

IOM CZECHIA

NEEDS AND PLANS OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN COLLECTIVE ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN PILSEN AND KARLOVY VARY REGIONS

Data collection period 8 March – 17 April 2023

JULY 2023

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This publication was made possible through the support provided by The Government of Japan, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), U.S Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the German Federal Foreign Office, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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This report was issued without formal editing by IOM.

Citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), July 2023. DTM Czechia “Needs and plans of Ukrainian refugees in collective accommodation facilities in Pilsen and Karlovy Vary regions” Prague: IOM. For more information on terms and conditions of DTM reports and information products, please refer to: <https://dtm.iom.int/terms-and-conditions>

Release date: 11 July 2023

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INTRODUCTION

As a result of the war in Ukraine, more than 6 million people have been forced to leave their country (UNHCR, June 2023).¹ The number of refugees from Ukraine, including Third-Country Nationals (TCNs), that have been granted Temporary Protection (TP) in Czechia as of 4 June 2023 was 341,117.² This makes it the country with the highest number of refugees from Ukraine per capita. This unprecedented situation puts enormous demands on everyone involved, from the refugees themselves, to the state administration, to all citizens of Czechia.

The need to provide accommodation for refugees was a huge challenge since refugees started arriving in the first months of 2022. So far, accommodation for refugees from Ukraine has been funded by the state. This, however, changed from July 2023, and will have a huge impact on all groups of refugees, but especially on those living in collective accommodation. The aim of this report is to provide municipalities and organizations involved in the Ukraine crisis response with information on refugees staying in **collective accommodation facilities in Karlovy Vary and Pilsen regions**. This information would:

- 1) support them in terms of strategic planning and for designing targeted support
- 2) and help them anticipating the impact of Lex Ukraine V (see Box 1) implementation along with a new arrangements, including determination of financial contribution for accommodation for TP holders (except from vulnerable individuals)

Types of visited locations

The Report is based on data collected in **17 accommodation facilities, of 13 cities in both regions between March and April 2023**. These accommodation facilities can be divided into four types, based on varying degrees of spatial exclusion, the available transport infrastructure and civic facilities in the area, although differences exist within each type. For the purpose of the analysis, the report distinguishes between accommodation facilities in: 1) remote locations (without infrastructure and services), 2) small cities with relatively good infrastructure and services, 3) spa cities³ and 4) bigger cities, both with good infrastructure and available services.

¹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

² Statistics related to the war in Ukraine - archive – Czech Ministry of the Interior (mvcrcz)

³ Cities which are known for their resorts and mineral spa activities.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted with a **mixed method** approach. Data collection was carried out from 8 March to 17 April and a total of **329 interviews with refugees from Ukraine** were collected through DTM Intensions, Needs and Integration Challenges Survey. Additionally, **60 qualitative thematic interviews** were conducted with refugees from Ukraine and with operators/owners of accommodation facilities and representatives of cooperating NGOs.

Sampling

The selection of respondents was **purposeful**, with an attempt to reach as wide range of respondents as possible – from those working with children, to those not working, or working and childless, retired, or with health limitations. The interviews are anonymous and only adults (18 years and above) were interviewed.

Limitations

Due to the narrowly defined group of the survey, the results are not generalizable to the situation of refugees in the whole Pilsen/Karlovy Vary regions, but they provide a sufficient data base for the interpretation of the situation of refugees in a given type of housing, with a deeper insight into the situation of refugees in these locations and type of accommodation.

Box 1: Lex Ukraine and the question of accommodation

The amendment to the Lex Ukraine V law (which entered into force on 1 July 2023) introduces significant changes to the existing regulation of refugee accommodation conditions and the reimbursement of costs by the state. From 1 July 2023, the accommodation allowance is provided directly to TP holders as part of the humanitarian benefit (HuD), in the amount of the countable housing costs, and only for the first 150 days (5 months). After this period, the allowance is provided only to persons defined as vulnerable by the law. These include children up to 18 years of age, students, those who care for a child up to 6 years of age (only one person at a time), pregnant women, persons over 65 years of age, persons with disabilities, as well as persons who care for them. Low-income workers and jobseekers registered with the Jobseekers' Allowance will be entitled to claim the countable costs of accommodation after the free accommodation period, which enters into the final amount of HuD received.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

