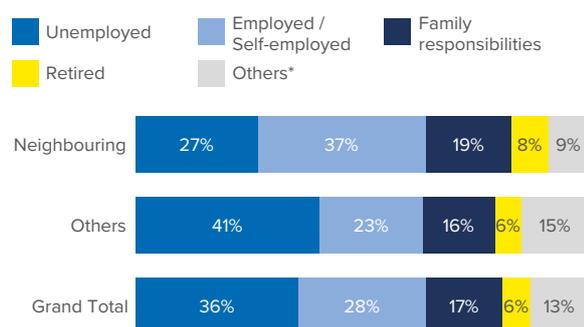
Employment

Only **28 per cent** of respondents are currently **employed or self-employed**, and **4 per cent** are attending professional training, apprenticeships or doing volunteer work. **68 per cent** are not economically active, including **36 per cent who are unemployed**, **17 per cent who are engaged in family responsibilities**, **6 per cent who are retired**, and **2 per cent who are students**. For those hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine, the proportion of refugees reporting that they are engaged in family responsibilities is even higher (**19 per cent**), particularly in **Moldova** and **Romania**.

Among those who are employed or self-employed, the large majority are working **in person** in the host country (**82 per cent**), with **15 per cent** working **remotely** with an employer in Ukraine. For those not working at the moment, **lack of knowledge of the local language** is by far the most frequent challenge reported (**65 per cent**), particularly for those in

countries which are not neighbouring Ukraine, where language gaps were found to be more prominent. Participants in focus group discussions also highlighted limited access to language courses, absence of recognition of work skills and limited access to childcare as the main barriers to be addressed in this regard.

MAIN ACTIVITY IN HOST COUNTRIES

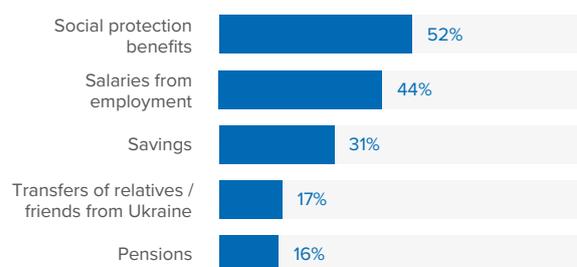


* Includes apprentice, intern, volunteer, professional training and student.

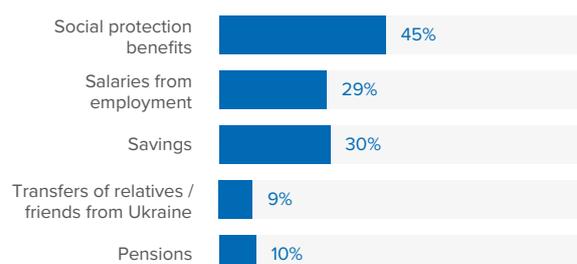
Income sources

Finally, the survey asked about the main sources of income of refugee households. The most frequently reported source of income was **social protection benefits / cash assistance (47 per cent)**, indicating that the majority of refugees are not yet self-reliant, as expected from the relatively low rates of current economic participation. The next two most frequent income sources reported are **salaries / incomes from employment, at 35 per cent** and **savings at 32 per cent**, followed by **transfers from relatives or friends in Ukraine** and **pensions with 12 per cent** each.

INCOME SOURCES: COUNTRIES NEIGHBOURING UKRAINE*



INCOME SOURCES: OTHER COUNTRIES*



* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

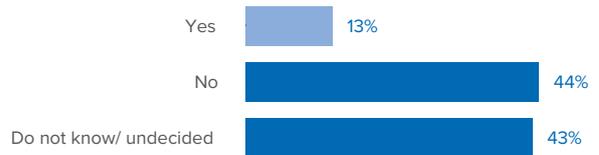
Refugees' intentions

Similar to the results from the first round of [UNHCR's Intentions Survey](#), only **13 per cent of respondents reported plans to return permanently to Ukraine in the next three months**. As noted in the first report, **a shared uncertainty about the future is still evident**, considering that **43 per cent** are still undecided on whether to go back or not in the next three months, including **4 per cent** who reported intentions to go back but were not sure whether it would be on a permanent basis.

