

LATVIA

On the Way Back to Ukraine: Surveys with Refugees on Destinations, Length of Stay & Assistance



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April - June 2023
Country Report & Data Analysis

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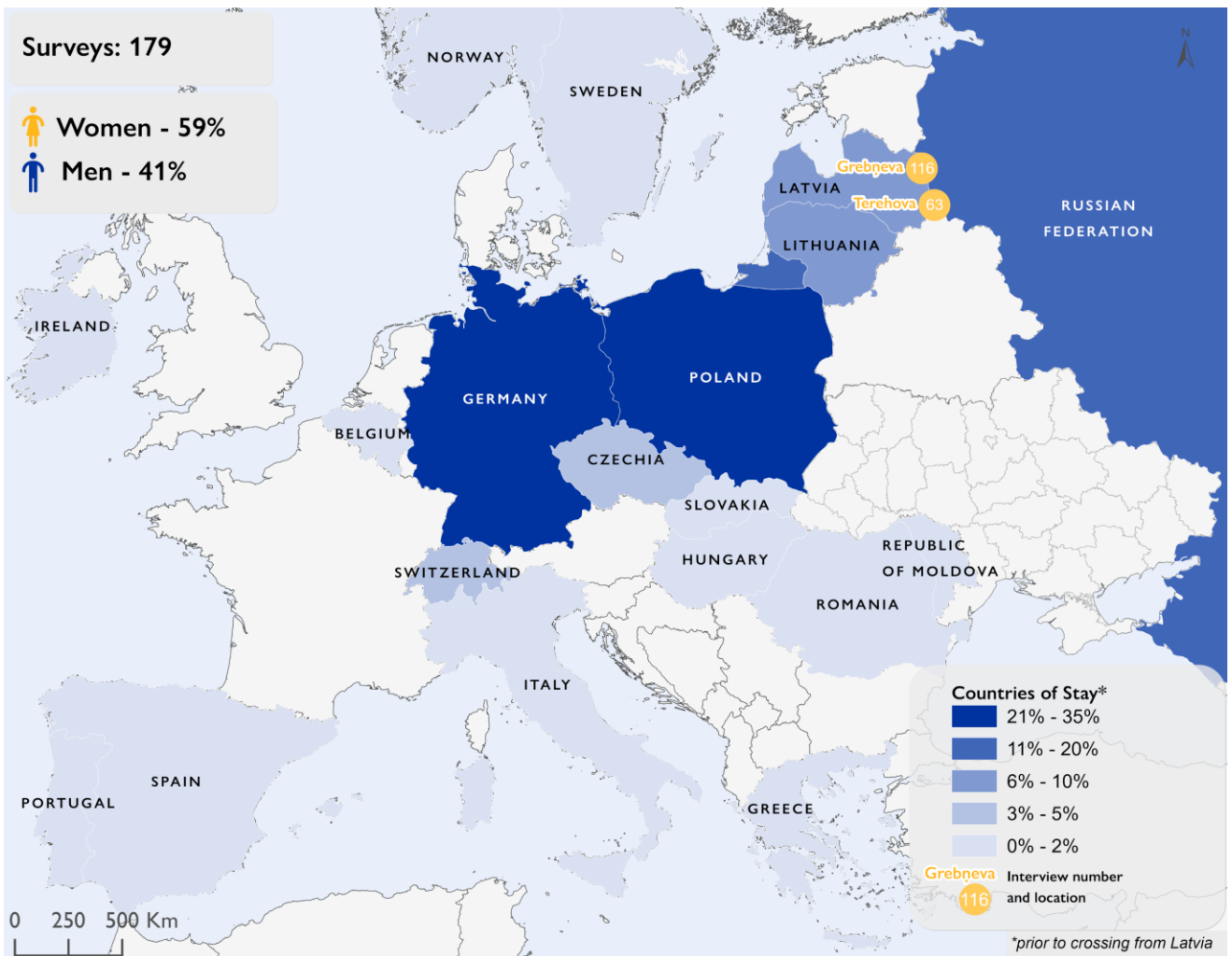
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KEY FINDINGS

