

A nighttime photograph of a city street, likely in Poland, showing pedestrians in winter clothing, cars, and illuminated buildings. The scene is dark with city lights and streetlights providing illumination. The title text is overlaid on a blue background that spans across the middle of the image.

**UKRAINIAN REFUGEES AND POLISH
MUNICIPAL POLICE: EXPLORING
PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES
AND AVENUES FOR
RELATIONSHIP-STRENGTHENING**

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**UKRAINE RESPONSE
POLAND 2022-2023**

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES AND POLISH MUNICIPAL POLICE: EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES AND AVENUES FOR RELATIONSHIP-STRENGTHENING

November 2023
IOM Poland Data & Research Unit
Immigration & Border Governance Unit

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

As of December 2023, more than 6 million refugees from Ukraine have fled to other countries because of the war which began in February 2022. More than 950,000 of these refugees are living in neighboring Poland.

With this sudden influx of refugees, Polish society and institutions responded quickly to support their new Ukrainian arrivals through initiating social protection programs, collective site housing, and providing immediate assistance to those entering through the borders with Ukraine. Polish law enforcement – including the border guard, police, and municipal police – played a key role in supporting Ukrainian refugees. As the conflict continues and as many refugees have now lived in Poland for over a year, there is a need for research and programming on the various aspects enabling durable solutions – one of these being the ways in which Ukrainian refugees interact with and perceive Polish law enforcement.

Even before the onset of the war there was a sizable Ukrainian population in Poland, meaning that Polish law enforcement officers' interactions with and perceptions of Ukrainians may include both refugees who arrived after and migrants who arrived before February of 2022. From the law enforcement perspective it can be challenging to distinguish whether an individual is a refugee, so for this reason our research also touches on the perceptions and experiences of Ukrainian migrants who resided in Poland before the war began (e.g. those who lived in Poland prior to February of 2022).

This study aims to provide insights into the interactions, perceptions, and potential areas for improvement in the relationship between Ukrainians in Poland (with a focus on the refugee population) and Polish law enforcement (specifically focusing on Polish municipal police). The report covers IOM's main research findings as well as recommendations both for Polish law enforcement's engagement with Ukrainian communities and for future humanitarian programming.

MAP I: DATA COLLECTION LOCATIONS IN POLAND



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.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1	What types of experiences have refugees from Ukraine had with Polish police?
2	What types of experiences have Polish police had with refugees from Ukraine?
3	How do refugees from Ukraine perceive Polish law enforcement agencies?
4	How does Polish police perceive refugees from Ukraine?
5	What do both groups perceive as the greatest issues/areas for improvement in the interactions/relationship between the two groups?

KEY DEFINITIONS

Ukrainian Refugee:

A person of Ukrainian nationality who fled Ukraine due to the war that began on February 24th, 2022. For the purposes of this research this includes those who hold temporary protection status as well as those who may not, as we did not verify legal status of respondents.

Polish Police:

A uniformed and armed formation intended to protect people's safety and maintain public order, subordinated to the Poland's Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration¹.

Municipal Police:

A uniformed unit established by the municipal council to protect public order within the municipality, subordinated to the local government authorities².

Community Leader:

People in leadership positions within the Ukrainian humanitarian community, including collective site coordinators, integration center managers, and leadership within relevant NGOs which support Ukrainian refugees.

¹ Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 r. o Policji, Dz.U. 1990 nr 30 poz. 179 [Parliamentary Act on the Police of April 6, 1990].

² Ustawa z dnia 29 sierpnia 1997 r. o strażach gminnych, Dz.U. 1997 nr 123 poz. 779 [Parliamentary Act on Municipal Police of August 29, 1997].

2. METHODOLOGY

SURVEYS

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining individual surveys (281 surveys) with one-on-one key informant interviews (47 interviews). Surveys were conducted in-person with Ukrainian migrants and refugees by trained enumerators, who identified respondents randomly at a variety of locations including integration centers, transit points, public spaces and collective accommodation. Although the sample consisted mostly of Ukrainian refugees who arrived in Poland due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, approximately 14% of surveyed individuals arrived in Poland before the war outbreak in February 2022. The surveys were completely anonymous, and data was collected via tablets using the Kobo application and stored in a secure server. A brief introduction was shared with respondents and only those over the age of 18 and who provided consent were surveyed. No personal identifiable information was collected.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The study identified two target groups for key informant interviews: Polish law enforcement officers and leaders within the Ukrainian humanitarian community, hereafter referred to as “community leaders”. The community leader target group included collective site coordinators, integration center managers, and leadership within relevant NGOs which support Ukrainian refugees. Within the law enforcement target group, only Polish municipal police were interviewed due to access limitations.

The interviews were anonymous, and each was carried out with one respondent and two IOM staff (one to guide the interview and one to take notes), provided the respondent consented to be interviewed after a brief introduction.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