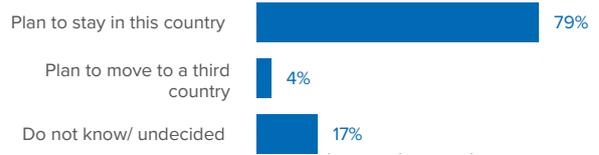
There were no significant differences when comparing countries neighbouring Ukraine versus the rest of the hosting countries, though results showed a higher proportion planning to return among those hosted in **Moldova (18 per cent)** in contrast to a lower proportion for those in **Romania (9 per cent)**. In terms of places of origin, less than **5 per cent** of respondents from **Donetska** and **Luhanska** Oblasts report plans to return there permanently, while this is higher at about **15 per cent** for those from **Kyiv** and **Lyiv** Oblasts.

For those who report no intention to return or who are undecided on whether or not to return in the next three months, the large majority are **planning to stay in their current host country (79 per cent)**, with only a minority **planning to move to another country (4 per cent)**. Still, **17 per cent** of respondents are undecided about their plans. For those currently hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine, a higher proportion report plans to stay compared to the ones in other host countries (**86 vs 75 per cent**), while for the latter group, a higher proportion than average was undecided (**20 per cent**).

INTENTION TO RETURN IN NEXT 3 MONTHS

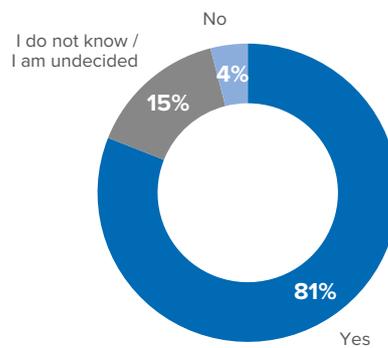


NOT INTENDING OR UNDECIDED TO RETURN: PLANS FOR NEXT 3 MONTHS



While most of refugees intend to stay in their current host countries for the time being, an equally large number expressed **their continued hope to return to Ukraine one day (81 per cent)**, with **15 per cent** not decided and only **4 per cent** reporting no to hope to return.

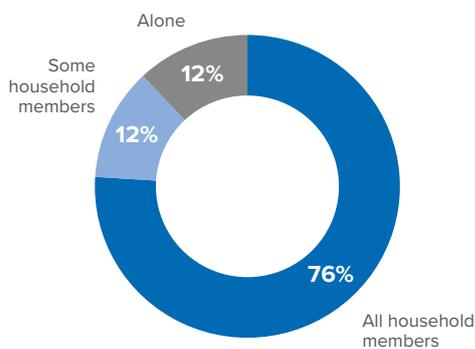
HOPE TO RETURN ONE DAY



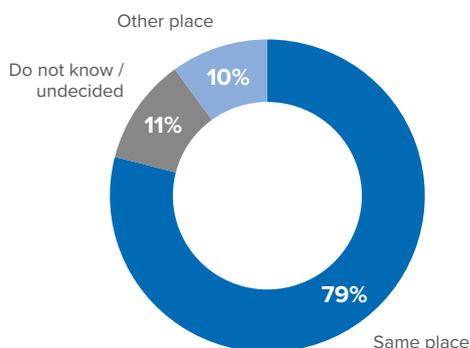
Perspectives and reasons for those planning to return

Among respondents who reported plans to return to Ukraine within the next three months (**13 per cent**), almost **a quarter** had already been back to Ukraine at least once. The majority report planning to return with all their household members (**76 per cent**), and to the **same place** where they were living before the war (**79 per cent**).

