

Surveys with Refugees from Ukraine: Needs, Intentions, and Integration Challenges



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Regional Analysis

April - June 2023

Data collected in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia

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This publication was made possible through the support provided by Council of Europe Development Bank, U.S Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the German Federal Foreign Office, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Publisher

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This report was issued without formal editing by IOM.

Cover photo: Displaced Ukrainians on Latvian-Russian border in Ludza region, Latvia. © IOM 2023

Citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), August 2023. DTM Latvia “Surveys with Refugees from Ukraine: Needs, Intentions, and Integration Challenges. April-June 2023” IOM, Latvia. 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: 20 October 2023

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KEY FINDINGS

- **Top oblasts of origin.** Donetska (15%), Kharkivska (12%), Khersonska (12%) Zaporizka (10%), Dnipropetrovska (7%).
- **Intentions to move.** Lithuania: no intentions to move (95%), move within current country (1%), or to another country (1%), where Top 3 were Poland, Latvia and the United Kingdom. Latvia is a transit country for many refugees from Ukraine. The majority planned to move to another country (58%), where Top 3 were Poland, Russian Federation and Germany. Others wanted to move to a different location in Ukraine (29%) or move to their place of origin in Ukraine (8%). Estonia: no intention to move (88%), move to place of origin in Ukraine (3%), to another country (3%), where Top 3 were Germany, Czechia and Norway.
- **Employment status.** Lithuania: employed (33%), retired (24%), unemployed and looking for a job (14%), unemployed and not looking for a job (12%), parental leave (12%). Latvia: unemployed and looking for a job (40%), employed (20%), retired (25%), unemployed and not looking for a job (4%), daily worker (3%). Estonia: employed (46%), unemployed and looking for a job (22%), student (14%), retired (6%), on a parental leave (5%).
- **Top needs*.** Lithuania: financial support (27%), health services (22%), medicines (18%), employment (14%), food products (12%). Latvia: housing (36%), cash support (36%), employment (34%), medical needs (23%), information (18%). Estonia: employment (20%), health services (17%), financial support (16%), documentation and registration (12%).
- **Top areas of assistance received*.** Lithuania: food products (90%), personal hygiene and sanitary supplies (85%), financial support (83%), transportation (58%), clothes and shoes (53%). Latvia: food products (74%), financial support (40%), housing (35%), personal hygiene and sanitary supplies (16%). Estonia: free transportation (84%), food items (71%), financial support (66%), accommodation (34%).
- **Top inclusion challenges*.** Lithuania: financial issues (23%), language barrier (14%), employment (12%), housing (11%), social services (8%). Estonia: language barrier (33%), employment (24%), housing (14%), accessing social services (9%).