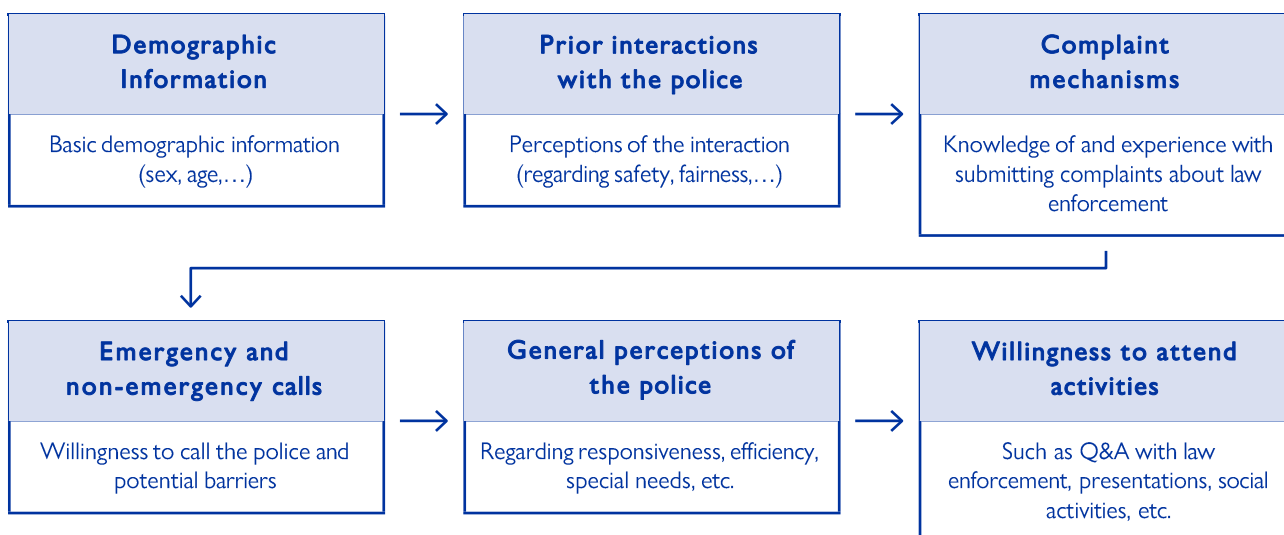
This research focused on four locations within Poland, each with unique characteristics. The first location, Przemyśl, has a population of 56,466¹, with 3,523 Ukrainian PESEL registrations² as of November 2023³. Przemyśl is located near a major border crossing point with Ukraine and is a major transit point for Ukrainians who cross between Poland and Ukraine. The second location, Kraków, has a population of 804,237¹, with 31,646 Ukrainian PESEL registrations³. Warsaw was the third city of focus, as Poland’s capital and largest city, with a population of 1,861,644¹ and 104,792 Ukrainian PESEL registrations³. Finally, Piaseczno is a town on the outskirts of Warsaw, with a population of 51,985¹ and 8,572 Ukrainian PESEL registrations³.

¹ Statistics Poland. 2023. *Stan, ruch naturalny i wędrownicy ludności w I półroczu według podziału administracyjnego*. [The population, population’s natural and migratory movement in the first half of the year by administrative division] Available at: <https://demografia.stat.gov.pl/bazademografia/Tables.aspx>

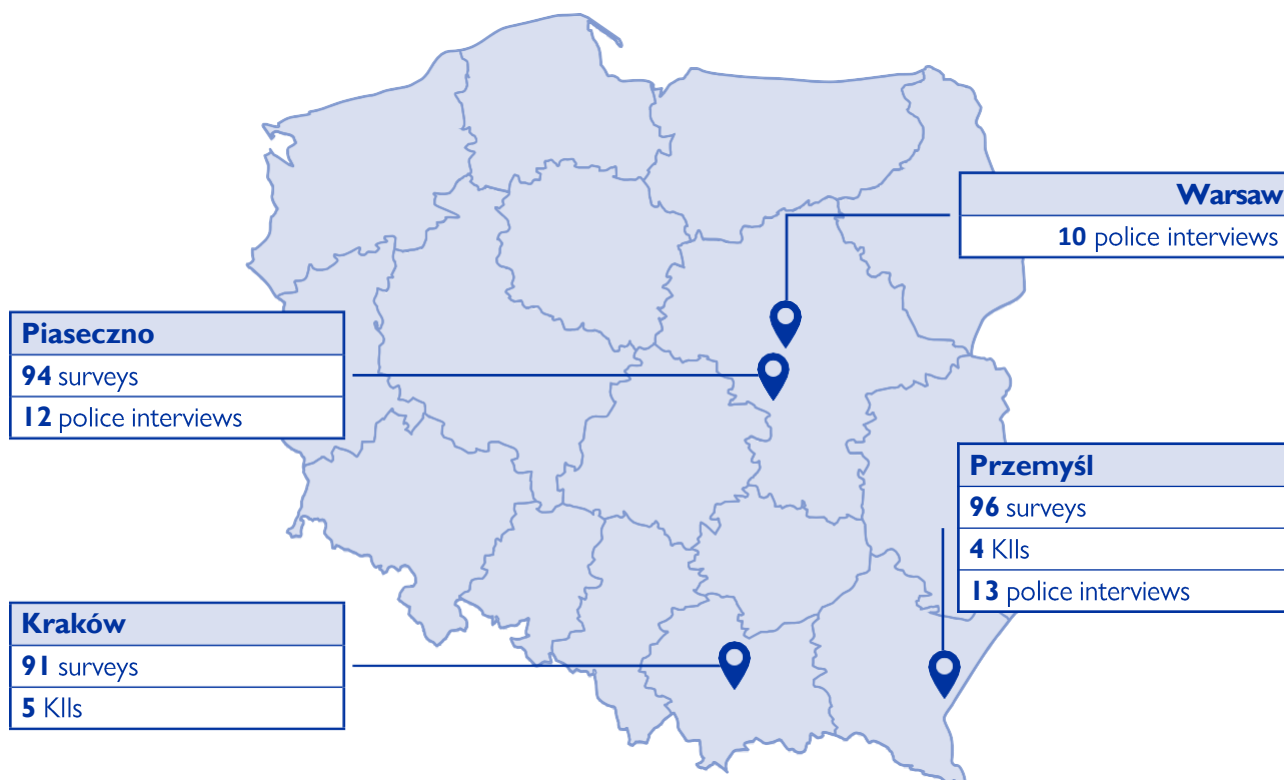
² Citizens of Ukraine who crossed the Polish border after 24 February could apply for PESEL number (Polish national identification system) registration which guarantees the legality of temporary stay in Poland, based on *Ustawa z dnia 12 marca 2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa, Dz.U. 2022 poz. 583* [Parliamentary Act on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with the Armed Conflict on Its Territory of March 12, 2022].