PLANNING TO RETURN WITH:



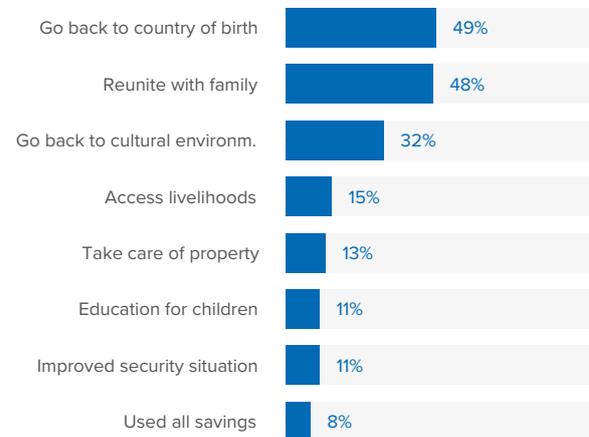
PLANNING TO RETURN WHERE:



While in the first round of [UNHCR's Intentions Survey](#) the main reason for returning was the feeling that the security situation had improved (40 per cent),

in this second round of surveys, only **11 per cent** reported a perception of improved security as one of the main reasons for return. Currently, more than five or six months into displacement, almost **half** of those respondents who are planning to return within the next three months report reasons related to their **desire to go back to their home country and reunite with family members** and a **third report** wanting to go back to their usual cultural environment. About **11 per cent** are planning to return to ensure access to the Ukrainian education system for their children; **15 per cent** report the need to access employment or livelihood opportunities among the main reasons to return; and **8 per cent** the fact that their savings had been depleted.

MAIN REASONS FOR INTENDING TO RETURN*



* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

Looking at other key factors or conditions that could influence decisions to return, the survey results show that:

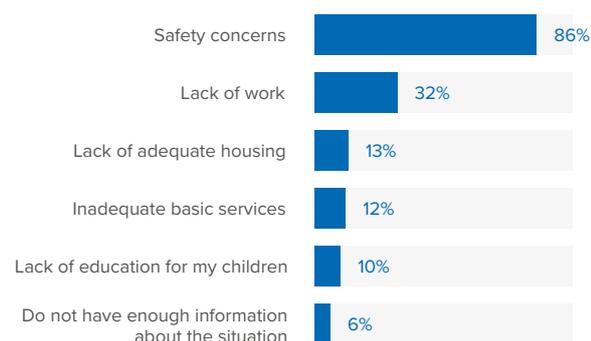
- As expected, a lower proportion (**7 per cent**) is intending to return among those who reported that their **dwellings were fully damaged / destroyed** or among those who are not sure of the status of their accommodation.

- Intentions to return are more frequent among **retired persons (20 per cent)** or **unemployed (16 per cent)**, than among those who are currently employed in the host country (**8 per cent**).
- A higher proportion (**17 per cent**) of those currently staying in **shared accommodation** with other refugees are intending to return, as well as among those hosted by family or friends (**21 per cent**).
- Other factors, such as diverse demographic characteristics or household composition, did not show significant differences in terms of intentions to return.

Perspectives and reasons for those not planning to return or undecided whether or not to return

Among those who said they will not return in the next three months (**44 per cent** of the overall sample), the main reason reported is by far **safety and security concerns (86 per cent)**, followed by **lack of work or livelihoods opportunities (32 per cent)**, **lack of adequate housing, education for children, and/or lack of access to adequate basic services** (between **10 and 13 per cent** each).

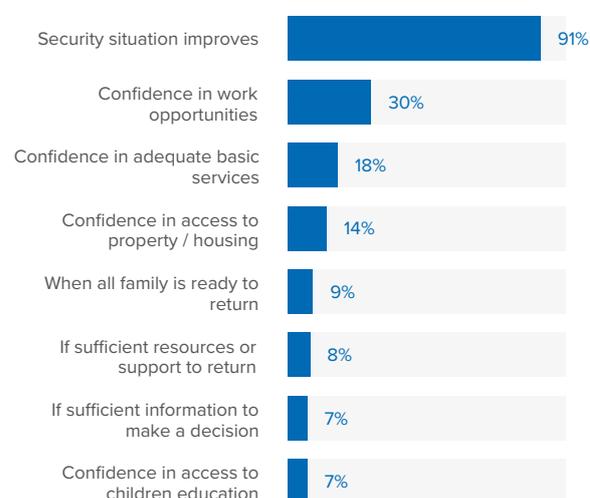
MAIN REASONS FOR NOT PLANNING TO RETURN*



* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

Along the same lines, among those who have not yet made their mind about returning (**43 per cent** of the overall sample), the main factor that would help them make a decision to return is by far **improved safety and security conditions in Ukraine (91 per cent)**, with the second main factor reported being **confidence in finding work or livelihoods opportunities (30 per cent)**, followed by the possibility of **accessing adequate basic services**, as well as **accessing their property** or having alternative housing available (between **14 and 18 per cent** for each).