- **Top 3 countries of stay abroad:** Poland (36%), Germany (23%), Russian Federation (17%).
- **Top oblasts of origin:** Donetsk (26%), Luhanska (18%), Khersonska (18%).
- **Destinations in Ukraine:** going to same oblast of origin (83%), to a different oblast (17%): Donetsk, the city of Kiyv, Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Mykolaivska.
- **Transport to Ukraine:** minibus (44%), car (25%), foot (21%).
- **Intentions after arrival to Ukraine:** long-term stay (47%), short-term visit (37%), 15% do not know. One per cent did not answer.
- **Top needs on the way to Ukraine:*** general information (89%), food supply (11%), short-term accommodation (3%).
- **Top areas of assistance received:*** financial support (96%), accommodation (68%), food (58%), sanitary supplies (39%).

* more than one answer possible

Map I: Latvia, surveys deployed, countries of stay & oblasts of destination in Ukraine



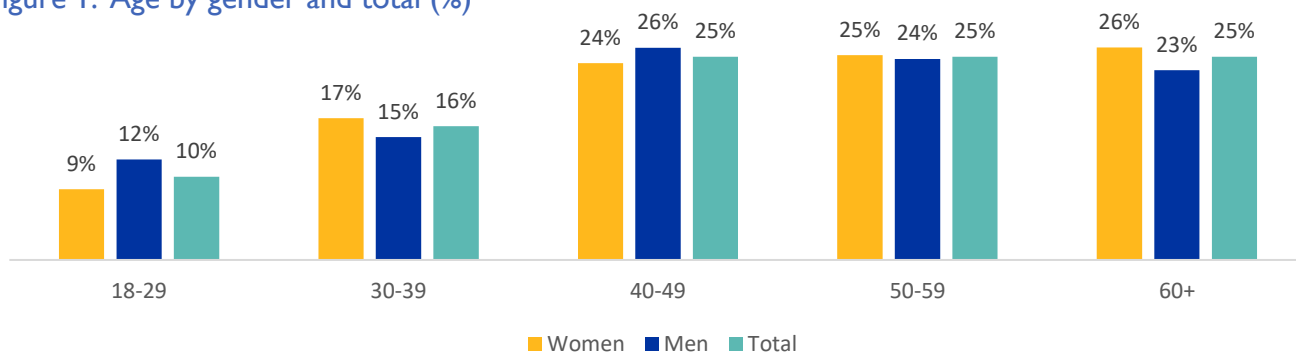
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I. Socio-Demographic Profile

Gender and age

This survey presents findings on assistance, length of stay and destinations of refugees from Ukraine who travelled through the Russian Federation to reach the occupied territories or their oblasts of origin in Ukraine. The respondents were interviewed at crossing/transit points in Latvia. Out of them, 59 per cent were women, and 41 per cent were men. The average age for the total sample was 48 years. When looking at the data disaggregated by gender, the average age for women (49) was slightly higher than the men's (47). Most respondents were aged between 40 and 49 years of age (25%), followed by those between 50 and 59 (25%) and 60 years or older (25%). The largest age group for women was of those 60 years old and above (26%), followed by those aged between 50 and 59 (25%). Among men, the largest groups were aged between 40 and 49 years old (26%), followed by those between 50 and 59 years of age (24%).

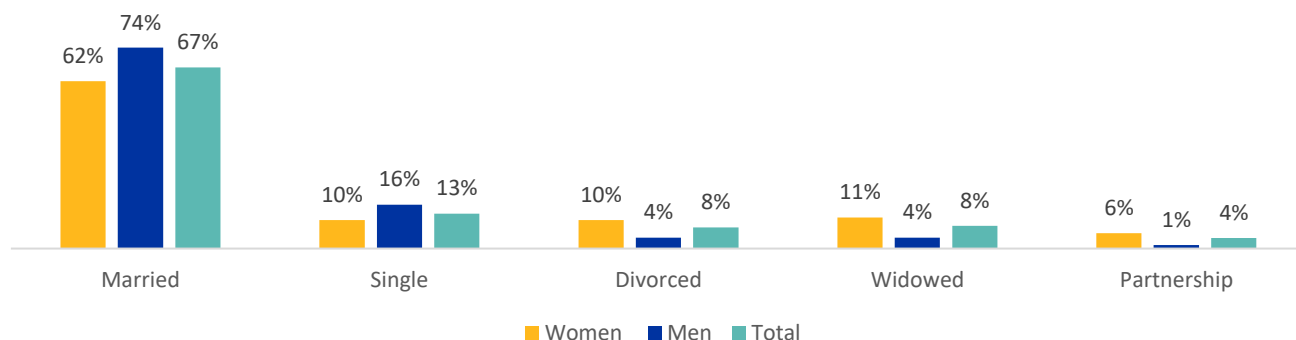
Figure 1: Age by gender and total (%)