SURVEY COMPONENTS

A data collection tool was developed to survey Ukrainian refugees in the target cities. The tool included modules on demographic information, past experiences with Polish law enforcement, knowledge of complaint mechanisms, willingness to contact law enforcement, perceptions of law enforcement, and interest in participating in potential future programming involving law enforcement.



MAP 2: TOTAL NUMBER OF SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS PER LOCATION



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.

3. FINDINGS OVERVIEW



27% of respondents had at least one interaction with Polish law enforcement agents while living in Poland. Of these, **57%** of reported interactions were initiated by respondents while **38%** were initiated by law enforcement agencies.



Though only **10%** of respondents identified as **men**, they were found to be significantly **more likely** to have interactions with Polish law enforcement than those identifying as women.



The most common interaction types were **reporting a crime** as either a victim or a witness (**43%**) and **being pulled over in a car** (**21%**).



Most interactions were rated to have gone **mostly well or very well**. **75%** of interactions were rated positively regarding every attribute (safety, fairness, respect, communication).



31% of respondents stated they would **not feel comfortable** calling law enforcement in an **emergency**, and **21%** would **not feel comfortable** with any possible way of contact in a **non-emergency**.



The most stated reasons for not calling law enforcement were **language barrier** and **fear of potential punishment for an unjustified call**.



According to community leaders Ukrainian refugees prefer to address issues **without involving law enforcement** due to the **fear of not being understood** or **fear of repercussions**, the latter likely resulting from negative past experiences with the police in Ukraine.



From the perspective of law enforcement officers, most experiences took place on a basis of **intervention** with the most frequently reported context for interaction being **public disorderly behavior** and **traffic offences**.



Behavioral differences were noted between those who stayed longer and those who arrived after the war began. A **longer stay** was often associated with **better understanding and compliance**.



Attitudes toward refugees are an individual issue and depend on personal opinions which may be influenced by personal experience, interpersonal conflicts, and historical context.



The main barriers to successful interactions include language barriers, cultural differences, lack of information on specializations of different law enforcement agencies in Poland, and lack of understanding of Polish rules and regulations.

4. SAMPLE INFORMATION

SURVEY WITH UKRAINIANS

Only Ukrainians participated in the survey. Most of the respondents were university-educated women between 31 and 50 years of age. The majority of the participants lived in the city they were surveyed in only since after the war outbreak. Most of the persons surveyed were employed, and the most frequently spoken language was Ukrainian.

FIGURE 1: RESPONDENTS' GENDER IDENTITY (N=281)

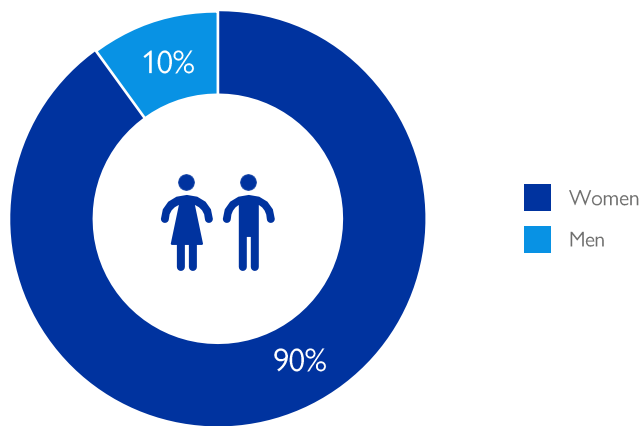


FIGURE 2: RESPONDENTS' AGE STRUCTURE (N=281)

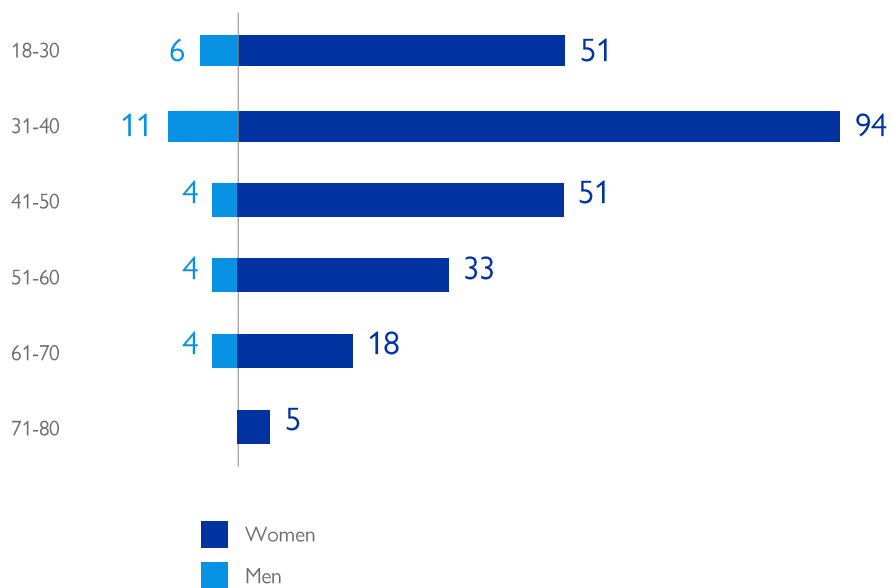


FIGURE 3: PARTICIPANTS BY MONTHS LIVED IN THE CITY THEY WERE SURVEYED IN (N=281)