MAIN FACTORS THAT WOULD HELP THEM DECIDE TO RETURN



Voices of refugees: perspectives and future plans

During August and September 2022, UNHCR held a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with refugees from different age groups (including children), gender, and capacities, who are currently living in Belgium, Poland, Slovakia and Spain. Topics discussed were access to information concerning the situation in places of origin or former habitual residence in Ukraine, refugees' views concerning return, situation in the current host country, and onward movement to EU and other countries. The key objective of FGDs is to place refugee voices at the centre of discussions, to engage them meaningfully and to consult them on protection, assistance, and solutions which directly affect them.

Needs in host countries

While individual circumstances, needs and characteristics of refugees from Ukraine may impact on their decision to return in diverse ways, a substantial number of refugees stated they will remain in their current host country unless the security situation improves in Ukraine. Discussions on return are still taking place among families and members of communities. With displacement reaching six months or more for many, refugees are confronted with the need to ensure the sustainability of their lives in host countries.

Refugees from Ukraine acknowledge the warm reception by host countries. Factors such as links with family or friends, security and stability, availability of medical services, access to education, and the overall economic situation, are positively highlighted. However, new needs have emerged as the duration of displacement has increased.

The majority of adults, including mainly women alone with children or other dependents, are dependent on humanitarian and government support. While they are looking to join the job market, the often-complex procedures for the recognition of work qualifications, combined with a lack of knowledge of the local language of the host

country, and the need for childcare are widely outlined as the most frequent challenges faced in accessing employment. Children and adolescents underline the need for language classes to successfully join local schools and build relationships with their peers, while mothers highlight the need for more extra-curricular activities for children (such as sport). Specific support, particularly psychological support to tackle mental distress, and special support for children with disabilities or other specific needs are also underlined. Young adults look for opportunities to access higher education (university). Services for older persons, from daily care to health and psychosocial support are needed.

Key factors impacting on decisions to return

While during the FGDs, an overall desire to return was expressed (to reunify with family and friends and for some to contribute to the reconstruction of Ukraine for others), almost all considered the current security situation in Ukraine as not conducive to ensure a sustainable return home. Safety and security (including from mines or radiation exposure), availability of services, work opportunities, housing opportunities, education, infrastructure, availability of health and psychological support were reported by the participants as the main factors impacting on the decision to return. The vast majority would prefer to return to their place of origin in Ukraine, however, some are aware that this may not be possible in the medium term and consider returning to other areas, where conditions are more suitable. Many expressed concerns about the approaching winter as a further factor impacting on their decisions.

Older persons and women whose husbands remained in Ukraine are those mainly considering returning. Women with children are less inclined to consider returning now, since they wish to ensure stability and opportunities for their children. Equally,

adolescent males who turned 18 during their displacement are conflicted about returning as they fear losing educational opportunities.

A small number of people reported they must return to Ukraine soon due to a lack of means, if they do not manage to find a job and stable accommodation in their current host country. For refugees living in countries other than those neighbouring Ukraine, the complexity and cost of travel back to Ukraine is highlighted as a challenge.

Some participants had already managed to return temporarily or knew someone who had. This was generally to collect belongings and/or documents, and to visit relatives (mostly husbands and older sons). Participants in all FGDs reported knowing someone who had gone back to Ukraine to stay, but not always in the area of origin.



Mothers with children are aware that winter is going to be very cold in Ukraine. That is why they understand that they cannot go back now, plus it is dangerous. We understand that this situation can last for a long time.”

- Adult female, FGD participant, Spain

Awareness of the situation in the place of origin and information needs

Different newspaper sources are widely consulted (Ukrainian, but also Russian and English language outlets). All participants reported being aware of possible biases and sensitivities in the media, therefore they reported trying to triangulate the information from different sources. For many refugees who participated to the discussions, the most reliable sources of information remain family and friends in Ukraine, as well as social media groups (Facebook, Telegram, Viber), and official city websites, which are considered trustworthy sources.