PLANS AND STRATEGIES

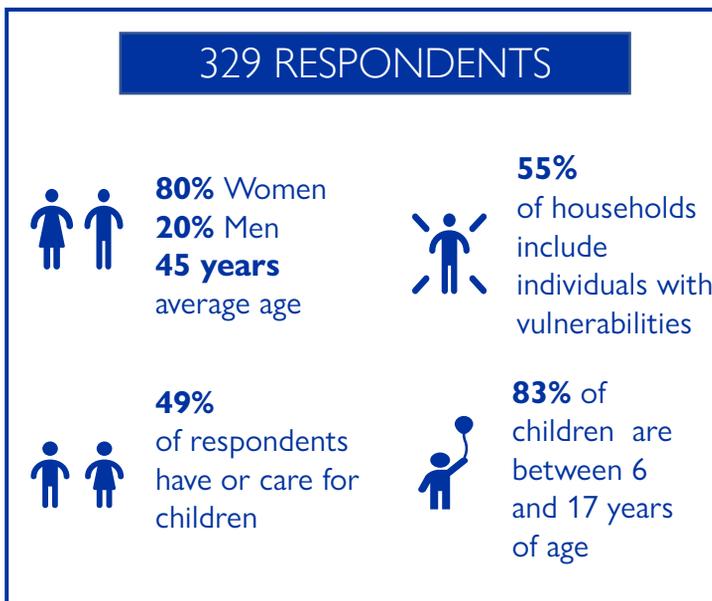
- Respondents **who will have to pay** for accommodation from 1 July 2023 (and after 5 months in Czechia) mentioned **different plans** and strategies on what they will do within one month to six months.
- Those with **relatively well-paid jobs** reported the intention to **either stay** in their current accommodation **or move out** and find something else, depending on how satisfied they are with the accommodation and the cost of it.
- **Those who work** but whose occupations are more **precarious, unstable or with lower incomes**, and those who are **not working** and face barriers on labour market that they themselves can hardly influence, will often **not be able to pay for current accommodation or find and pay for accommodation elsewhere**. Lot of them have **no strategy at all, and have no clear plans on how to cope after the free accommodation period is over**.
- Some respondents reported they may be forced to **travel back to Ukraine** given their lack of resources. At the same time, those who are not able to return are likely to be exposed to various **negative coping mechanisms**, ranging from accepting **exploitative labour conditions**, to incurring **debts** and reducing their participation in the life of the local communities, with higher risks of **social exclusion**.

VULNERABLE PERSONS

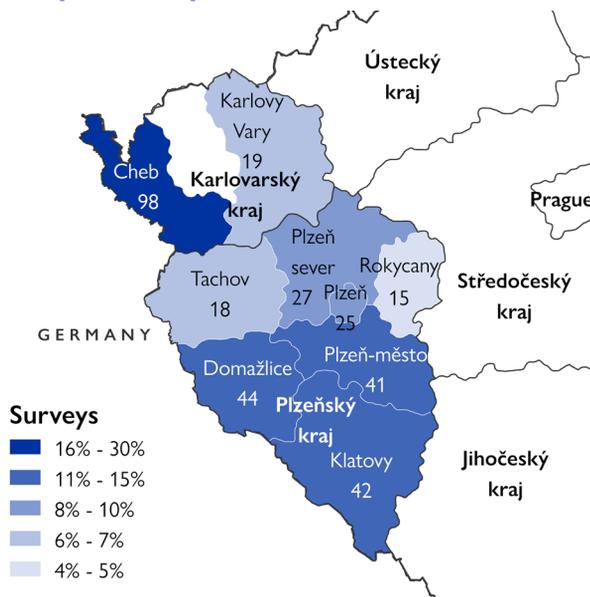
Based on results from our qualitative and quantitative findings we have identified the following **four categories of persons** that can be considered as vulnerable, in the sense of being **more at risk in light of the changes introduced** by Lex Ukraine V, together with the individual, socio-economic and other factors that cause/amplify this vulnerability.