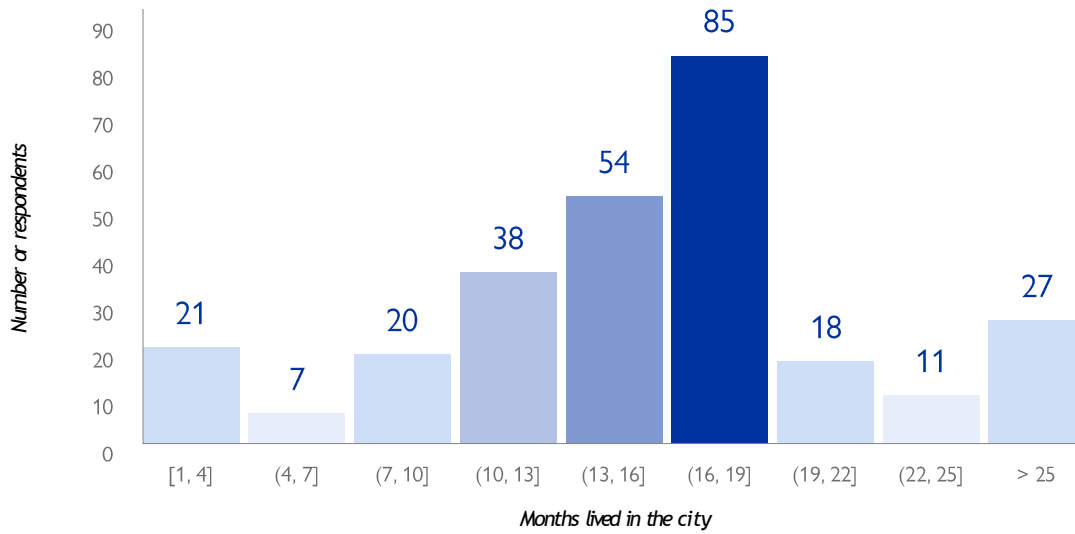


FIGURE 4: TOP 5 LANGUAGES SPOKEN (N=281)

(more than one answer possible)

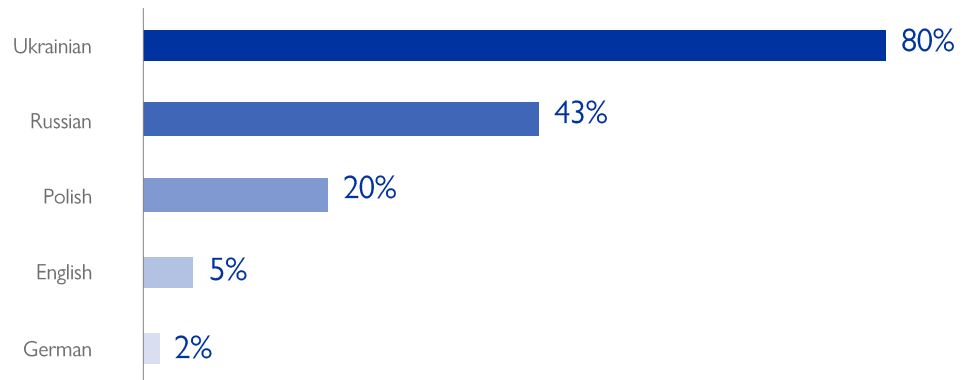


FIGURE 5: FREQUENCY OF MONTHS LIVED IN THE CITY (N=281)

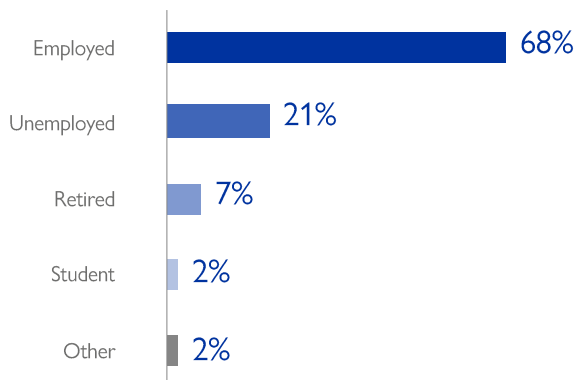
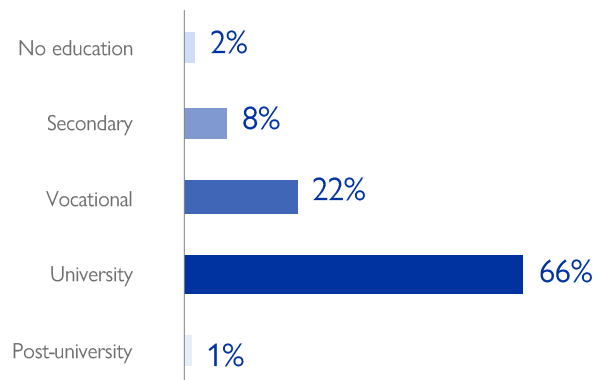


FIGURE 6: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (N=281)



5. EXPERIENCES WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

UKRAINIANS' EXPERIENCES WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

Out of all the survey respondents, approximately 27% had interactions with Polish law enforcement. Among those, the median number of interactions was 1. Out of the 104 reported interactions, 35 took place in Kraków, 29 in Piaseczno, and 40 in Przemyśl. Approximately three quarters of reported interactions took place three months before the date of the survey, or earlier. It was found that the number of months lived in the city they were surveyed in moderately correlated with the number of interactions with Polish law enforcement.