My friends told me that there is bombing and shelling going on, which matches the information I see in media. It is very hard to talk about safety and security, as the situation is changing every day. There can be bombs any day. The availability of services depends on the different areas of the country: there is no information in the areas under occupation, but in others, the situation can change a lot.”

- Adult female, FGD participant, Spain

Some older persons reported struggling to access an adequate level of information, as they are less familiar with social media. Those with families in occupied territories in the East of Ukraine reported a lack of direct communication with family members by phone. Some participants reported that they would need more detailed information on the specific status of infrastructure and services available in their communities of origin in order to make a decision, however they are also aware that such detail may not be possible to obtain due to the on-going war.

Moving onward

Very few refugees reported thinking of moving onwards to another host country. In particular many participants consider it would be “too risky” to move again to another EU country six months after the outbreak of the war, pointing to perceived risks or increased difficulties in accessing social support and temporary protection, as well as a high administrative burden and the reorganisation of personal affairs as the main challenges. Women with children are considered less likely to move to another country, mostly to ensure stability for their children.

Annex 1. Sampling and weighting

Phone-based surveys

- **Sampling universe:** The sample-universe was composed by focal points of all “registration groups” (proxy for households) that have enrolled with UNHCR for multi-purpose cash assistance in Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, which as of mid-August 2022 covered more than 185,000 groups (including more than 400,000 individuals).

PHONE-BASED SURVEY: SAMPLING UNIVERSE (# OF REGISTRATION GROUPS)

Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia	Total
26,701	126,221	5,317	27,008	185,247

- **Sampling size:** The minimum number of respondents per country is 400 individuals, representing one household unit/registration group per interview. The study is designed so that only one member of each household/registration group should be interviewed. Indeed, only one member of each household was selected from UNHCR database.

The margin of error associated with the sample size of 400 is up to $\pm 5\%$ at a 95% confidence interval. The maximum margin of error is assessed for a 50% estimate of a binary distribution. One needs to note that for any estimate that is based on less than the full sample (for example those that concern schooling needs), the precision will be lower by the factor corresponding the prevalence of the

criterion (in this case, having school-aged children) within respondents. The combined sample of the four countries, amounting to at least 1,600 respondents, have a nominal maximum margin of error of about $\pm 2.5\%$, although the weights that correct for the disproportional sampling rate across countries will drive this margin up due to design effect and correspondingly decreasing effective sample size.

- **Sampling stratification:** The sample universe was stratified based on two variables: family structure and time of arrival to the host country. The family structure quota consists of three categories: single adults, adults with children, and multiple adults without children. The table in the following page identifies the proportion of focal points (each representing a registration group) that fall under these criteria.

After stratification of the sample, a random selection of focal points was made within the database that was at least five times the size of the needed final sample size, to account for expected non-response rate. The actual number of focal points selected for the 400 interviews were as follows: Rep of Moldova 2,500; Poland 2,800; Romania 2,000; Slovakia 2,300. The selection of the sampled IDs was performed on a list of the total sampling frame in each country separately. The selection used a fixed interval sampling (sampling every Nth item from the list)

PHONE-BASED SURVEY: STRATIFICATION OF SAMPLING UNIVERSE

Time of arrival	Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia	Total
Apr-Aug 2022	40%	11%	51%	38%	20%
Feb-Mar 2022	60%	90%	49%	62%	80%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Group composition	Moldova	Poland	Romania	Slovakia	Total
1 - single adults	30%	32%	27%	39%	33%
2 - adult(s) with children <18	55%	63%	65%	54%	61%
3 - multiple adults, no children	15%	4%	8%	7%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

method, on the sampling frame sorted for the quota criteria and then by a random number, so that the order of entries within the same quota classes are also randomised. The sampling interval was defined as the total units in the sampling frame divided by the target sample list size, rounded to the next integer. In the final step, any missing items were added to the already selected IDs with simple random sampling performed on the non-sampled part of the sample frames. This was necessary due to the method of sampling interval rounding; the number of sampled IDs is always slightly below the target and requires to be topped up to produce the exact sample list size. In the same step, the selected final sample was sorted randomly.