Marital status

A total of 67 per cent of the interviewees were married, while another 13 per cent were single. Sixteen per cent were divorced and widowed (8% each), the remaining four per cent were in a partnership. The share of single persons was higher among men than among women (16% versus 10%), while women were more likely to be widowed than men in the sample (11% versus 4%). Women were more than twice as likely than men to be divorced (10% versus 4%).

Figure 2: Marital status (%)



2. Time outside Ukraine

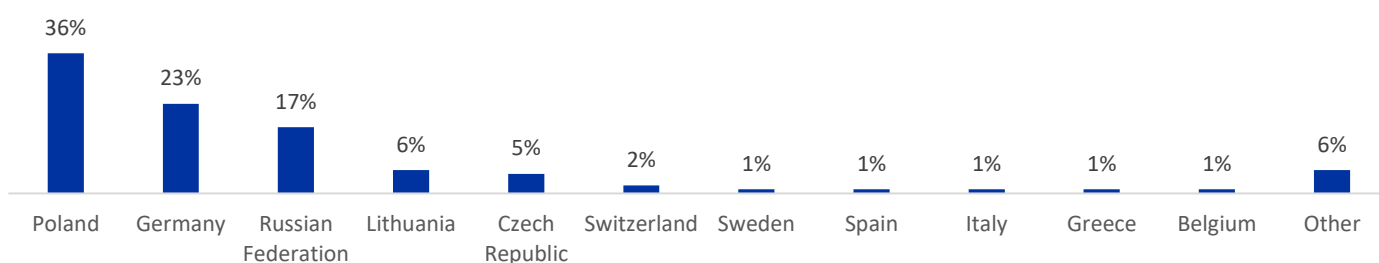
Countries of stay while abroad

Only four per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian nationals stayed in Latvia, where the survey was conducted, before travelling back to Ukraine. The majority of respondents (96%) spent their time outside Ukraine in other countries.

Among these, Poland accounted for 36 per cent, Germany for 23 per cent, and the Russian Federation for 17 per cent.

A smaller portion of respondents stayed in Lithuania (6%), Czechia (5%), Switzerland (2%), as well as Sweden, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Belgium (1% each). The remaining six per cent of the respondents lived in other eight different countries before going to Ukraine through Latvia.

Figure 3: Countries of stay (%)



Average time since initial displacement

The approximate duration of time spent outside Ukraine can be assessed by looking at the difference between respondents' initial date of displacement from Ukraine, and the date of interview. Out of the total sample of respondents, 14 per cent were displaced between April and June 2022.

Another 13 per cent of refugee from Ukraine were displaced between July and September 2022.

Therefore, by the time the interviews were conducted (April - June 2023), they had spent about 8-10 months outside Ukraine.

The few months between April 2023 and June 2023, displacement fluctuated between 9 per cent to 11 per cent. It indicates that the respondents spent a duration of approximately two months or less in displacement during this period.

