

# SLOVAKIA

## Crossing Back Surveys with Ukrainian Nationals



July – September 2023  
Country Report & Data Analysis

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

---

This publication was made possible through the support provided by U.S Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the Government of Japan.

#### Publisher

International Organization for Migration  
Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern  
Europe and Central Asia  
Dampfschiffstrasse 4/10-II, 1030 Vienna, Austria  
+43 1 581 22 22

Website: <https://rovienna.iom.int/>

Contact: [ROViennaDataResearch-  
Newsletter@iom.int](mailto:ROViennaDataResearch-Newsletter@iom.int)

International Organization for Migration  
Country Office Slovakia

Grösslingová 35  
811 09 Bratislava I  
Slovak Republic

+421 2 5263 0093

Website: <https://iom.sk>

Contact: [bratislavainfo@iom.int](mailto:bratislavainfo@iom.int)

This report was issued without formal editing by IOM.

Cover photo: Refugees from Ukraine in Michalovce, Slovakia.

© IOM 2023

Citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), May 2023. DTM Slovakia “Surveys with refugees from Ukraine: needs, intentions and integration challenges” IOM, Slovakia. 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: 27 November 2023

© IOM 2023



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License \(CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode).\*

For further specifications please see the [Copyright and Terms of Use](#).

This publication should not be used, published or redistributed for purposes primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation, with the exception of educational purposes, e.g. to be included in textbooks. Permissions: Requests for commercial use or further rights and licensing should be submitted to [publications@iom.int](mailto:publications@iom.int).

\* <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

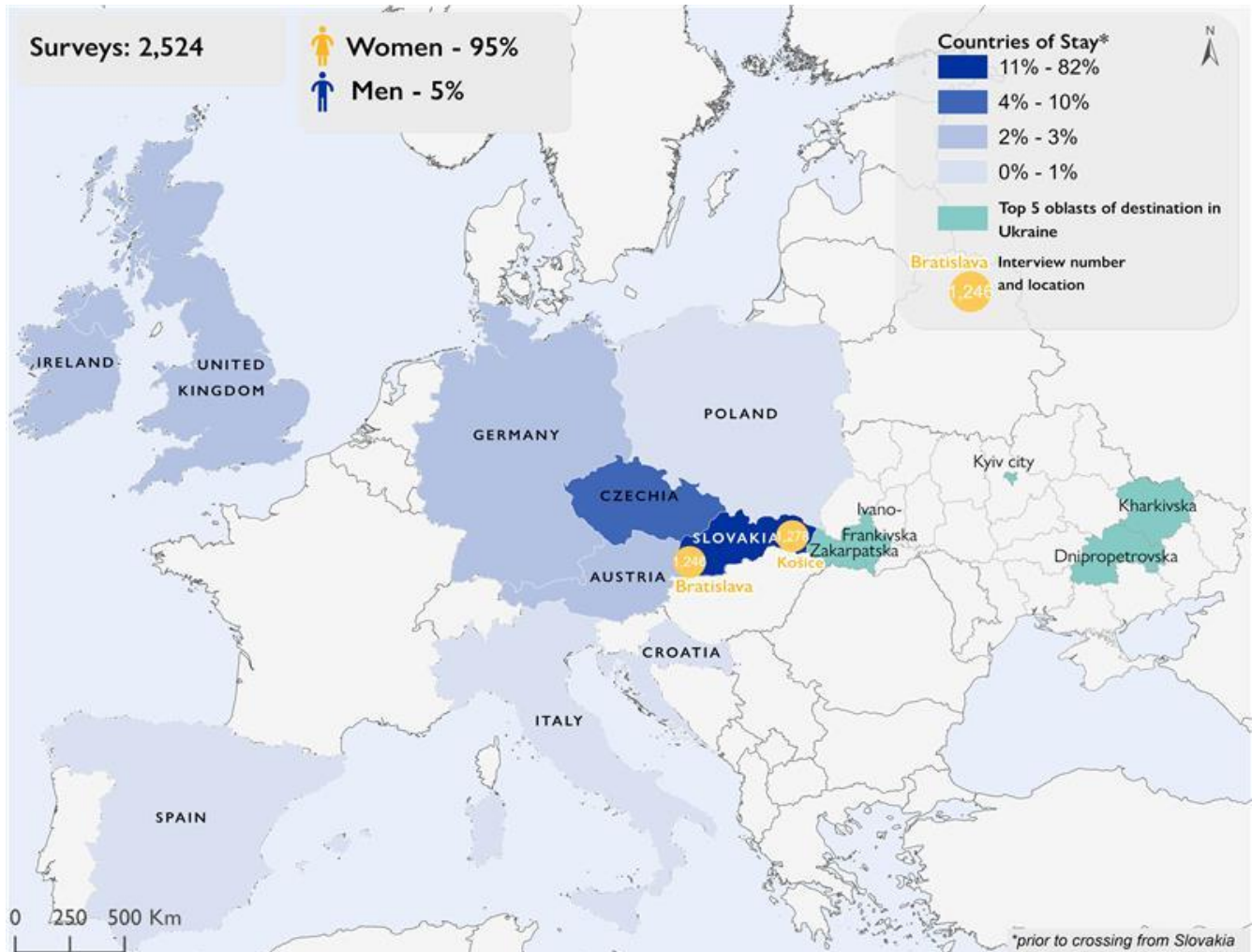
<b>1. Socio-Demographic Profile</b>	<b>5</b>
Gender and age	5
Marital status	5
<b>2. Time Outside Ukraine</b>	<b>6</b>
Countries of stay while abroad	6
Average time since initial displacement	6
Number of exits / entries since initial displacement	7
Transport	7
<b>3. Oblast (region) of Origin and Destination</b>	<b>8</b>
Origin or habitual residence	8
Intended Destination	8
<b>4. Intentions and Reasons to Cross Back to Ukraine</b>	<b>9</b>
Long-term stay	9
Short-term visit	9
<b>5. Needs, Assistance Received, and Challenges</b>	<b>10</b>
Immediate needs upon crossing back	10
Assistance received in Slovakia	10
Experiences of discrimination	10
<b>6. Group Composition</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7. Methodology</b>	<b>12</b>
Background	12
Methodological framework	12