- **Women and women with children**, especially if these woman are **alone** with the children in Czechia (gender and family situation)
- Persons who are **aged 55-64** (age) and people with **health problems or limitations** (health situation)
- **Workers with insecure, unstable and/or low income** (unstable work, low pay), especially those who also **care for children over 6 years old** (family situation)
- Persons living in **remote locations** (remoteness of location)

1. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE (quantitative findings)



Map 1: Survey locations



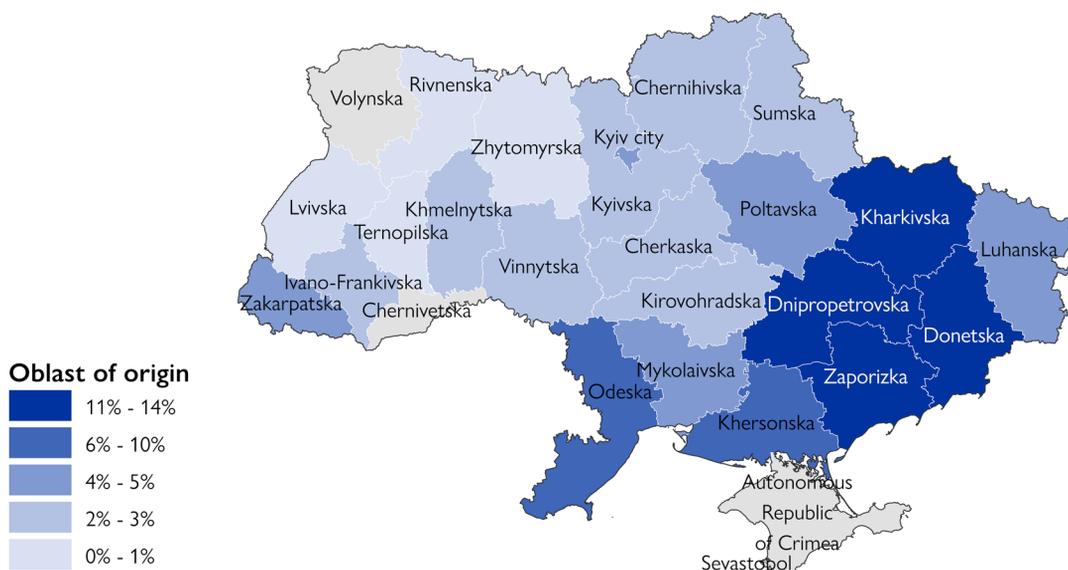
This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM

OBLAST (REGION) OF ORIGIN

Respondents came to Czechia from many different areas of Ukraine, with the following five regions of origin most commonly represented: Donetska (14%), Kharkivska (13%), Zaporizka (13%), Dnipropetrovska (12%) and Odeska (8%), which,

with the exception of Odeska, but whose proximity to the Black Sea made it vulnerable to rocket, air and drone attacks, are also the areas most affected by direct fighting ([Ukraine Conflict Update: 15-21 April 2023 \(acleddata.com\)](https://acleddata.com))

Map 2: Share of respondents per origin oblast in Ukraine (%)



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM

Figure 1 : Education level, by gender and total (%)

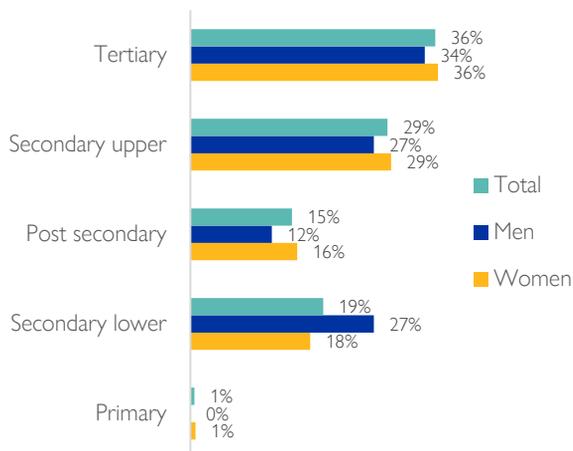
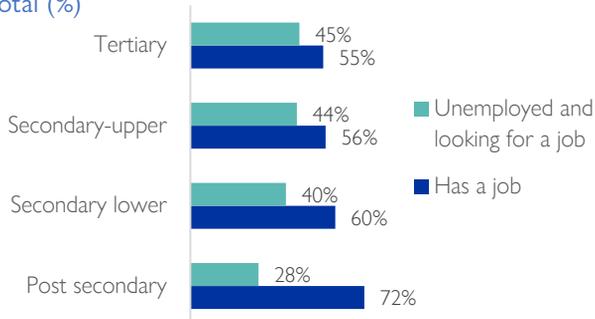


Figure 2 : Current employment status by education level, total (%)



ECONOMIC STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT (quantitative findings)