FIGURE 7: RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED HAVING AT LEAST ONE INTERACTION WITH POLISH LAW ENFORCEMENT (N=281)

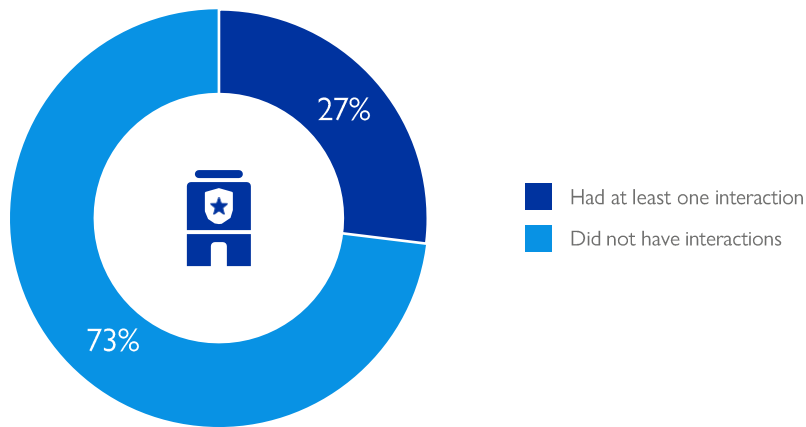


FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS PER RESPONDENT AMONG THOSE WHO HAD ANY (N=75)

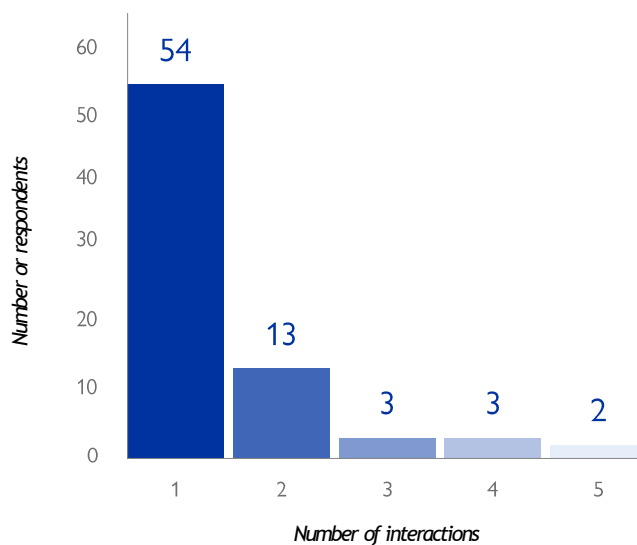


FIGURE 9: WHEN DID THE INTERACTION TAKE PLACE (N=104)

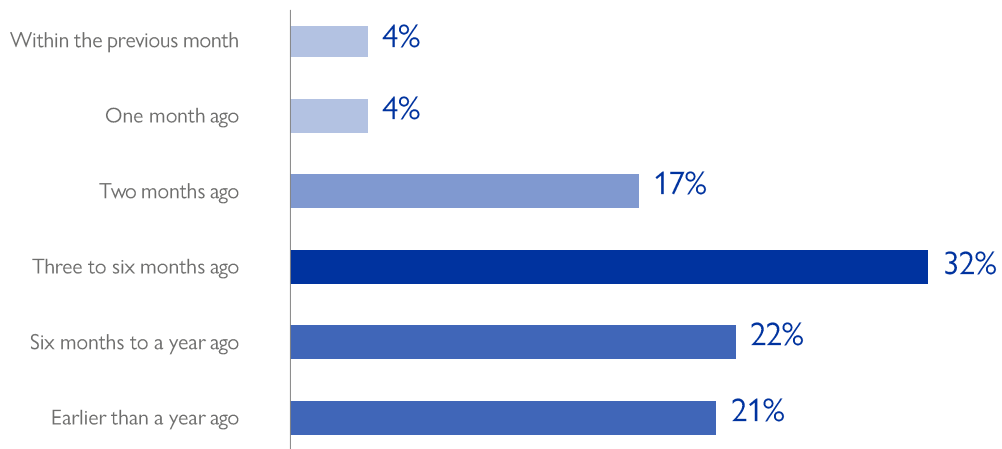
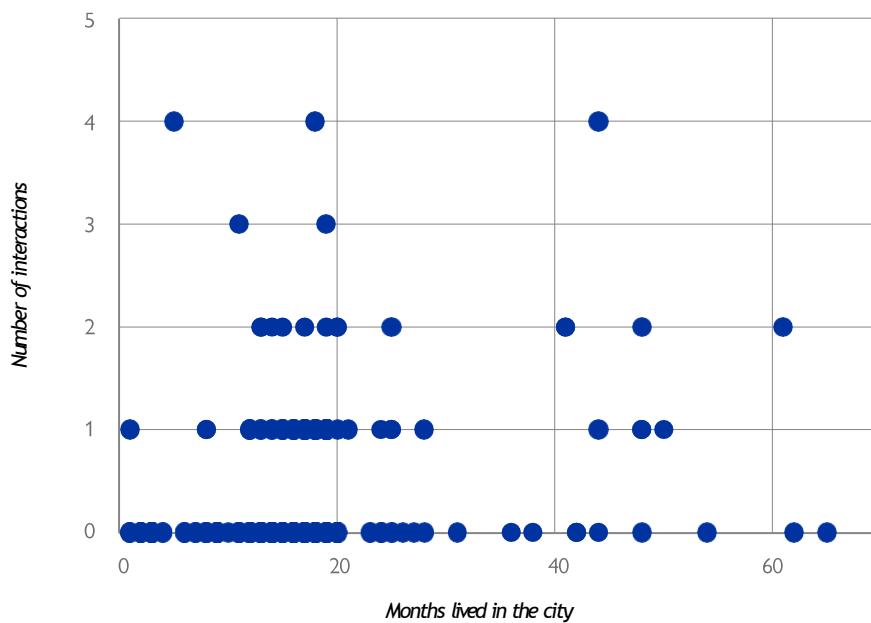


FIGURE 10: NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS BY MONTHS LIVED IN THE CITY THEY WERE SURVEYED IN (N=281, OUTLIERS ARE NOT VISUALIZED)



INITIATION OF INTERACTIONS

Based on the type, each individual interaction was classified as initiated either by the respondent, by the police officer, or as unclear who initiated the contact. The proportion of interactions initiated by the respondent was significantly higher in case of interactions with Polish Police than with Municipal Police.