* multiple answers possible

I. Socio-Demographic profile

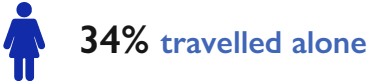
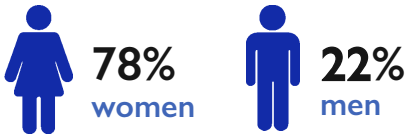
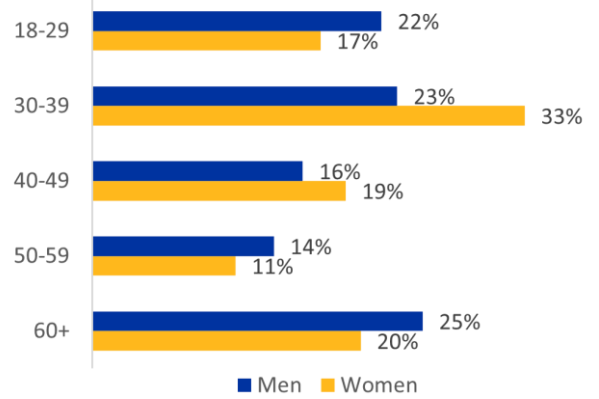
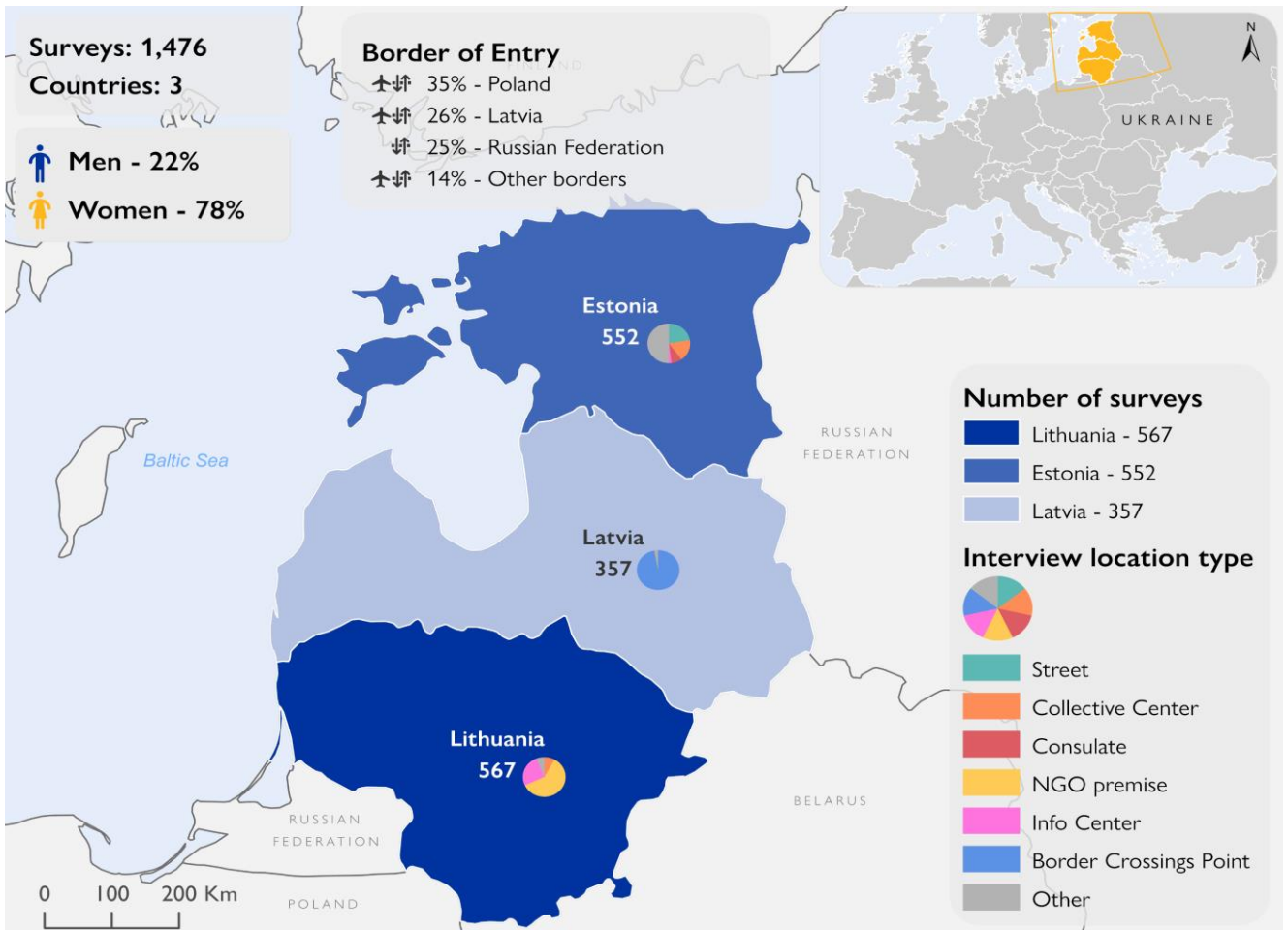


Figure I: Age distribution by gender (%), (N=1476)