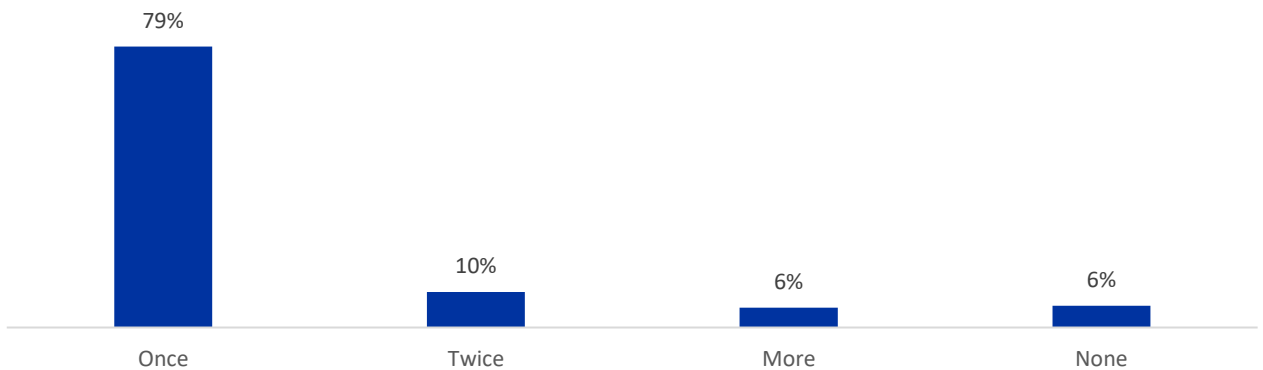
Table 1: Approximate time in displacement until the date of interview (%)

Date of initial displacement	Approximate time in displacement until date of interview	(%) Of Respondents
Before 2022	2 years or more	15%
Jan-Mar 2022	14-16 months	9%
Apr-Jun 2022	11-13 months	14%
Jul-Sept 2022	8-10 months	13%
Oct-Dec 2022	5-7 months	12%
Jan-Mar 2023	2-4 months	8%
Apr-23	1-2 months	9%
May-23	Around a month or less	11%
Jun-23	Less than a month	9%

Number of exists/entries to and from Ukraine

Most respondents (79%) have entered/exited Ukraine once since February 2022. Ten per cent of respondents have entered/exited the country twice during that time period, while six per cent have done so more than two times. The remaining six per cent have never returned to Ukraine since the time of their displacement.

Figure 4: Number of entries/exits between 24 February 2022 and 30 June 2023 (%)

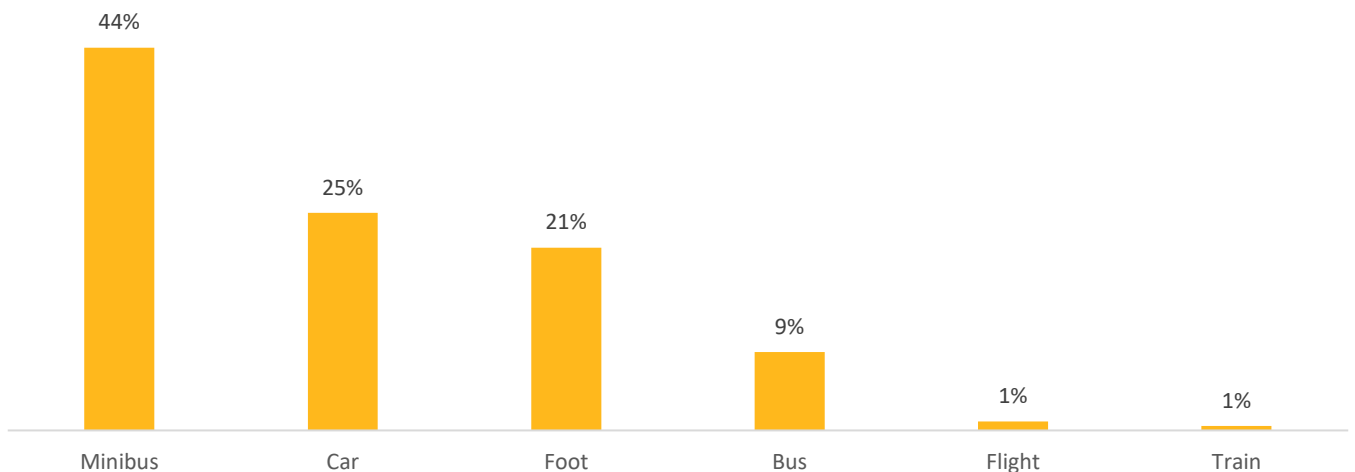


Transport

A significant portion of the surveyed Ukrainian nationals (44%) travelled to Latvia using public transport, particularly minibuses. The second most common mode of transportation was by car, accounting for 25 per cent of respondents.