FIGURE 11: THE PARTY WHICH INITIATED THE INTERACTION (N=104)

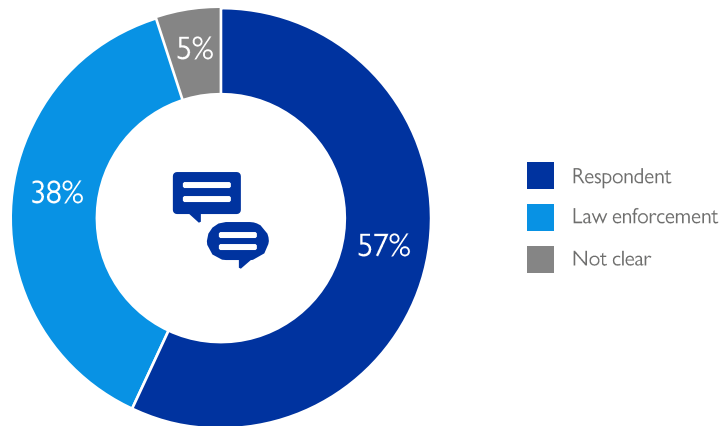
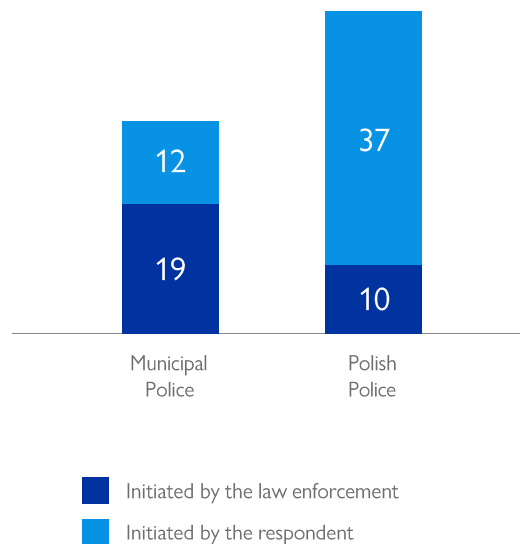


FIGURE 12: INITIATION OF THE INTERACTION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY



INTERACTIONS AND GENDER IDENTITY

Respondents identifying as men were found to be significantly more likely to have interactions with Polish law enforcement than those identifying as women. The average number of interaction among those who had at least one was significantly higher for respondents identifying as men, than those identifying as women.

FIGURE 13: RESPONDENTS WHO HAD INTERACTIONS BY GENDER IDENTITY

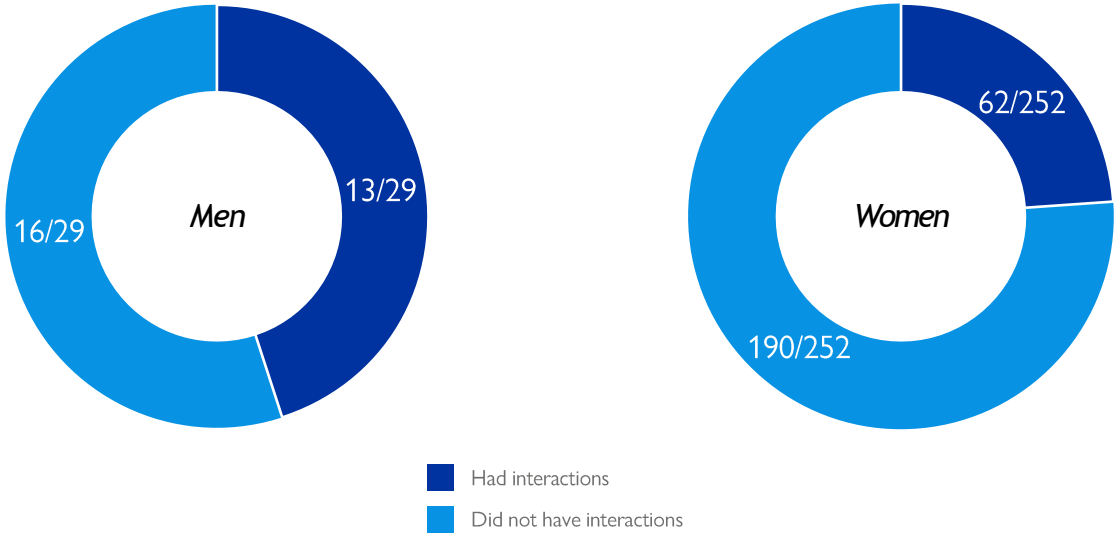
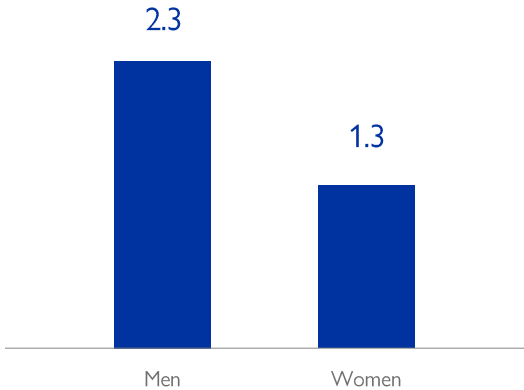