- The share of respondents who reported having a job in Czechia is 44 per cent (including daily workers and self-employed), while the share of unemployed and jobseekers was 31 per cent. The status of pensioner, student, unemployed and not looking for a job, and person on parental leave was reported by 23 per cent of respondents.
- Looking at the economically active population (excluding pensioners, students, etc.), then in the Czechia, 59 per cent of them were working and 41 per cent were unemployed, while in Ukraine, 96 per cent of economically active respondents were working and only 4 per cent were unemployed.
- The overall employment rate among the surveyed respondents was 55 per cent higher in Ukraine than it is now in Czechia.
- Among respondents who stated that they can speak Czech the share of those who are working is higher than that average (65% versus 59%).

EDUCATION (quantitative findings)

- The share of tertiary educated refugees from Ukraine among respondents in collective accommodation is relatively low compared to respondent's profile described in [Needs, Intensions and Integration Challenges Survey Report](#), as only 36 per cent respondents declared that they achieved tertiary education or more (compared to 48% of respondents in the whole country).
- The five most frequently mentioned fields of study were: engineering, manufacturing and construction (29%), commerce, administration and law (27%), health and social care (10%), education (10%) and services (9%).
- Respondents with secondary education (72%) and lower secondary education (60%) have higher employment rates, while those with university education and higher vocational education are more likely to be unemployed.

Figure 3 : Current employment status among economically active population, gender, total (%)

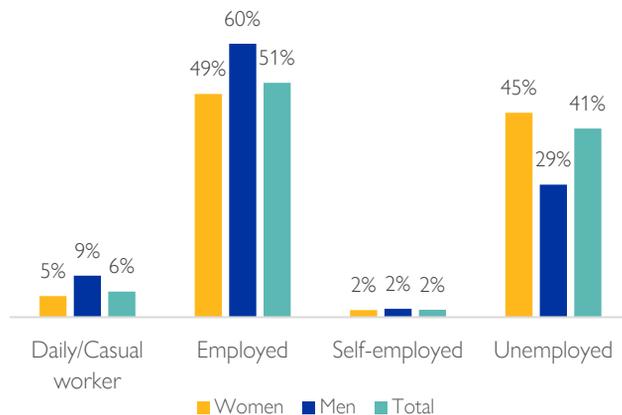
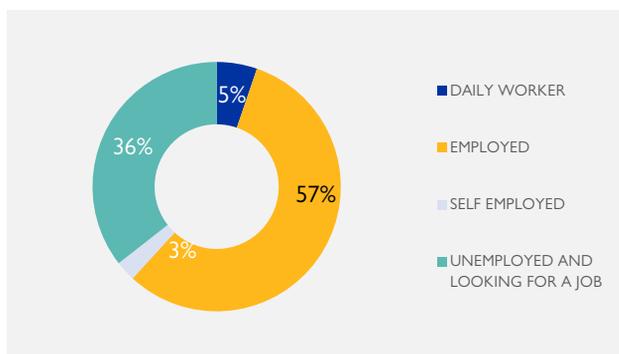


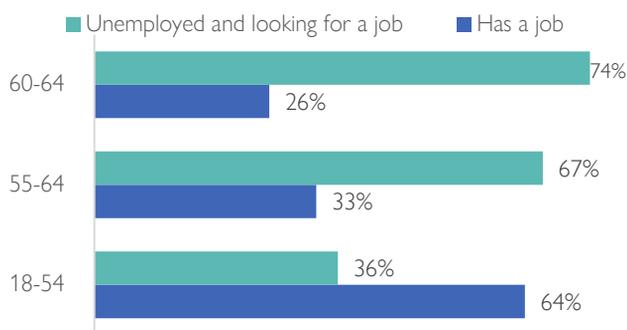
Figure 4 : Respondents speaking Czech (86 respondents)



2. A) VULNERABLE PERSONS – Women and people aged 55 to 64

Based on results from our qualitative and quantitative findings we have identified the following four categories of persons that can be considered as 'vulnerable', in the sense of those most at risk of the changes imposed by Lex Ukraine V: single woman with/without children; people aged 55 to 64 and people with health problems/limitations; people working in precarious conditions; people living in remote locations.