Approximately 21 per cent of respondents entered Latvia on foot, while nine per cent arrived by bus. The remaining two per cent of respondents used flight and train (1% each).

Figure 5: Transport (%)

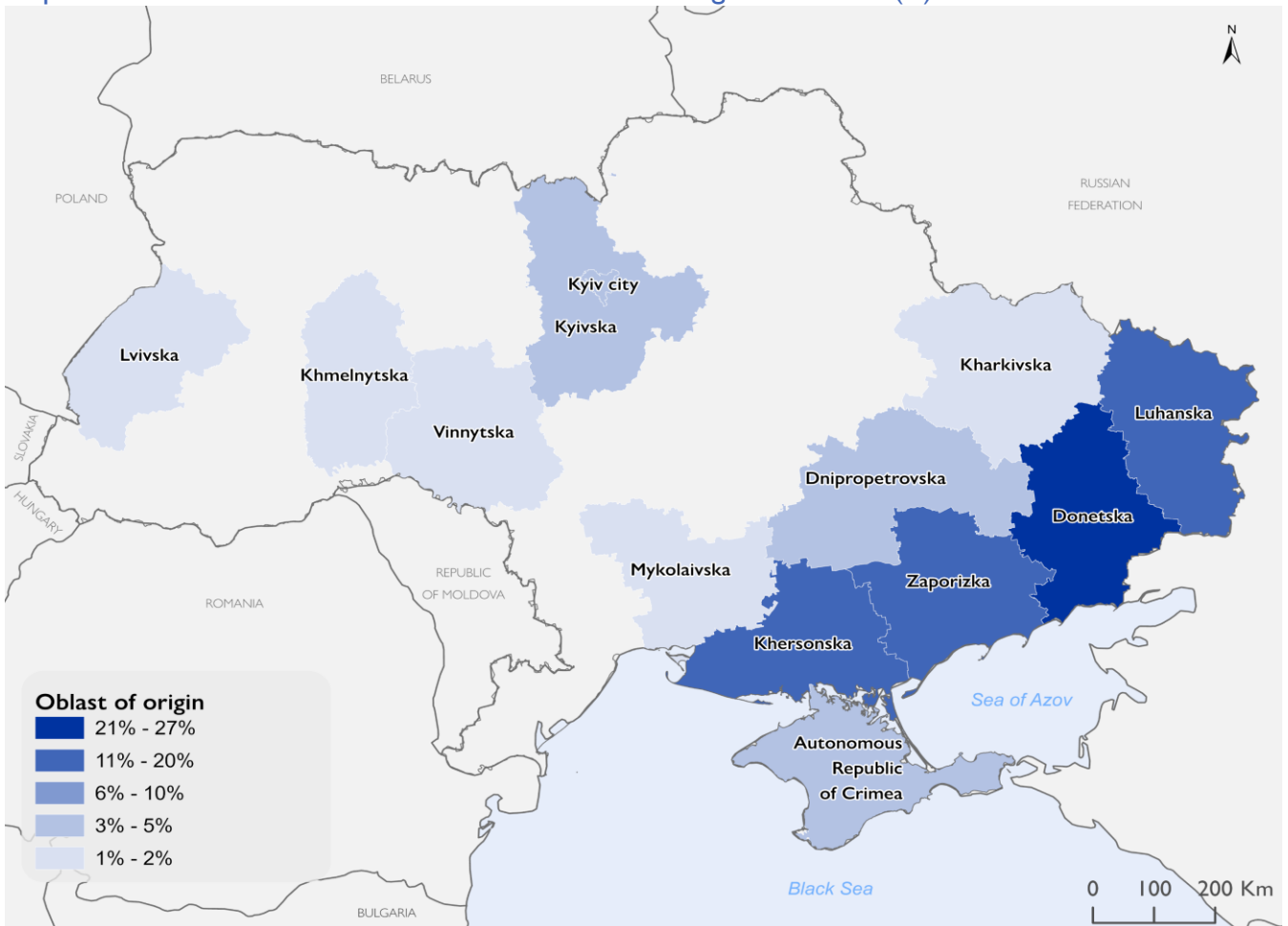


3. Oblast (region) of Origin and Destination

Origin or habitual residence

Nearly three-quarters of respondents (78%) came from only four oblasts in Ukraine – Donetsk (26%), Luhanska (18%), Khersonska (18%) and Zaporizka (16%) – which are the most Eastern regions of the country with big parts of the territory currently under occupation. The remaining 22 per cent of respondents came from 15 other oblasts in Ukraine.

Map 2: Intended oblast of destination versus oblast of origin 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.

Intended destination

Eighty-three per cent of respondents stated that they intended to return to the same oblast they were displaced from. A smaller portion of respondents (17%, N=30) planned to go to a different oblast. The most mentioned oblasts that respondents expected to return to at the time of the interview were the city of Kyiv, Donetsk, Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Mykolaivska.

4. Intentions and Reasons to Cross Back to Ukraine

Long-term visit

Forty-seven per cent of respondents expressed their intention to stay in Ukraine upon their return. Out of this share (N=85), 51 per cent stated that their primary motivation for returning was to reunite with their families.

This was followed by 47 per cent of respondents who wanted to return because they missed their home and 28 per cent who wished to help their families. For 14 per cent of the respondents, the

improved situation in Ukraine played a crucial role in their decision to return. Safety concerns for their family members accounted for the return of 8 per cent of the respondents.

To a lesser extent, other mentioned reasons included the lack of resources (8%), unemployment (7%), discrimination (4%), improved situation in the place of origin (2%), or the availability of essential services (2%).

Table 2. Main reasons for coming back to Ukraine total (%) (N=85)

(more than one answer possible)

Listed reasons	Total (%)
Reunite with family	51%
Miss home	47%
Help family	28%
Improved situation in Ukraine	14%
For family safety	8%
Lack of resources	8%
Lack of employment	7%
Discrimination	4%