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

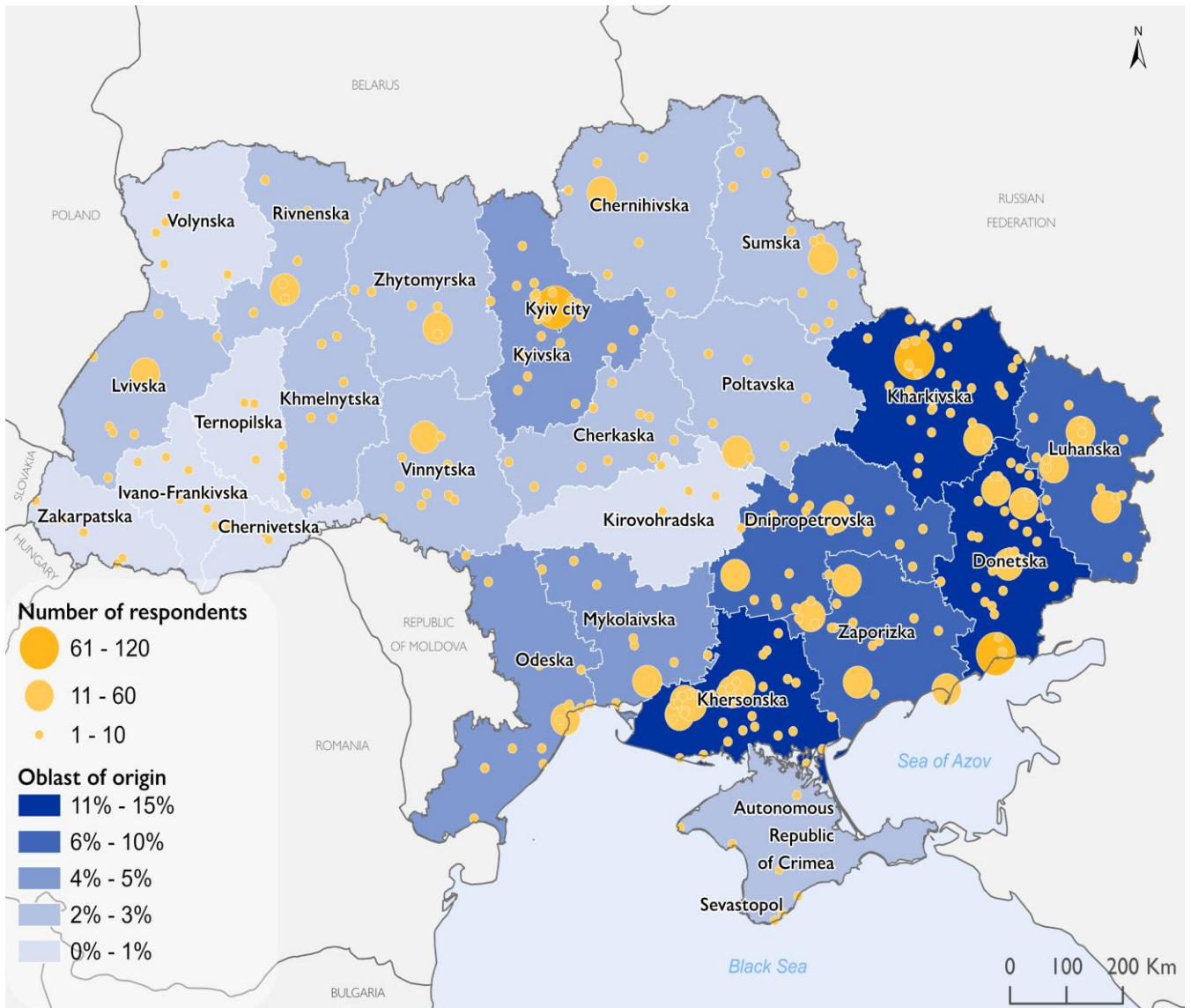


This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Oblast (region) of origin

The share of respondents from each region of five regions before fleeing Ukraine. These were origin in Ukraine varied across the countries Donetska (15%), Kharkivska (12%), Khersonska where surveys were conducted. However, overall, (12%), Zaporizka (10%), and Dnipropetrovska more than half (57%) of respondents lived in only (7%).

Map 2: Oblast of origin before leaving 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.

Among respondents, 68 per cent expressed intention to return to their oblast of origin in Ukraine, while the remaining 32 per cent planned to move to a different oblast.

Ukrainians in Latvia expressed at the highest rates (77%) the intention to return to a different oblast, followed by a much lower proportion in Estonia (14%). None of the respondents in Lithuania indicated a desire to return to Ukraine at the time of the interview. Among those who were not aiming to return to their oblast of

origin, the city of Kyiv (31%), Donetska (10%), and Luhanska (10%) were the most selected destinations.

In both Latvia and Estonia, a significant proportion of refugees who intended to return to Ukraine cited family reunification as their primary reason (67% and 43% respectively).

Additionally, in Latvia, 20 per cent of respondents planned to return due to an improvement of the situation in Ukraine, while in Estonia, 19 per cent expressed their intent to go back due to lack of shelter in their current country of displacement.

Average time since initial displacement

In Lithuania and Estonia, a substantial proportion of respondents initially experienced displacement during the early stages of the conflict in 2022. In contrast, in Latvia, the majority of respondents (85%) were first displaced during April, May, and June of 2023, more than a year after the war started.