Figure 5: Employment of economically active respondents, by age groups and total (%)



FINANCIAL SITUATION AND NEEDS (quantitative findings)

- The less favourable situation of women in the labour market compared to men is also reflected in their financial situation. **Women are significantly more likely than men to say that they have no sufficient income** to meet their daily expenses (47% of women compared to 27% of men). In the **age group 55-64** the share of those without sufficient income is 50 per cent and slightly higher than average.
- The **most frequently cited sources of income** in case of all respondents are state support (44%), income from work (29%) family support (17%) and own savings (10%). **Women are more likely than men to mention government support** (46%) and family support (20%) as sources of income, while **men are more likely to cite income from work** (40%) and own savings (17%). Also **33 per cent of women are dependent on state support alone.**
- The five most pressing need were the **provision of long-term accommodation and health services**, both of which were cited by 53 per cent of respondents, followed by job search support (45%), language courses (44%) and financial support (29%).

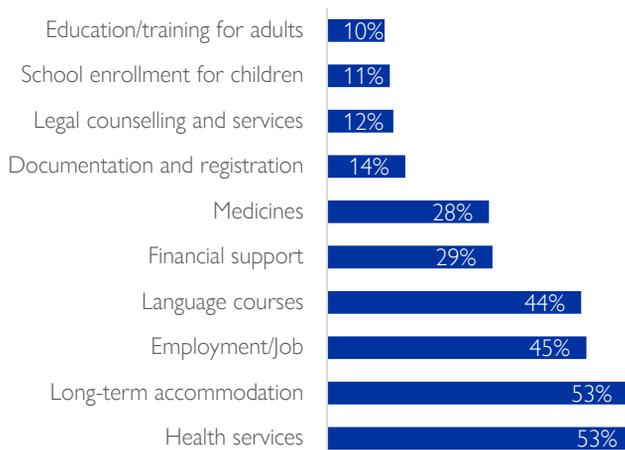
EMPLOYMENT (quantitative findings)

- Women are more likely to be unemployed and looking for work** than men (45% versus 29%), while men are more likely to be among those who reported having a job (71% versus 55%) among the economically active respondents (see Fig. 3).
- Differences are also evident in the different **age categories**. In the **55-64 age group**, the proportion of unemployed and jobseekers at the time of the interview is almost **twice as high as the average** (67% vs. 41%).
- In the **60-64 age group**, the proportion of unemployed and jobseekers is as high as **74 per cent**

Table 3: Source of income, by gender and total (%), (more than one answer possible)

	Women	Men	Total
Savings	7%	17%	10%
Income from work	27%	40%	29%
Support from family/friends	20%	6%	17%
State support	46%	37%	44%

Figure 6: Share of respondents reporting unmet needs at time of survey (%)



2. B) VULNERABLE PERSONS – All categories (qualitative and quantitative findings)

Single woman with/without children (gender and family situation)

- One of the main barriers women encounter when looking for work is the **less favourable position of (refugee) women in the Czech labour market**, which is due to the local **labour market structure** and the type of work available to refugees who do not speak Czech.
- Other barrier in finding employment is the **need to combine work and care**. Almost half of the survey respondents (48%) came to Czechia with children to care for and **39 per cent are in Czechia alone with their child(ren)**. The lack of access to educational facilities makes it difficult for caring women to find work. This relates both to **overcrowding in local schools** and to problems (especially in remote locations), with transporting children to school and with transport in general
- Women are often **pressured to accept work under unfavourable conditions** (precarious work), short – term work, casual work, or for minimum wages/very low wages, in occupations such as maids, in cleaning services, or without contract.

Persons aged 55 to 64 and people with health problems/limitations (age and medical conditions)

- The specific structure of the labour market and the job offers available to refugees often require "young and physically fit" workers
- Respondents aged 60-64, but also 55-59 **can face rejection from employers but also less support from the Labour Office**. Some have negative experiences in this respect, even when trying to enrol in a Czech language course.
- The majority of respondent in this age group who are employed (12) are women working as **cleaners**, either part-time or full time, but for a low salary, or both.
- Some **are caring for a sick/elderly partner** at retirement age, or for grandchildren.
- Respondents with disabilities or limitations face similar barriers as older people.