## KEY FINDINGS

- **Top countries of stay:** Slovakia (80%), Czech Republic (4%), Austria (3%), Germany (2%), Ireland (1%) United Kingdom (1%).
- **Intentions:** 53% going for a short visit, 39% plan to stay in Ukraine (prospective returnees), and 8% undecided.
- **Top needs\*:** health services (48%), medicines (31%), general information (26%), financial support (22%), language courses (22%), employment (21%).  
\*more than one answer was possible (N=1,135).
- **Destinations in Ukraine:** 86% to the same oblast of origin, 14% to a different oblast in Ukraine: Zakarpatska (61%), Kyiv city (13%), Lvivska (10%).
- **Transport to Ukraine:** bus (82%), train (17%), car/minibus (1%).
- **Travel mode:** 66% alone and 34% in group.
- **Experiences of discrimination:** 13% experienced discrimination throughout their journey.
- **Travelling with children:** 68% of the respondents travelled with children aged less than 18 years

Map I: Slovakia, surveys deployed, countries of stay &amp; oblasts of destination in Ukraine



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. The map shows only countries where more than 1% of respondents stayed during displacement.

# 1. Socio-Demographic Profile

## Age & Gender

Of the 2,532 respondents interviewed before crossing from Slovakia to Ukraine, ninety-five per cent were women, and 5 per cent were men.

Nearly half of the respondents (46%) fell within the age range of 18 to 39, while another 43% were adults aged between 40 and 59. Eleven per cent were individuals aged 60 and above.

Data disaggregated by gender show that the biggest difference between males and females was among the youngest and the oldest respondents. While men aged 18 to 29 years accounted for only six per cent of the male respondents, women in the same age

group accounted for almost four times as much as the female respondents (22%). Opposite results can be seen in the age group of over 60 years, where more than half of the male respondents (54%) belonged, as opposed to only eight per cent of female respondents. This was shown in the average age of the sample.

The average age of the entire sample was 41 years. However, when examining the data by gender, it can be observed that male respondents were older than their female counterparts, with an average age of 55 years for men and 40 years for women.

Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents by gender and total (%)

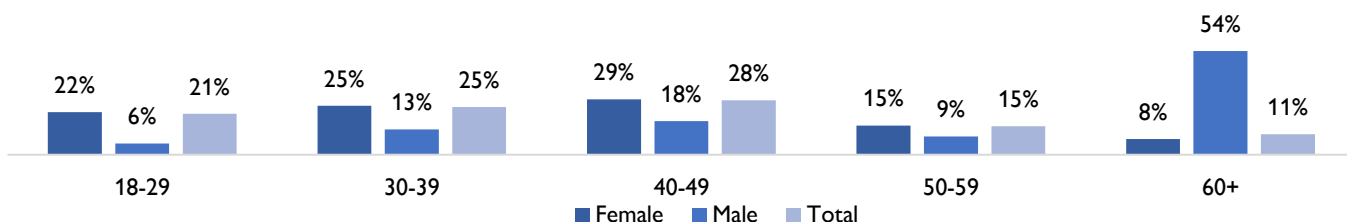
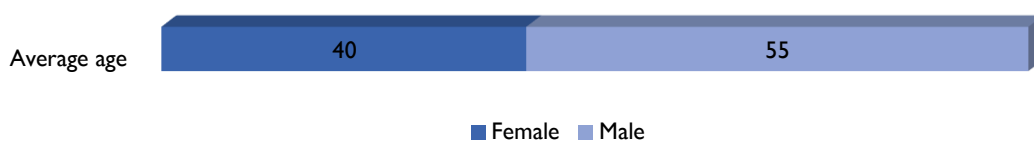


Figure 2: Average age by gender

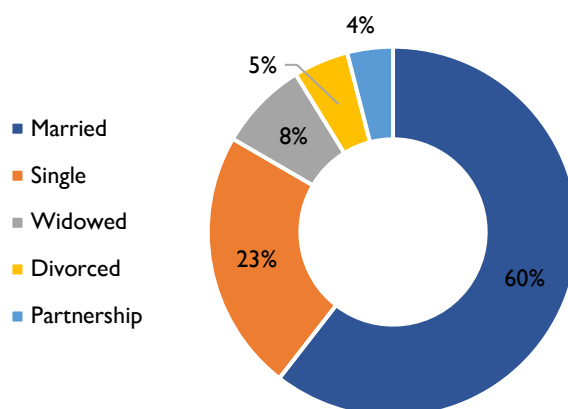


## Marital status

With regard to marital status, 60 per cent of the total sample were married, 23 per cent stated they were single, and five per cent were divorced.

Data disaggregated by gender show differences in marital status between male and female respondents. While almost a quarter of the female respondents indicated they were single (23%), only 13 per cent of male respondents indicated the same status as their female counterparts. In contrast, male respondents were more likely to be married (74%) as opposed to female respondents (60% of all females).

Figure 3: Marital status of respondents, total (%)



## 2. Time Outside of Ukraine

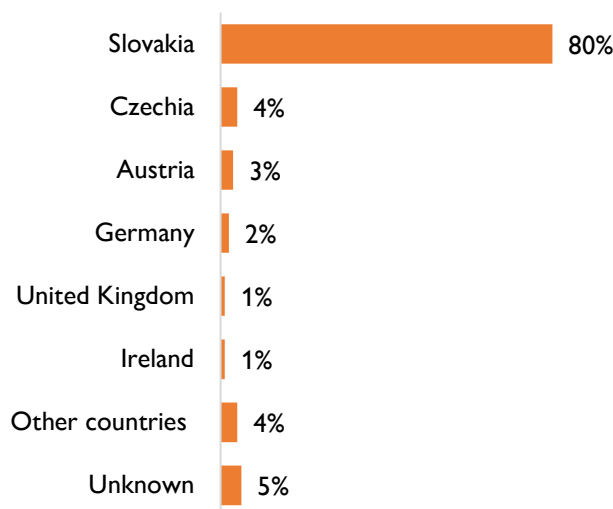
### Countries of stay

Most of the respondents primarily resided in Slovakia during their displacement, constituting 80% of the total. The subsequent prominent countries mentioned by the respondents were Czechia, where four per cent of respondents spent most of their time in displacement, followed by Austria (3%), Germany (2%), the United Kingdom (1%), and Ireland (1%).

The remaining minority, accounting for 4% of respondents, stayed in twenty-seven other countries across the world before eventually returning to Ukraine through Slovakia.