In Latvia, interviews were conducted at border crossing points, which increases the likelihood that individuals would have been recently displaced and arriving for the first time in the country of destination. Interviews in Lithuania and Estonia were conducted in other settings (including collective centers, consulates, NGO premises etc.), increasing the propensity to reach individuals who had been in the country for longer. Respondents in Lithuania and Estonia reported significant displacement rates in March

2022 (42% and 34%, respectively). During April, May, and June 2022, similar proportions of individuals were displaced (21% of respondents in Lithuania and 20% in Estonia).

Lower proportions of Ukrainians in Lithuania and Estonia left Ukraine between May and December 2022: those who left for Lithuania between May and December 2022 ranged from one to five per cent and those who left for Estonia during the same time period ranged between one to nine per cent of respondents, peaking at nine per cent in August.

As a result, over one-fifth (22%) of Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania had spent 5 to 12 months outside of Ukraine at the time of assessment, while 32 per cent of those in Estonia had experienced a similar duration of time outside of their country.

Table 1: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. Approximate time in displacement until the date of interview (%)

Date of initial displacement	Approximate time in displacement until date of interview	Lithuania (%) of respondents	Latvia (%) of respondents	Estonia (%) of respondents
Before 2022	2 years or more	1%	2%	7%
Jan-Mar 2022	14-16 months	49%	3%	42%
Apr-Jun 2022	11-13 months	21%	3%	20%
Jul-Sept 2022	8-10 months	9%	2%	17%
Oct-Dec 2022	5-7 months	5%	1%	5%
Jan-Mar 2023	2-4 months	8%	4%	6%
April 2023	1-2 months	2%	25%	1%
May 2023	Around a month or less	4%	34%	2%
June 2023	Less than a month	1%	26%	-

2. Intentions

Intention to move elsewhere or stay in current location

When examining the plans of refugees from Ukraine in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, distinct patterns emerge, revealing differences in their intentions.

Ninety-one per cent of respondents in Estonia declared their intention to remain either, in their current location (88%) or a different location (3%) in the near future.

In contrast, in Latvia only two per cent of respondents intended to stay, while another 58

per cent aimed to move to another country. Additionally, more than one-third (37%) wished to return to Ukraine.

Surveys in Lithuania demonstrated a different trend, with the highest percentage (96%) of refugees planning to remain in the country, either in their current location (95%) or in a different location within Lithuania (1%). Only one per cent of respondents planned to move to a different country.

Figure 2: Estonia. Respondents' intention to move, by gender and total (%), (N=552)

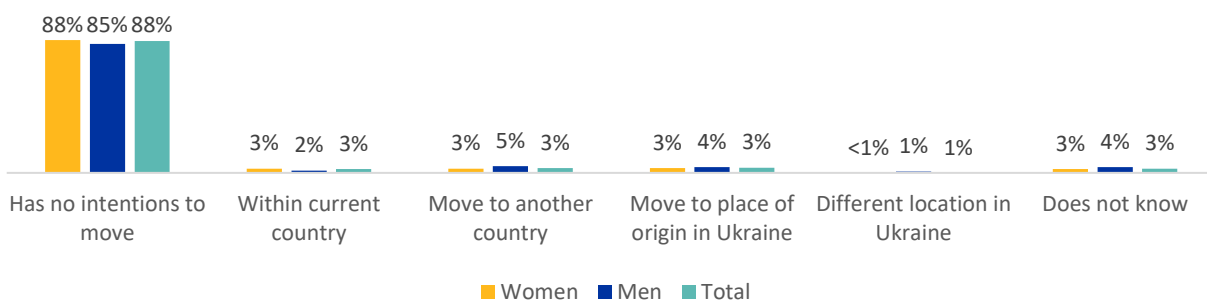


Figure 3: Latvia. Respondents' intention to move, by gender and total (%), (N=357)