Improved situation in place of origin	2%
Offer essential services	2%

Short-term stay

On the other hand, 37 per cent of respondents were planning to go to Ukraine for a short-term visit only. The main cited reasons for their visit were to meet family members who had stayed back (71%) and to collect belongings that had remained in Ukraine (41%). Additionally, 39 per cent of the Ukrainian nationals were travelling

back to check on their property, while 18 per cent of the respondents expressed a wish to help their families. Furthermore, 17 per cent travelled for a short visit specifically to assist their family members in leaving Ukraine. A small percentage travelled to bring supplies (14%), obtain/renew documents (3%), to seek healthcare (2%).

Table 3: Main reasons for staying in Ukraine for a short-term period, by Gender and total (%) (N=66)

(more than one answer possible)

Listed reasons	Total (%)
Meet family	71%
Collect personal belongings	41%
Check on property	39%
Help family	18%
Help family leave	17%
Bring supplies	14%
Documents	3%
Health care	2%

5. Needs, Assistance Received, and Challenges

Immediate needs upon crossing back

The majority of respondents (89%) indicated that their most immediate need at the time of the interview was for general information. Following that, eleven per cent of the respondents reported a need for food supplies. Other imminent needs mentioned included short-term accommodation (3%), financial support (2%), and long-term accommodation (2%).

Less frequently mentioned needs included health services, adult education, psychological counselling, documentation assistance, employment, and transportation (1% each). Three per cent of the respondents stated that they had no immediate needs at the time of the survey.

Assistance received in Latvia

A significant majority of respondents (96%) reported receiving financial support. Additionally, 68 per cent of the respondents received accommodation assistance, while 58 per cent received food supplies. Personal hygiene and sanitary supplies were received by 39 per cent of the respondents, while 27 per cent received clothes and shoes. Other areas of assistance included transportation (12%), toys (8%), and vouchers (6%).

Experiences of Discrimination

Ninety-nine per cent of respondents reported not having encountered any form of discrimination in the country of displacement.