FIGURE 14: AVERAGE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS AMONG THOSE WHO HAD AT LEAST ONE, BY GENDER

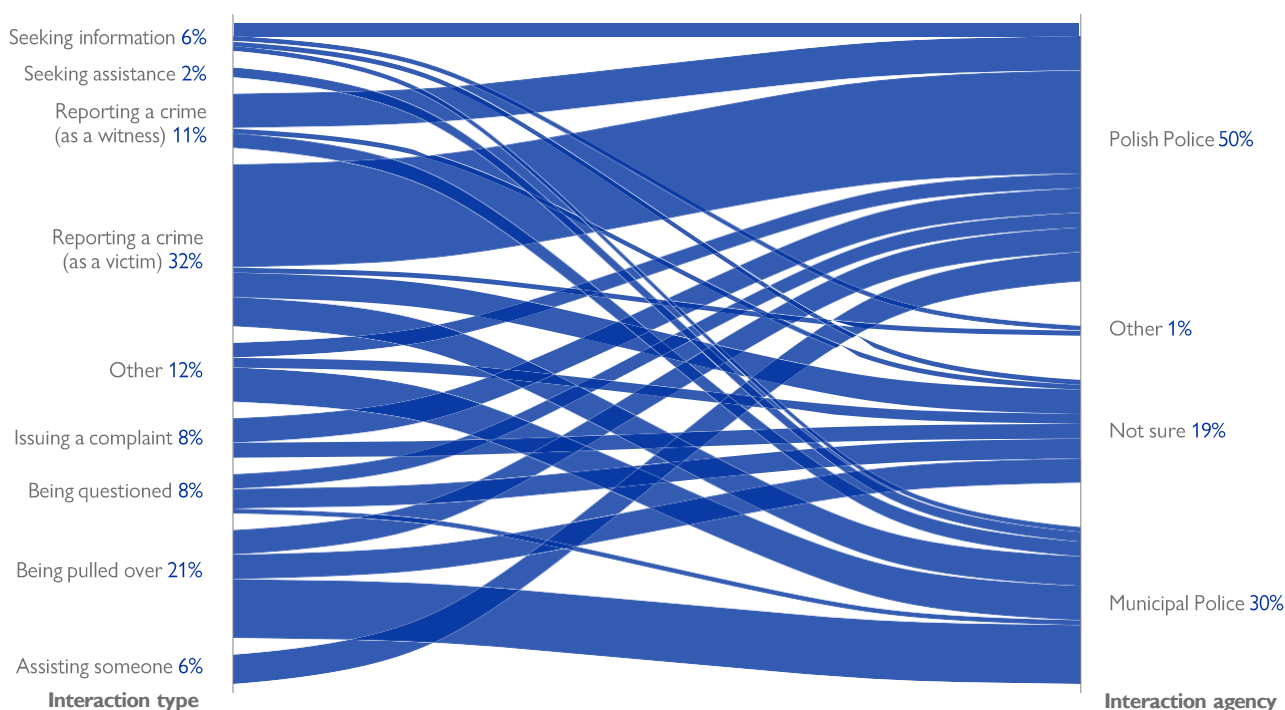


INTERACTIONS PER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The most commonly reported types of interactions with law enforcement included were reporting a crime of which the respondent was the victim, and being stopped by a law enforcement agent while driving. Half of the reported interactions were with Polish Police, 30% with Municipal Police, and in 19% of the cases the respondent was not sure with which agency they were interacting. Most of the crime reporting was handled by the Police, and the majority of cases of pulling over was done by Municipal Police.

FIGURE 15: INTERACTIONS BY TYPE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (N=104)

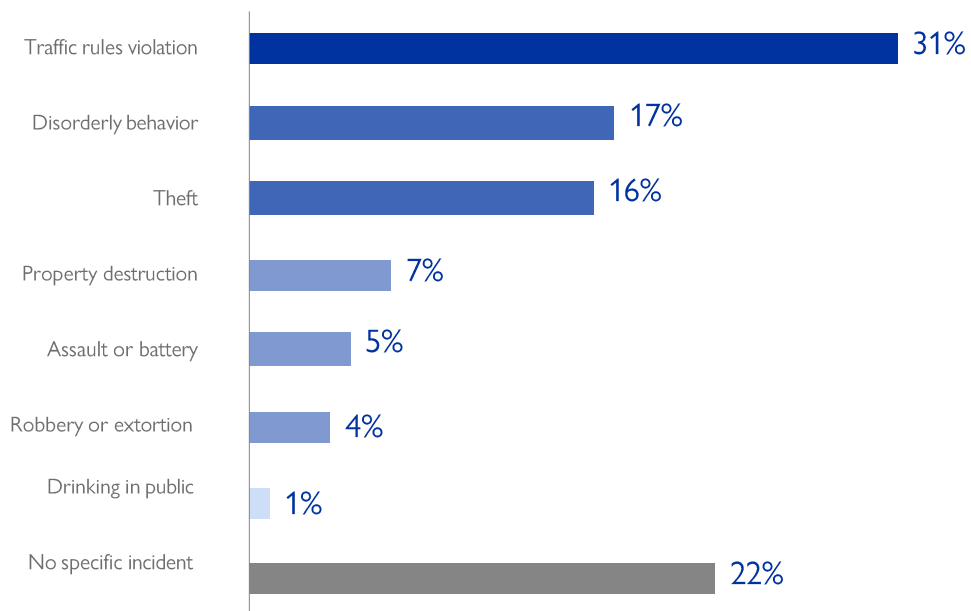
(more than one interaction type per interaction possible)



TYPES OF INCIDENTS

In addition to types of interactions with law enforcement, the respondents were asked about types of incidents the interactions were relating to. The most common was traffic rules violation. Many of the interactions were not about a specific incident, for instance some were initiated because of informational needs.