Persons with precarious jobs⁴ (low/unstable income and absence of social protection)

- Many work on **various types of agreements** or **without a contract – irregularly or with quasi-formal arrangements**.
- Among those with formal employment contract, most have **short term contracts**, ranging from 1.5 to 3 months . Their work and financial situation is therefore very unstable.
- **In 75 per cent of cases, they work in the least skilled jobs** (manual, unskilled and support occupations), which are usually linked to **low wages**. Respondents' earnings levels are very often below the median wage level common for the sector ([according to the ISPV](#)).
- Some have additional high transport costs and sometimes spent up to 4 hours of daily commuting to work
- Respondents **often do not have the opportunity to learn the Czech language, which is a main barrier to improve their position on the labour market** (job mobility).

People living in remote locations (locations with little or no transport infrastructure and limited services)

- One of the main barriers to find employment (but also to attending Czech language courses) is the **low frequency of transport connections**.
- Only 24 per cent of respondents came to Czechia by their own car. In the six locations we identified as remote, **only 11 per cent of respondents came by car**.
- Some **commute to work** on foot (sometimes 11 km one way), others use car sharing services, or transportation provided by the owner of the accommodation or by the employment agency. These services can be paid by the employer (as a part of the working arrangement), or workers can be expected to pay it directly. The sum can be in the range of CZK 2,500 to CZK 3,000/month.

⁴ We use the term precarious work, in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) to refer to a type of work which is poorly paid, unprotected, and insecure. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_dialogue/@actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_161381.pdf

3. RISK ANTICIPATION (qualitative findings)

- Findings show that the financial situation of many respondents, especially those defined as vulnerable, is very precarious and it is therefore likely that many of them will **not be able to pay for a rent** by themselves on the private market.
- As some are not able to afford the change in the provision of accommodation, they may **travel back to Ukraine**, despite the uncertainty, insecurity and dangers in the country.
- Those who remain in Czechia may be exposed to **several risks** as they will try to cope with the impacts of the new law and accommodation provision:

- ☞ People could be put under pressure **to work precariously and/or irregularly**
- ☞ People **could be exposed to/less able to withstand the risk of exploitation** (not only labour exploitation, but also sexual exploitation, for example)
- ☞ People **could be pushed into taking out loans and may become victims of unfair practices** and/or be at risk of debt
- ☞ People **could be forced to return to Ukraine**, where they will be exposed to danger, unstable political conditions and poverty
- ☞ People **could find themselves more marginalized** and excluded from access to services (housing, education for children, etc.) and will not be able to integrate
- ☞ People could integrate into a certain segment of the workforce, but **their potential will remain unused**
- ☞ People **could be pushed to accept inadequate housing solutions for long periods and to pay higher rents**
- ☞ **Families could be divided** - women will stay in a free hostel with their children and men will live in a paid accommodation

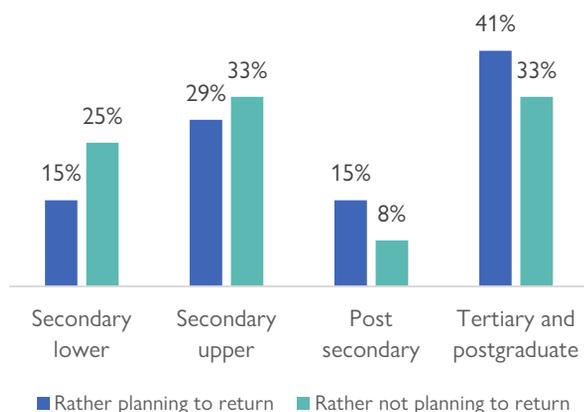
4. A) FUTURE PLANS (quantitative findings)

RETURN TO UKRAINE

When asked about their desire to return to Ukraine, most respondents (68%) answered positively to this question, with 63 per cent saying they would return if possible and 5 per cent saying they would return at any cost. Those who answered that they would not or could not return were ten and five per cent of the total, respectively. In eighteen per cent of cases, respondents answered that they did not know. Men were slightly less likely to respond positively than women (58% versus 70%).