Figure 6: Needs upon crossing back (%)
(more than one answer possible)

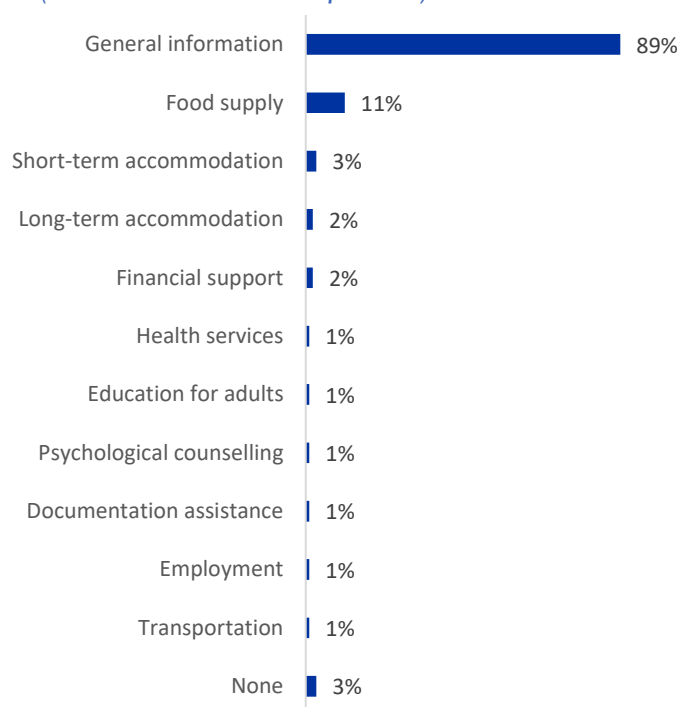


Table 4. Main areas of assistance received (%)
(more than one answer possible)

Type of assistance received	Total (%)
Financial support	96%
Accommodation	68%
Food supplies	58%
Personal hygiene	39%
Clothes and shoes	27%
Transport	12%
Toys	8%
Vouchers	6%

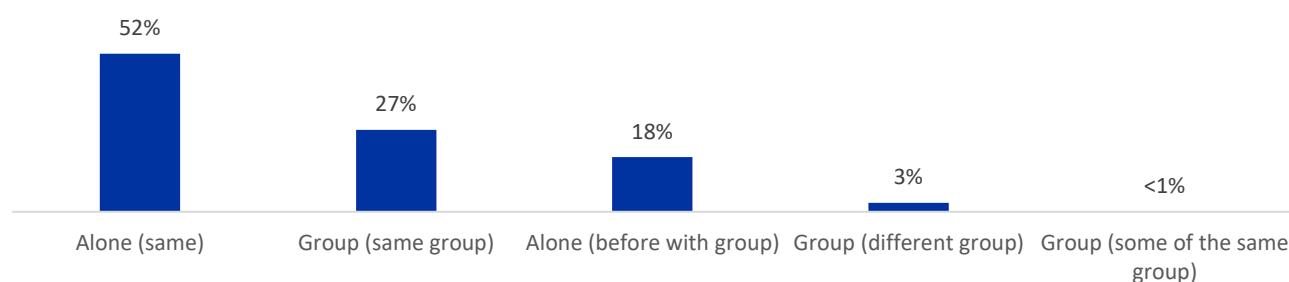
The remaining one per cent reported having experienced some form of discrimination.