- **Data collection:** Data was collected via phone calls performed by IPSOS SA's team based in Ukraine. Three call attempts were made, the first two using either Viber or Telegram - whenever

the registered phone number is associated with one of these platforms - or using the phone network if it is not. The third attempt always used the phone network. In case the respondent picked up the phone but was not available at that moment, a new call was scheduled at an agreed time. At the end, more than 8,100 calls numbers were dialled, to obtain the target sample of 1,600 completed interviews in the four selected countries.

- **Weighting:** Weights were calculated for each country, to control for any biases in the realization rates across the quotas. Simple intercellular weighting within country was performed in each intersection of the time-of-arrival and group-composition quota segments. The only exception was the adult only groups in Poland, which did not have enough members in either in the group that arrived before, or after April, hence these two groups were merged in the weighting.

Web-based surveys

- **Sampling universe:** The sampling universe was composed on IPSOS SA's Ukraine opt-in panel, focusing on panellists satisfying the previously stated criteria of having left Ukraine since 24 February 2022, not currently residing in Ukraine, and being at least 18 years of age.
- **Sampling size:** A quota of 400 interviews completed in neighbouring countries (Poland, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia) and 1,600 interviews with individuals residing elsewhere.

WEB-BASED SURVEY: SAMPLING UNIVERSE AND ESTIMATED RESPONSE RATES

Category	Estimated number of panellists	Estimated N of interviews assuming 6% response
Ukrainians who are abroad now	27,000	1,620
In Poland + Slovakia + Romania + Moldova + Hungary	14,580	875
In other countries (worldwide)	10,260	616

Face-to-face surveys

- **Sampling design:** Given the lack of complete sampling frames of all refugees from Ukraine in the selected countries, the face-to-face followed a non-probabilistic design. Interviews were carried out in fixed locations, including reception, transit, collective accommodation centres and/or community centres. Respondents were randomly selected and asked for their consent to participate in structured interviews using the harmonized regional questionnaire.
- **Sampling size:** A quota of 400 interviews completed in each country was established.
- **Data collection:** In Czech Republic and Spain, trained enumerators digitally collected the data through Kobo Toolbox, which was safely stored in a UNHCR server. In Belgium, community-centres were set up to invite and support refugees to complete the online version of the questionnaire in available computers.

Combined sample

- **Population weighting:** After the combination of the cases collected with different survey modes, a cross-national population-relative weight was developed to all completed interviews from phone, web and face-to-face modes of data collection, reflecting the assumed true sizes of the total number of refugees from Ukraine in the various countries as per the current knowledge of UNHCR (<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>). This retained the weights computed for the phone-survey component's original weights. This population-relative weight was computed on the basis of the reported location of the respondents during the interview, hence some of the individuals sampled over the phone in Moldova, Poland, Romania or Slovakia were also reclassified to the country of their current residence. This stage of weighting calibrated the

sample at country level where the largest refugee groups existed, and consequently, where there were also the highest number of respondents, and combined the rest of the

countries into a single “other” category with its own weight. This weight was eventually scaled so that it totals the nominal sample size.

COMBINED SAMPLE: POPULATION-RELATIVE WEIGHTS

Country of Asylum	Individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe	Sample collected across all interviewing modes	Unweighted distribution of the combined sample	Weighted distribution of the combined sample
TOTAL	5,040,507	4 812	100%	100%
Belgium	55,130	300	6.2%	1.1%
Czech Republic	431,462	721	15.0%	8.6%
Germany	1,003,029	258	5.4%	19.9%
Italy	159,968	180	3.7%	3.2%
Poland	1,379,470	710	14.8%	27.4%
Republic of Moldova	90,745	434	9.0%	1.8%
Romania	86,178	421	8.7%	1.7%
Slovakia	93,384	414	8.6%	1.9%
Spain	141,846	520	10.8%	2.8%
Other	1,599,295	854	17.7%	31.7%

LIVES ON HOLD: INTENTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

REGIONAL INTENTIONS
REPORT #2

September 2022



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For further information visit the UNHCR Operational Data
Portal for Ukraine Refugee Situation:
<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>