RESPONDENTS WHO DON'T WISH TO RETURN

Figure 8 : Education profile of respondents according their wish to stay or return (%)

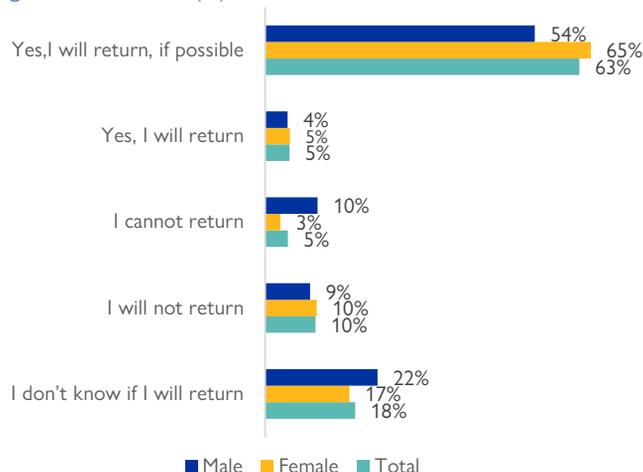


MOVING WITHIN CZECHIA

Out of those who plan to who plan to move within Czechia (N=26) within one to six months, most want to move to a larger city than where they currently live. Forty-six per cent of respondents in this case (12 persons) plan to move to Plzeň, eighteen per cent (5 persons) to Cheb, fourteen per cent (4 persons) to Domažlice, eleven per cent (3 persons) to Klatovy, and seven per cent (2 persons) to Karlovy Vary.

As main reasons for moving, 63 per cent of the cases (21 persons) cited a job offer in another locality as the reason for moving, and 12 persons answered that they would have to move due to the end of humanitarian support to cover for the accommodation.

Figure 7 : Respondents wish to return to Ukraine, by gender and total (%)

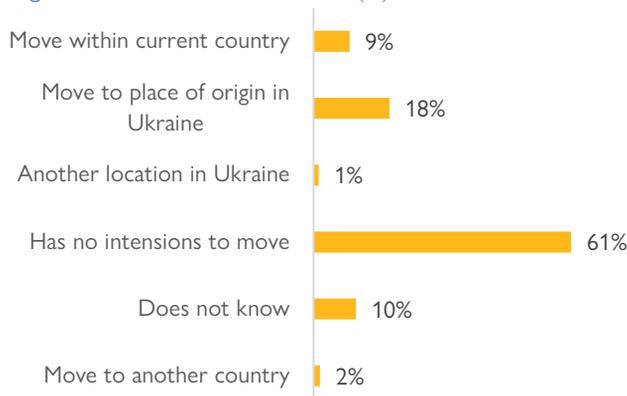


In the group of people who answered that they do not want to return or cannot return, men slightly outnumber women (19% vs. 13%), while the average age of those who want to return is slightly higher (46 years) than those who rather do not want to return (42 years). In terms of educational attainment, those who do not plan to return are more often represented by respondents who declared secondary education without a high school diploma and less by those who have attained a university degree (Figure 8).

SHORT TERM PLANS

Most of the respondents (61%) don't plan to move from current accommodation and/or location. Those who plan to move, wish to move either elsewhere in Europe or outside Europe (2%), to another location in Czechia or to Ukraine (Figure 9).

Figure 9 : Movement intentions (%)



4. B) FUTURE PLANS (qualitative findings)

- The qualitative data show that the fact that respondents do not want to move does not mean that they will actually be able to pay for their own accommodation. Some are not satisfied with the accommodation conditions, but it is not realistic for them to move elsewhere (see Box 2), even if they are able to pay for the accommodation themselves. Others have answered that they don't plan to move because they do not know what they are going to do.
- Many respondents do not seem to have a specific plan or strategy in the form of promised work, help from friends, work or accommodation, even for those who indicated that they planned to move.
- Their thinking about the future is influenced by whether they have a job and what is its nature in combination with housing conditions (see Box 3).

According to their wishes and future plans, respondents can be distinguished in the following types:

Those who are likely to stay

- Those who don't know what they're going to do, their situation is hopeless
- Those who belong to the category of vulnerable according to Lex Ukraine V and who's accommodation will be paid for by the state
- Those who have the means and are satisfied with the accommodation

Those who want/are likely going to move within Czechia for various reasons

- Those who are satisfied with the accommodation, but they do not have the means and cannot find work in its proximity
- Those who have the means but are not satisfied with the accommodation

Those who will move outside the Czechia or are considering to return to Ukraine

- Those who are satisfied with accommodation, but they do not have the means and were not able to find work and will therefore be forced to leave, even though they will be exposed to danger and a major economic downturn
- Those who are in Czechia mainly for work, in case when there will be no work

Box 2 : Factors that influence satisfaction with current accommodation are:

- good accommodation conditions,
- relatively central location of the place,
- suitable job opportunities in the place,
- proactive and helpful accommodation provider,
- good relations between residents,
- no additional accommodation fees,
- adequate amount for accommodation (if paid).