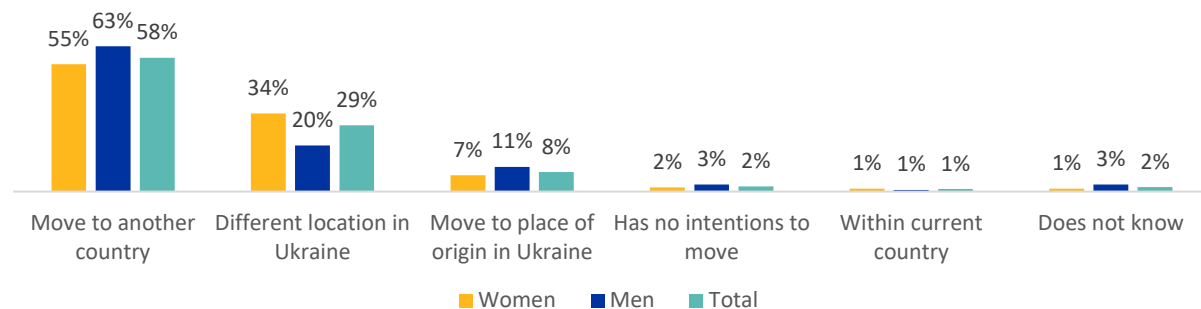
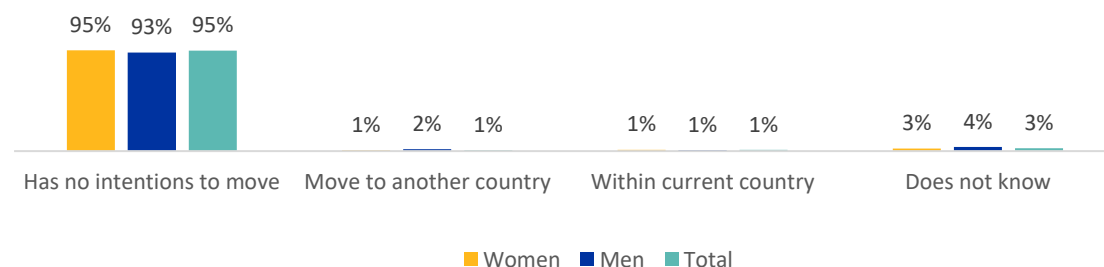


Figure 4: Lithuania. Respondents' intention to move, by gender and total (%), (N=567)



Intended country of destination

In Estonia, respondents who intended to go to another country (N=18) favored Germany (33%), followed by Czechia (11%), and Norway (11%).

Meanwhile, in Latvia (N=206), Poland was the top choice with 38 per cent, and the Russian

Federation came in second at 22 per cent.

Only three respondents in Lithuania had plans to leave for another country, with each choosing a different destination: Poland, Latvia, and the United Kingdom.

Figure 5: Estonia. Intended country of destination (%), (N=18)

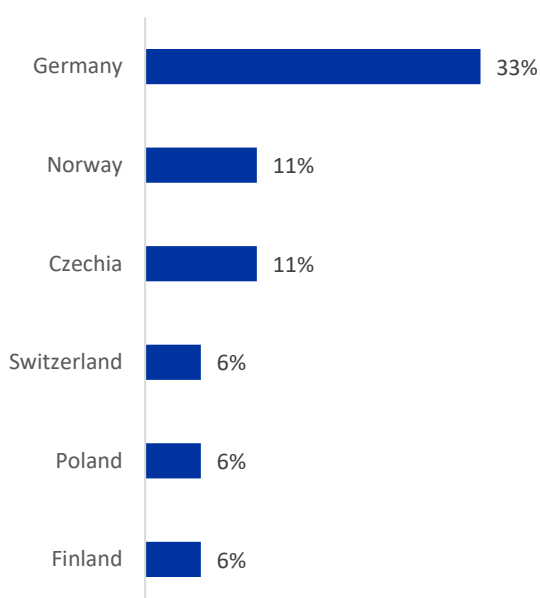
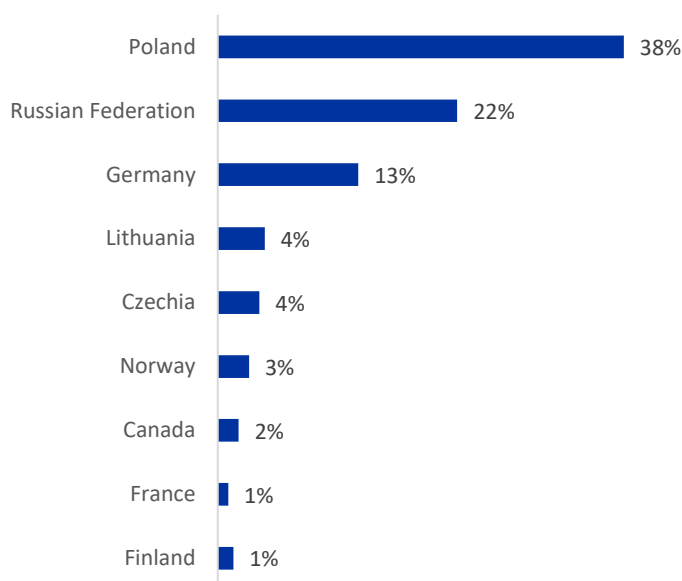


Figure 6: Latvia. Intended country of destination (%), (N=206)



Reasons for selecting elsewhere in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia or other countries of destination

In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, survey results revealed that family connections play a major role in people's decisions to relocate, whether within their current country or to another country.