Five per cent of respondents did not provide information regarding the country of stay.

Figure 4: Countries of stay (%)



### Average time since initial displacement

Most respondents were initially displaced at the onset of the conflict in the first half of 2022. These represented 37% of the sample. Based on the data collected, the second half of 2022 and the first half of 2023 represent a much lower displacement rate – only 10% per quarter.

A relatively large proportion of the interviewed respondents indicated they were initially displaced only shortly before the interview, within the months of July – September. These represent 31% of the total sample and spent only two months or less in displacement.

Table 1: Average time spent in displacement (%)

Date of initial displacement	Average time in displacement	% of respondents
Before 2022	Over 3 years	12%
Jan – Mar 2022	18 months	24%
Apr – Jun 2022	15 months	13%
Jul – Sep 2022	12 months	7%
Oct – Dec 2022	9 months	3%
Jan – Mar 2023	6 months	3%
Apr – Jun 2023	3 months	7%
Jul – Sep 2023	2 months or less	31%

### Number of exits / entries from and to Ukraine

Analysing the data gathered from respondents reveals a notable pattern among individuals returning from Slovakia to Ukraine, characterized by frequent movements across the border.

Most respondents (90%) have crossed the border back to Ukraine at least once since the onset of the conflict in February 2022.

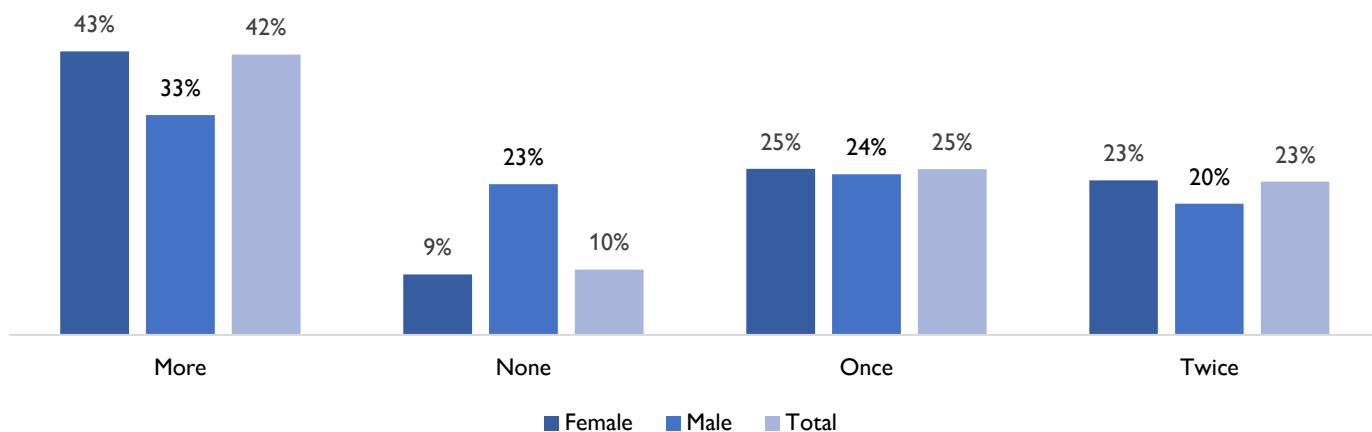
Among the interviewees, 42% reported multiple border crossings, exiting more than twice since their initial displacement. In comparison, an additional 23% crossed the border twice, as of the assessment. Twenty-five per cent mentioned a single border crossing before the interview.

Only 10% of respondents had not returned to Ukraine since their initial displacement until the time of the interview.

Breaking down this data by gender, a slightly more significant proportion of men appear to refrain from crossing back to Ukraine as frequently (23% of male respondents) compared to their female counterparts (9% of female respondents).

Respondents frequently cited reasons for returning to Ukraine, including seeking medical assistance, visiting family members, or travelling within Europe before returning.