7. Current Group Composition

Travel mode

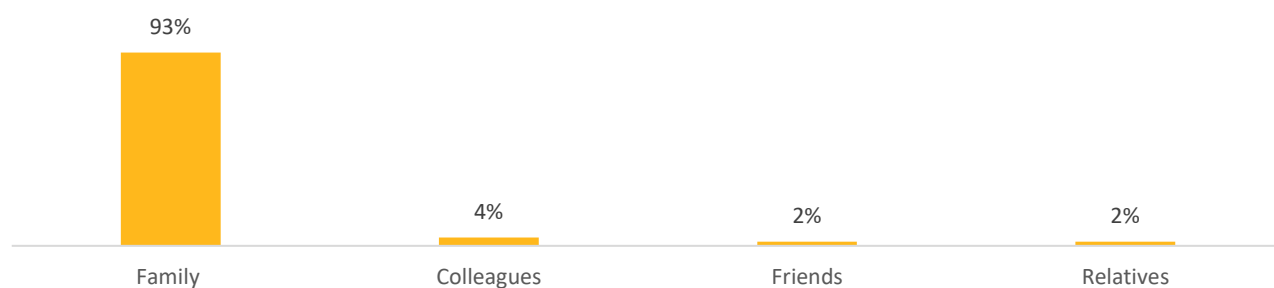
Out of the 179 respondents, 52 per cent indicated that they are returning to Ukraine alone, reflecting their initial departure from Ukraine. Additionally, 27 per cent stated that they are returning with the same group they entered the country of displacement with. 18 per cent of the respondents are returning to Ukraine alone despite originally leaving with a group. A small proportion (3%) mentioned returning to Ukraine with a different group than the one they initially exited the country with. Finally, less than one percent of the respondents are returning to Ukraine with a part of the group they exited the country with.

Figure 7: Travel mode (%)



Among those traveling in a group (N=54), the majority (93%) were traveling with their family members. Additionally, four percent of the respondents mentioned travelling with colleagues. Two percent of the group were accompanied by friends, while another two percent travelled with relatives.

Figure 8: Group composition (%)
(multiple answers possible)



Concluding remarks

The assessment on the travel intentions of the Ukrainian citizens crossing to the Russian Federation to reach Ukraine shows that most respondents are going to Ukraine for personal reasons such as visiting family members, checking on valuables or helping those left in Ukraine. During their stay in Latvia, with few cases, they have not experienced discriminatory behavior. A short analysis on the assistance received shows that their most basic needs have been met.

8. Methodology

Background

Since 24 February 2022, refugees from Ukraine and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) have been fleeing to neighbouring countries as a result of the war. As of July 2023, 8.3 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe. At the same time, almost 13 million border crossings of Ukrainian and Third-Country refugees and migrants were reported from Ukraine into the neighbouring countries since February 2022.

IOM has deployed its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tools since mid-April 2022 to collect individual surveys in neighbouring countries with persons crossing into Ukraine, with the aim to improve the understanding of main profiles, displacement patterns, intentions and needs of those moving back to Ukraine. Since late March 2023, crossing back surveys have been also deployed in Latvia, to assess main profiles and needs of Ukrainians crossing to the Russian Federation with the aim to reach Ukraine eastern regions. This report is based on surveys collected in Latvia between 01 April and 30 June 2023 in Grebneva and Terehova border crossing/transit points.

Methodological framework

In Latvia, surveys were conducted in Ukrainian and Russian by IOM's DTM trained teams of enumerators on a mobile application. The interviews are anonymous and carried out one-on-one with respondents, provided they consent to be interviewed after a brief introduction. Enumerators are trained on ethics of data collection, information provision and protection principles, approached people who were travelling through the Russian Federation to reach the occupied territories or their oblasts

of origin in Ukraine. This survey was addressed to adults (18+). The survey form was designed by IOM to capture the main displacement patterns for refugees crossing back to Ukraine following the outbreak of the war. It analyses the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relatively to the permanence in Ukraine; and it gathers information regarding a set of main needs at the moment of the interview.

Various settings were identified to conduct surveys, to maximise the number of interviews, and reach out to different profiles of individuals. While in border crossing/transit points, the flow of people was higher and interviewees were randomly surveyed, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with the different availability of possible target individuals to comfortably spend 10-15 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions. Consequently, this analysis does not proportionally represent the whole population and results cannot be deemed representative of a full picture of mobility towards Ukraine from Latvia.

In Latvia, DTM was activated in July 2022. The data for this report was collected between 2 April and 29 June 2023. Overall, 179 valid surveys were collected by a team of 2 enumerators (1 female and 1 male) deployed in 2 crossing/transit points.

Sixty-five per cent of surveys were collected in Grebneva and 35 per cent in Terehova crossing/transit points. The interviews have been conducted in Ukrainian and Russian.

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 new 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.