In Estonia, 75 per cent of those who intended to relocate cited the presence of relatives as a significant factor, while 53 per cent considered job opportunities, and 47 per cent mentioned the importance of having friends in the area.

Similarly, in Latvia, 65 per cent of respondents emphasized the role of family ties in their chosen destination, 30 per cent mentioned friends in the area, and thirteen per cent – job opportunities.

Additionally, in Lithuania, where only a few respondents expressed an intention to go abroad, the primary motivation for this group was to reunify with family members, similarly, to what was observed in Estonia and Latvia.

Figure 7: Reasons for choosing elsewhere in Estonia or another country as intended destination (%), (N=32) (multiple answers were possible)

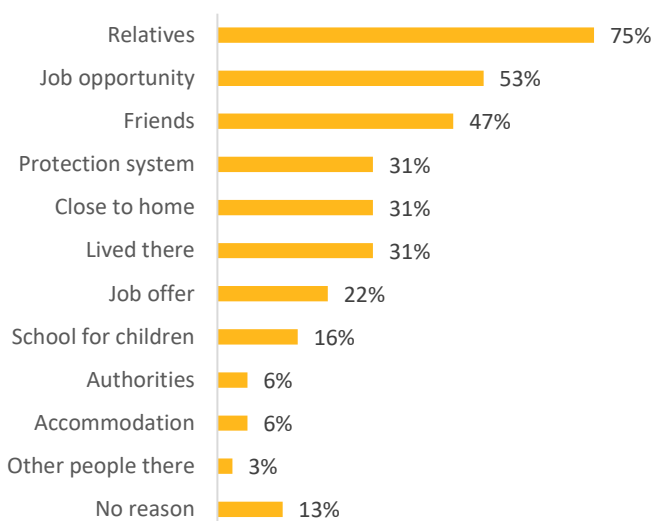
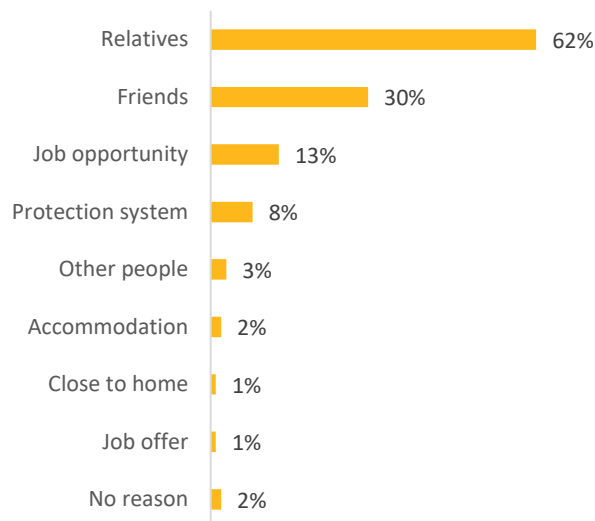


Figure 8: Reasons for choosing elsewhere in Latvia or another country as intended destination (%), (N=206) (multiple answers were possible)



3. Employment status

Respondents in Latvia reported the highest rates of being unemployed and seeking for a job (40%), followed by Estonia (22%), and Lithuania (14%).

Rates of employment among respondents in Estonia is the highest (46%), followed by Lithuania (33%) and Latvia (20%).

Table 2: Employment status in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (%)

Employment status	Lithuania % of respondents	Latvia % of respondents	Estonia % of respondents
Daily worker	1%	3%	4%
Employed	33%	20%	46%
Parental leave	12%	1%	5%
Retired	24%	25%	6%
Self-employed	2%	1%	2%
Student	2%	2%	14%
Unemployed and looking for a job	14%	40%	22%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	12%	4%	1%
Prefer not to answer	-	4%	-

4. Immediate Needs and Assistance Received

Immediate needs

In Latvia, the top needs identified by respondents were general information (76%), food products (15%), and long-term accommodation (12%).

Conversely, in Estonia, respondents cited employment (20%), health services (17%), and financial support (16%).