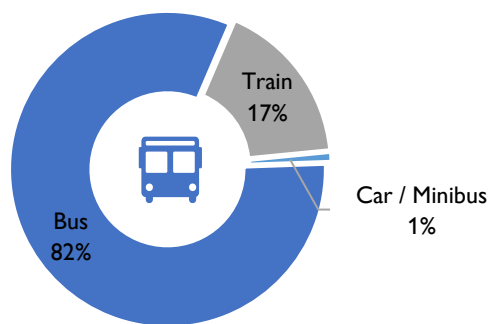
Figure 5: Number of entries / exits between 24 February 2022 and the moment of the survey, by gender and total (%)



### Transport

The predominant mode of transportation for most respondents, constituting 82 per cent of the total, was by bus. An additional 17 per cent indicated they used a train as their means of transportation. A negligible percentage, precisely one per cent, opted for alternative modes of transport, including minibuses or cars. Notably, this distribution corresponds with the survey collection locations, which exclusively focused on the two bus stations offering direct routes to Ukraine and a train station.

Figure 6: Means of transport to Ukraine (%)



### 3. Oblast (region) of Origin and Destination

#### Origin or habitual residence

Almost three-quarters of the respondents (73%) stated as their region of origin or of habitual residence before displacement one of the following eight regions in Ukraine: Zakarpatska oblast (29%),

Kyiv city (12%), Kharkivska (10%), Dnipropetrovska (8%), Ivano-Frankivska (4%), Odeska (4%), Zaporizka (3%) and Poltavska (3%) oblast. The remaining 27% of respondents came from 19 other regions.