Box 3 : Obstacles faced by respondents in finding accommodation are:

- unavailability of rental housing (at market price), lack of funds to cover rent (and deposits)
- repeated rejection by property owners for various reasons related to both ethnicity and other factors: multiple family, presence of a pet, distrust towards Ukrainian citizens and/or preference for long-term rentals, which is problematic in case of refugees with temporary protection status.

5. STORIES

She is satisfied with her job and with the accommodation and is prepared to pay for it

Marina (woman, 45 years old, city of Odeska) came to Czechia in March with her mother, who is sixty-eight years old. She has no children, her husband remained in Ukraine. She is a highly qualified engineer and economist, having worked as a sales manager in Ukraine. She has been working in Czechia since May as a production operator in a factory producing electronic cables. She has a contract and, in addition to a net income of 25 500 CZK per month, she also receives “food vouchers” (stravenky).

A condition for the contract extension was that she will learn better Czech so that she could assemble the cables according to the diagram in Czech, which she did. The work is difficult, she gets up early, works in shifts and has to commute to work which takes 3 to 4 hours, yet she is happy with the work and accommodation and is prepared to pay for it.

He has a job and is satisfied with the accommodation and prepared to pay for it, if it will be affordable, otherwise will try to move elsewhere

Oleg (man, 53 years old, Donetsk oblast) comes from an area of the oblast of Donetsk which is now under occupation. He has no children and came to Czechia last August with his wife. He is an employee of an expedition company. His wife works in the same position. He originally had a three-month contract, but it has now been extended until the end of his visa. His net salary is 24 500 CZK per month, he works 3 shifts of 8 hours each. These are different every week. He is happy with his work and accommodation and would like to stay, but it all depends on how much he would have to pay for accommodation. He has not yet been informed about this. If the cost of accommodation is too high, he will try to find accommodation with his wife somewhere else in the same city. They do not know if they will return to Ukraine, they do not want to think about the future now, they fear that their town will suffer the same fate as Bakhmut and that they will not be able to return home.

She has no plans for near future and for future in general, is without job and money, can not afford to pay for accommodation and has nowhere to go

Alina (woman, 43 years old, Doneska oblast) is divorced and childless, came to Czechia alone at the end of October 2022. In Ukraine, she worked as a cashier in a supermarket. *The house where she lived and the shop where she worked were destroyed.* KACPU has assigned her accommodation in a *remote location* (in a former hotel on the edge of the forest) with limited transport connections and no services.

On several occasions she has been able to find a job, which she could not take up because the work shifts did not correspond to the bus schedule, and the employer couldn't provide transport for her. It was a shift work with a net pay of CZK 100 per hour. She has *not been able to find a job* with better conditions, starting after 6:00 a.m. mainly due to lack of language skills and qualification. She has no savings, income or support from relatives/friends and is *totally dependent on state support*. She has no plans for the immediate future and for the future in general. She cannot go back to Ukraine, she has nowhere to go, and due to lack of financial resources she cannot move to another city or region and rent accommodation on her own. Recently, she has focused on job offers that provide free accommodation, but *often encounters dubious offers from "agents"* who promise nothing concrete and do not guarantee permanent employment, decent pay, acceptable working conditions or accommodation solutions.

He is employed and not satisfied with accommodation; he plans to move to a bigger city in Czechia

Artem (men, 28 years old, Khersonska oblast) is childless and unmarried and arrived in the Czechia at the end of July last year. He graduated from a construction technical school in Ukraine and worked for the last 2 years in a furniture factory that was occupied by Russian soldiers at the beginning of the war. He had a difficult time getting out of Ukraine, via the Russian Federation. He works shifts in a factory producing filtration systems and his net income is 120 CZK/hour. Transportation to work is provided by a landlord who also runs an employment agency. Artem's accommodation does not suit him; he is in the middle of the forest, far from the city, in a very small room with cockroaches and bedbugs. The owner tries to solve this, but without success. If he is forced to pay for the accommodation, he will try to find another place to live.

DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the main displacement patterns – origin country and region – for refugees of any nationality fleeing from Ukraine because of the war. It captures the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended final destination and prospects of permanence in the country of the survey/first reception; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several IOM's DTM tools were deployed in countries neighbouring Ukraine and in other countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of migrants and refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult: <https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>

DTM is part of IOM's Global Data Institute.