In Lithuania, the primary needs identified by interviewees were financial support (27%), health services (22%), and medicines (18%).

Figure 9: Latvia. Immediate needs (%), (N=357) (multiple answers were possible)

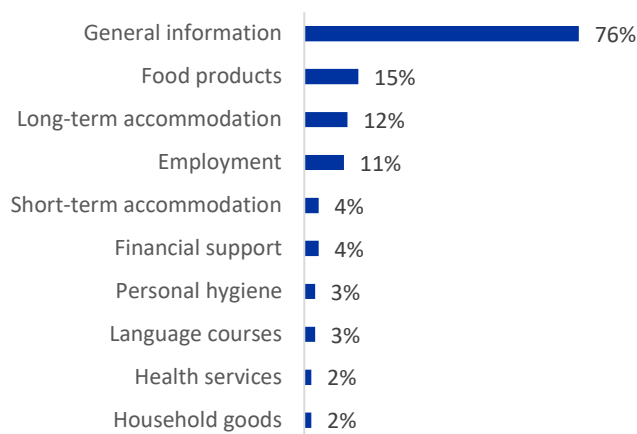


Figure 10: Lithuania. Immediate needs (%), (N=567) (multiple answers were possible)

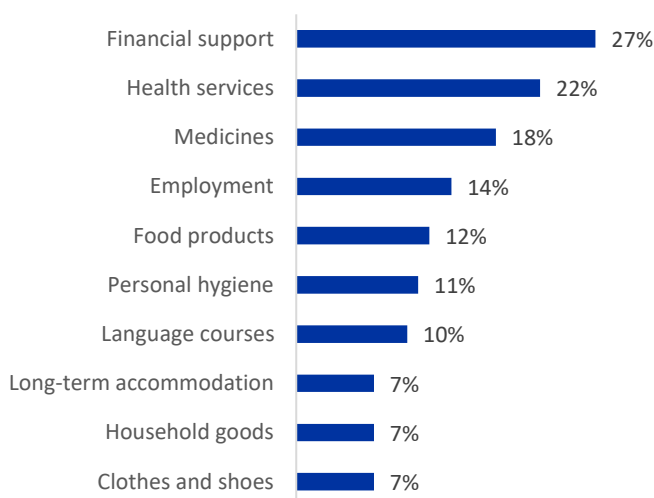
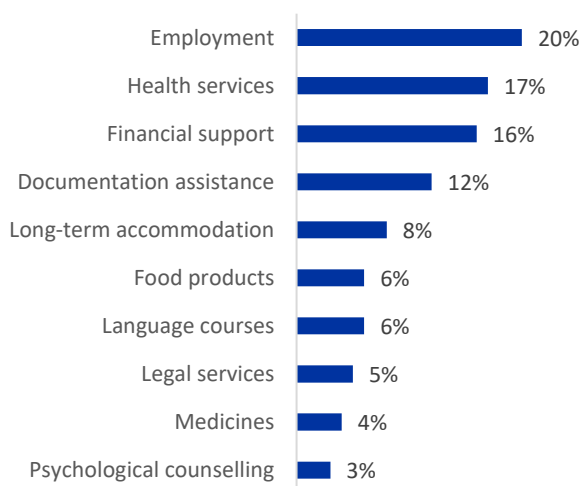


Figure 11: Estonia. Immediate needs (%), (N=552) (multiple answers were possible)



Assistance received

In Lithuania, almost all respondents (97%) reported receiving support. The most common assistance received by survey respondents were food products (90%), personal hygiene supplies (85%), and financial support (83%).

In Latvia, a lower but still substantial proportion of

respondents reported receiving support (81%), primarily in the form of food (74%) and housing (35%).

In Estonia, 84 per cent of refugees received assistance with transportation and food aid (71%) being the most common sectors.

5. Challenges in the country of displacement

Experiences of discrimination

In Estonia, 21 per cent of respondents indicated having experienced discrimination, which surpasses Lithuania (17%). When disaggregating the data by gender, in both Estonia and Lithuania, female respondents (23% and 18%, respectively)

were more likely to have faced discrimination than their male counterparts (15% and 8%, respectively). In Latvia, no respondents reported experiences of discrimination.