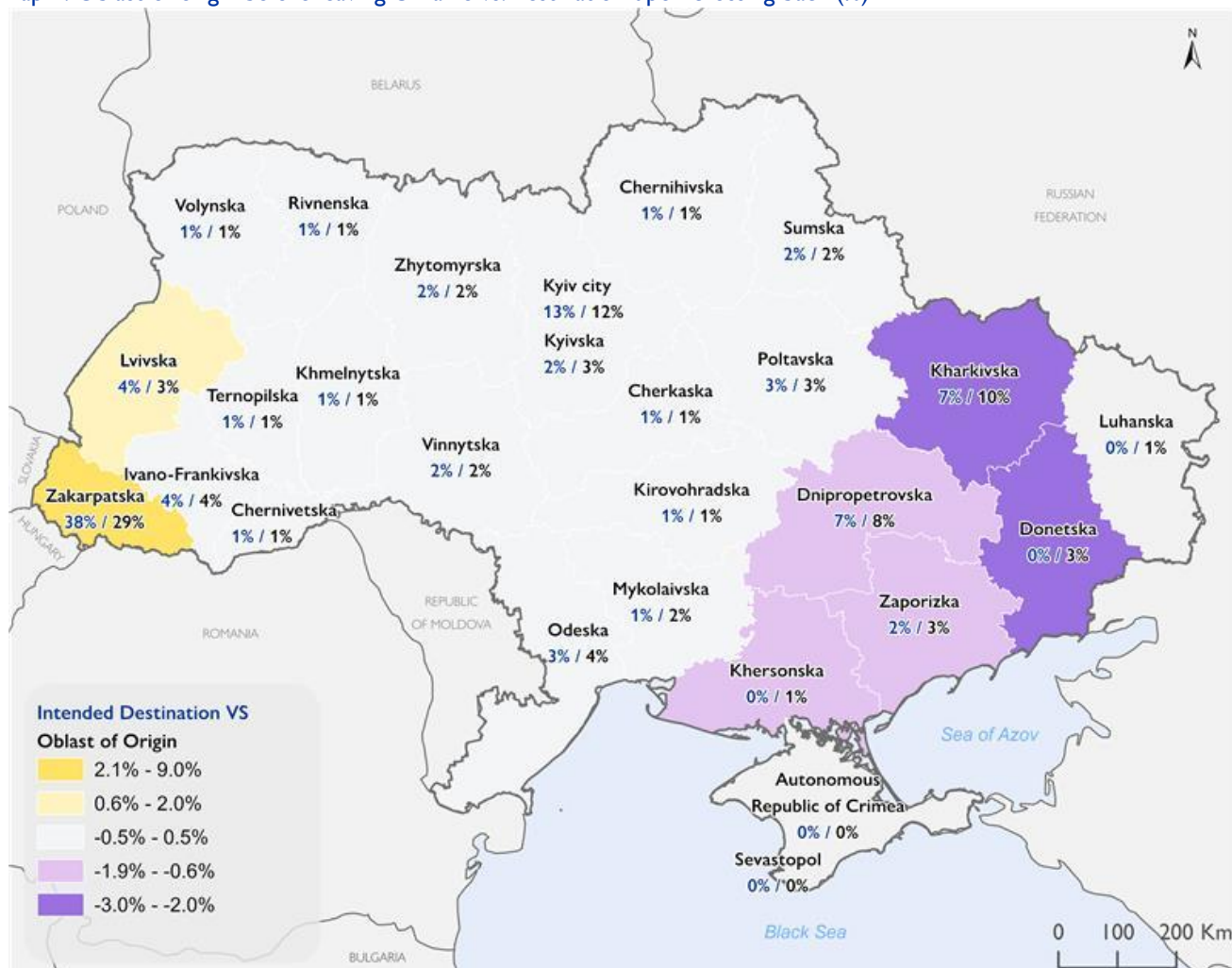
#### Intended destination

Eighty-six per cent of the respondents had plans to return to the same oblast they originated from, while 14 per cent were opting for a different oblast within Ukraine.

Among those respondents who had chosen different oblasts to their place of origin (N=354), the majority

(61%) intended to return to Zakarpatska oblast. The most mentioned reasons for returning to a different oblast were unsafe conditions in the region of origin (38%), family members not residing in the given area anymore (21%) and the house or property of the respondent being destroyed (11%).

Map 2: Oblast of origin before leaving Ukraine vs. destination upon crossing back (%)



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



## 4. Intentions and Reasons to Cross Back to Ukraine

### Long-term stay

More than half of the respondents who were crossing back to Ukraine from Slovakia (53%) expressed their intention for a short-term visit (less than 30 days). Conversely, 39% intended to establish a long-term stay in Ukraine upon their return (over one month and longer). Eight per cent of the total sample remained undecided about the duration of their stay at the time of the interview.

For those respondents planning a long-term stay in Ukraine (N=974), inquiries were made about the reasons for their return. Fifty-seven per cent of these respondents mentioned that they were only visiting someone abroad, while 11% sought to meet their family, and another nine per cent aimed to reunite with family. Eight per cent were returning after shopping abroad, and five per cent decided to stay in Ukraine due to homesickness.

Figure 7: Intended length of stay upon return (%)



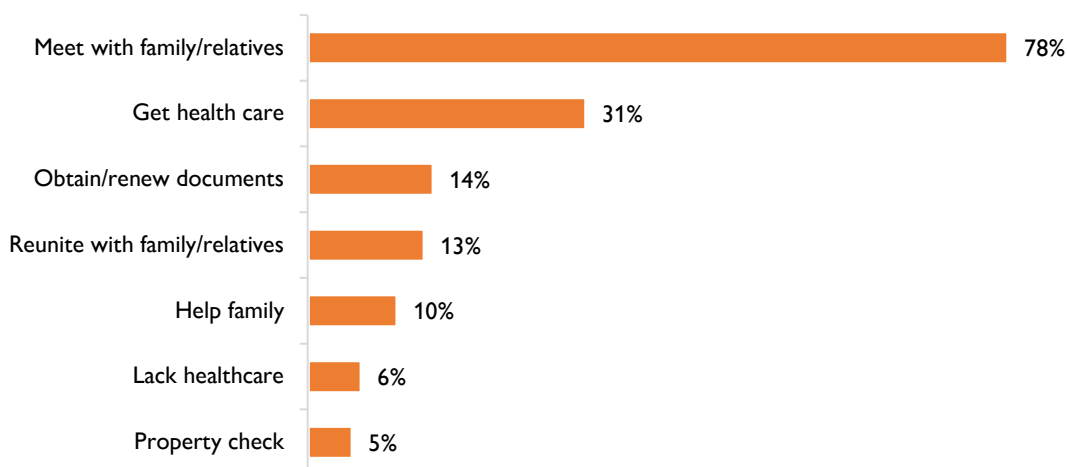
Table 2: Top reasons for long-term stay in Ukraine (%) (N=974). (more than one answer was possible)

Listed reasons	Total (%)
Visit someone abroad	57%
Meet family	11%
Reunite with family	8%
Shopping abroad	8%
Missing home	5%
Family safety	3%

### Short-term visit

A total of 53% of respondents were returning from Slovakia to Ukraine solely for a short visit. Among these 1,345 respondents, the majority (78%) were coming back to meet with their family or relatives. The second most frequently cited reason for crossing the border into Ukraine was to access healthcare, mentioned by 31 per cent of the respondents. Other reasons mentioned by interviewees for briefly returning to Ukraine included obtaining or renewing personal documents (14%), reuniting with family (13%), providing assistance to family members (10%), or checking on their property (5%). Multiple responses were possible in this question.

Figure 8: Top reasons for short-term visit in Ukraine (%) (N=1,345). (more than one answer was possible)



## 5. Needs, Assistance Received, and Challenges

### Immediate needs upon crossing back

Over half of the respondents (55%) mentioned during the interview that they had no immediate needs. Another 45% conveyed that, at the time of the interview, their most pressing requirement was related to health services.

This accounted for 48% of those respondents who indicated some immediate needs (N=1,135). Other notable needs identified included obtaining medications (31%), seeking general information (26%), financial support (22%), and access to language courses or assistance in finding employment (22% and 21%, respectively). Furthermore, 11% of respondents expressed the need for support in securing long-term accommodation upon their return. To a lesser extent, legal assistance (6%), food supplies (5%) and household goods (4%) were also indicated.

Figure 9: Immediate needs at the moment of interview, upon crossing back (N=1,135). (more than one answer was possible)

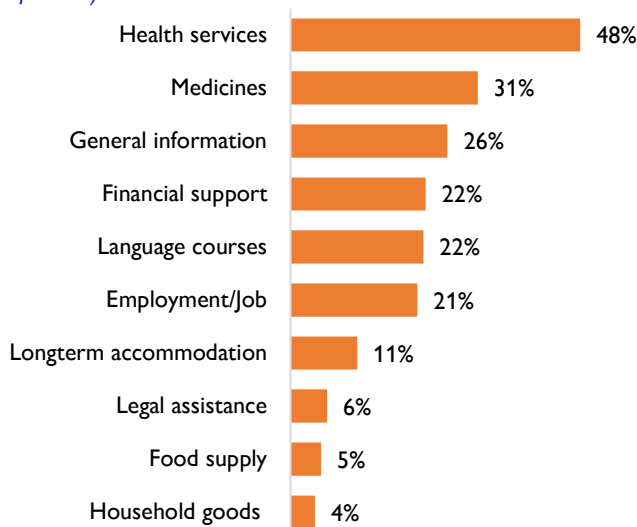


Table 3: Assistance received in total (%) (N=944). (more than one answer was possible)

Listed reasons	Total (%)
Food	73%
Financial support	65%
Personal hygiene items	63%
Accommodation	59%
Clothes	37%
Transport	21%
Psychological counseling	4%

### Experiencing discrimination

The majority of surveyed participants (86%) have not encountered any discrimination while in displacement. However, thirteen per cent of respondents reported experiencing instances of discrimination, with only one percent opting not to answer this question. A notable gender disparity emerged, with a higher proportion of female respondents (13%) reporting such incidents compared to only seven per cent of male respondents.

### Assistance received in Slovakia

A substantial majority (62%) of the interviewed respondents disclosed that they had not received any form of humanitarian assistance in Slovakia. In contrast, 944 survey participants (37%) reported having received some kind of aid. In terms of the assistance provided during their journey, majority of interviewees cited receiving food (73%), financial support (65%), and hygiene items (63%). Accommodation support (59%), clothing (37%), and transportation (21%) were also commonly mentioned forms of humanitarian assistance that the respondents had received. Conversely, only four percent of those who received assistance in Slovakia reported having received psychological support.

The specific situations mentioned involved biases related to language and nationality during interactions with neighbours, individuals working in various services or educational settings, as well as encountering negative attitudes and hostility from general public. Some participants also shared instances of facing discrimination at their workplaces in Slovakia, while children experienced bullying at schools.