Inclusion challenges

When comparing the inclusion challenges faced by surveyed refugees, language barriers were identified as a common obstacle in Estonia and Lithuania — with 33 per cent of respondents in Estonia and 14 per cent in Lithuania indicating this challenge. In Estonia, finding a suitable job (24%) and securing long-term housing (14%) were also significant challenges. In contrast, in

Lithuania, financial issues (23%) and difficulty finding suitable employment (12%) were more prevalent reported obstacles. In both Lithuania and Estonia, refugees reported challenges related to accessing social services, documentation issues, and facing discrimination. No data was available for Latvia in this regard.

Figure 12: Lithuania. Top 10 inclusion challenges (%), (N=243) (multiple answers were possible)

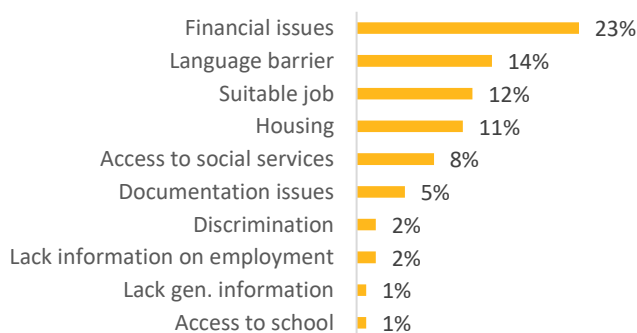
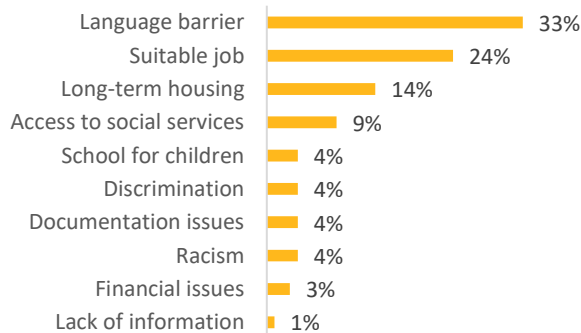


Figure 13: Estonia. Top 10 inclusion challenges (%), (N=393) (multiple answers were possible)



6. Travel mode

In Latvia, 64 per cent of respondents declared to be travelling alone, while the remaining 36 per cent were travelling in a group. Among those travelling in a group, 94 per cent were accompanied by immediate family or household members.

were with immediate family or household members.

In contrast, Estonia exhibited a different pattern, with 72 per cent of respondents travelling in a group and only 28 per cent travelling alone. Among those travelling in a group, 96 per cent

In Lithuania, 81 per cent of respondents were part of a group, while 19 per cent travelled alone. Ninety-eight per cent of those travelling in a group in Lithuania were accompanied by immediate family or household members.

On average, travel groups consisted of about two persons in Latvia and three persons in Estonia and Lithuania.

7. Methodology

Background

This report is based on a survey of displacement patterns, needs and intentions conducted by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in the countries included in the Regional Response Plan for Ukraine in 2023: 6 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia – and other 5 countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine since the start of the war in February 2022 – Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by trained enumerators with adult refugees from Ukraine and other TCNs (18 years of age and above). Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained on DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM approach to migrants' protection and assistance, the ethics of data collection and the provision of information and referral mechanisms in place.

Respondents were approached in a simple random sample by enumerators at selected entry, exit, transit points and accommodation centres. In border crossing point areas, both persons entering/exiting by car, by bus, by foot and by train were interviewed.

The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Surveys were administered only if consent from the respondent was given. The respondent could stop the survey at any time. All responses were checked for systematic issues by enumerator, and this process did not identify problems. Only fully completed surveys were considered for this report.

Country-level implementation and limitations

The data for this report was collected in the second quarter of 2023 (between 1 April and 29 June 2023) through a network of 10 enumerators in three Baltic countries. The total sample is composed of 1,476 individual valid surveys collected in Lithuania (567), Latvia (357), and Estonia (552).

Latvia is a transit country for many refugees from Ukraine, with interviews taking place at border crossing points within the country. In Lithuania and Estonia enumerators were approaching respondents in collective centers, open spaces, dormitories, humanitarian aid distribution centers. The interviews have been conducted in Russian and Ukrainian languages.

The survey respondents were chosen at random from locations within six primary transit and reception locations that receive high volumes of individuals entering Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia either via public or private transport.

Whilst every attempt was made to capture all types of arrivals, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with various levels of accessibility of transit and stay locations and the different availability of possible target individuals to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions.

Whilst results cannot be deemed representative, the internal consistency within the data within each country and at the regional level suggests that the findings of the current sampling framework have practical value.

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>

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