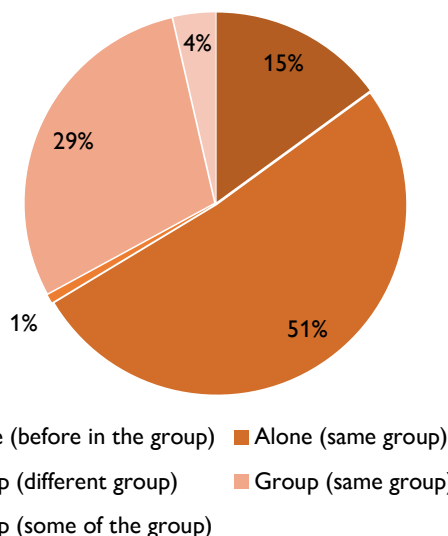
## 7. Group Composition

### Travel mode

More than half of the total respondents (51%) were returning to Ukraine on their own, just as they had left Ukraine alone. Other 15% were returning solo, though they had initially left Ukraine as part of a group. Regarding those travelling in groups, 34% of all respondents journeyed back to Ukraine in a group, with four per cent among them returning with only some members of their original travel group.

Regarding gender differences, women showed a greater inclination to travel back with the same group they initially departed with, with 28% of female participants compared to one per cent of male participants. Conversely, men demonstrated a higher tendency to travel independently throughout their entire journey.

Figure 10: Travelling mode (%)



### Group composition

Among those travelling in a group (N=851), most (90%) were accompanied by family members, while 9% were with friends, and two per cent were with relatives. Another two per cent of these respondents were travelling with colleagues from work.

Regarding group size, fifty-six per cent of the

travelling groups consisted of two persons, while thirty percent had three members. Fourteen per cent of the groups consisted of four or more members. Notably, children under 18 years of age were part of the target groups for 68% of respondents who travelled in groups.

Figure 11: Traveling groups total (%) (N=851).  
(more than one answer was possible)

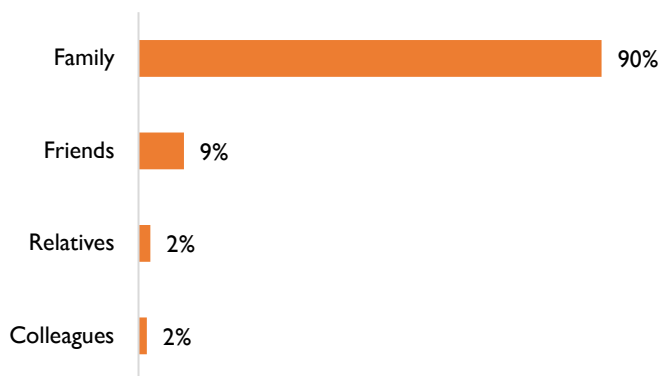
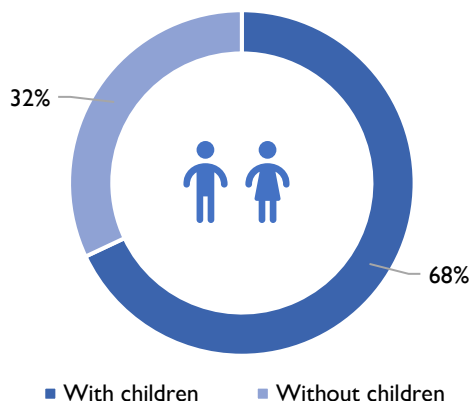


Figure 12: Share of groups travelling with or without children (%) (N=851)



## 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, up to six million refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe. At the same time, more than 20 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) tool in 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 into Ukraine.

This report is based on surveys collected in Slovakia between July and September 2023 in Bratislava and Kosice at the transit points (train stations and bus stations) with persons going directly to Ukraine.

### Methodological framework

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.

This survey is part of IOM's DTM activities to monitor the profiles, displacement patterns and most immediate needs of the Ukrainian refugees and TCNs crossing back to Ukraine since 24 February 2022.

In Slovakia, surveys were conducted in Ukrainian or Russian language 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 trained on ethics of data collection, information provision and protection principles, approached people crossing back to Ukraine, to verify their willingness to conduct the survey, which was only 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 maximize the number of interviews, and reach out to different profiles of individuals.

While in border crossing/transit points, such as train stations, the flow of people was higher and interviewees were randomly surveyed (having the same likelihood compared to others to be selected), in other settings, such as information centers, respondents were intentionally identified.

Among the limitations encountered during data collection were the reduced time to carry out surveys at transit points and sometimes the same respondents appearing in various days of collection.

A mixed sampling strategy guided the data collection exercise to address the aforementioned shortcomings and cover different viewpoints.

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 Slovakia.



## 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.