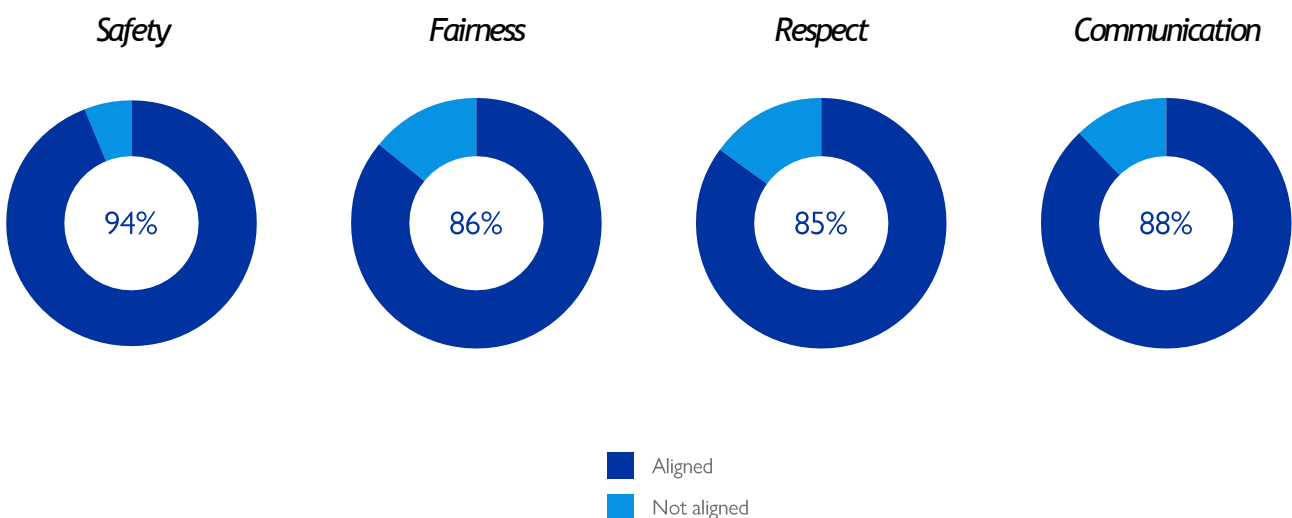
FIGURE 16: INTERACTION INCIDENT TYPES (N=104)



UKRAINIANS’ EXPERIENCES WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

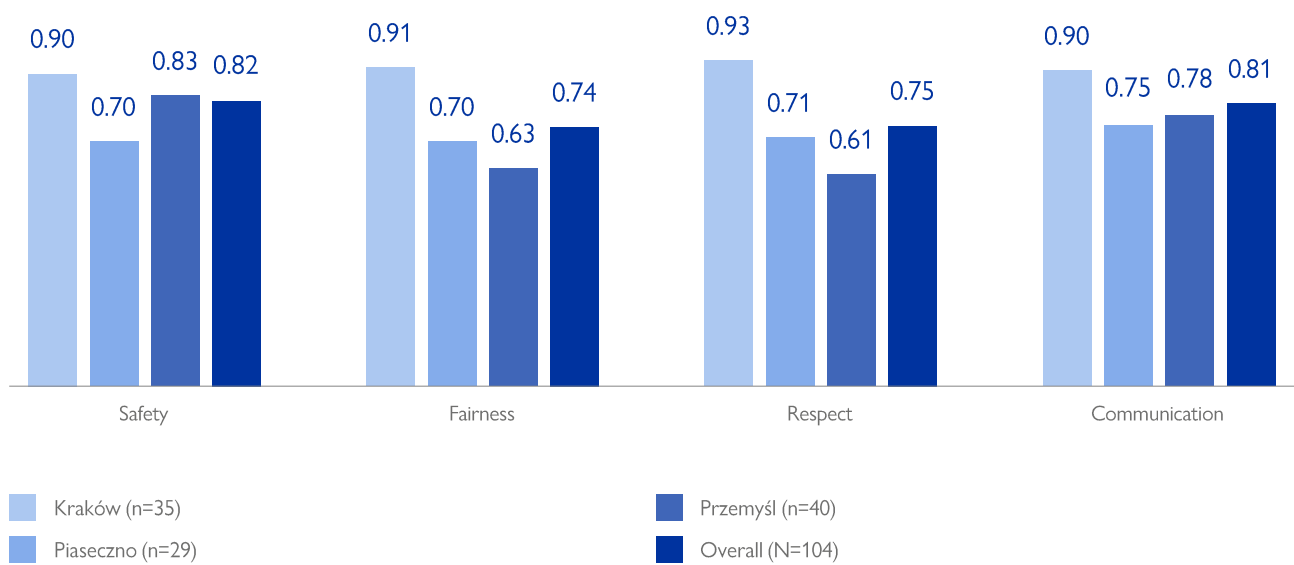
Respondents rated the reported interactions according to four attributes: sense of personal safety during the interaction, perceived fairness of treatment, respect, and easiness of communication. The majority of interactions were rated mostly or very well. 75% of interactions were rated positively regarding every attribute.

FIGURE 17: INTERACTIONS REPORTED AS AT LEAST MOSTLY ALIGNED WITH THE SPECIFIC ATTRIBUTES (N=104)



Response options were assigned values ranging from 1 to 4, and adjusted to a 0 to 1 scale, with 0 being the worst rating and 1 being the best. Scores for each of the attributes apart from communication turned out to differ significantly between the analyzed cities. Interactions that took place in Piaseczno were rated significantly lower in regards to safety than both in Kraków and Przemyśl. Interactions in Kraków on the other hand were rated significantly higher than those in Piaseczno and Przemyśl in terms of fairness and respect.

FIGURE 18: AVERAGE PERCEPTION OF SAFETY, FAIRNESS, RESPECT, AND COMMUNICATION OF INTERACTIONS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT BY CITY



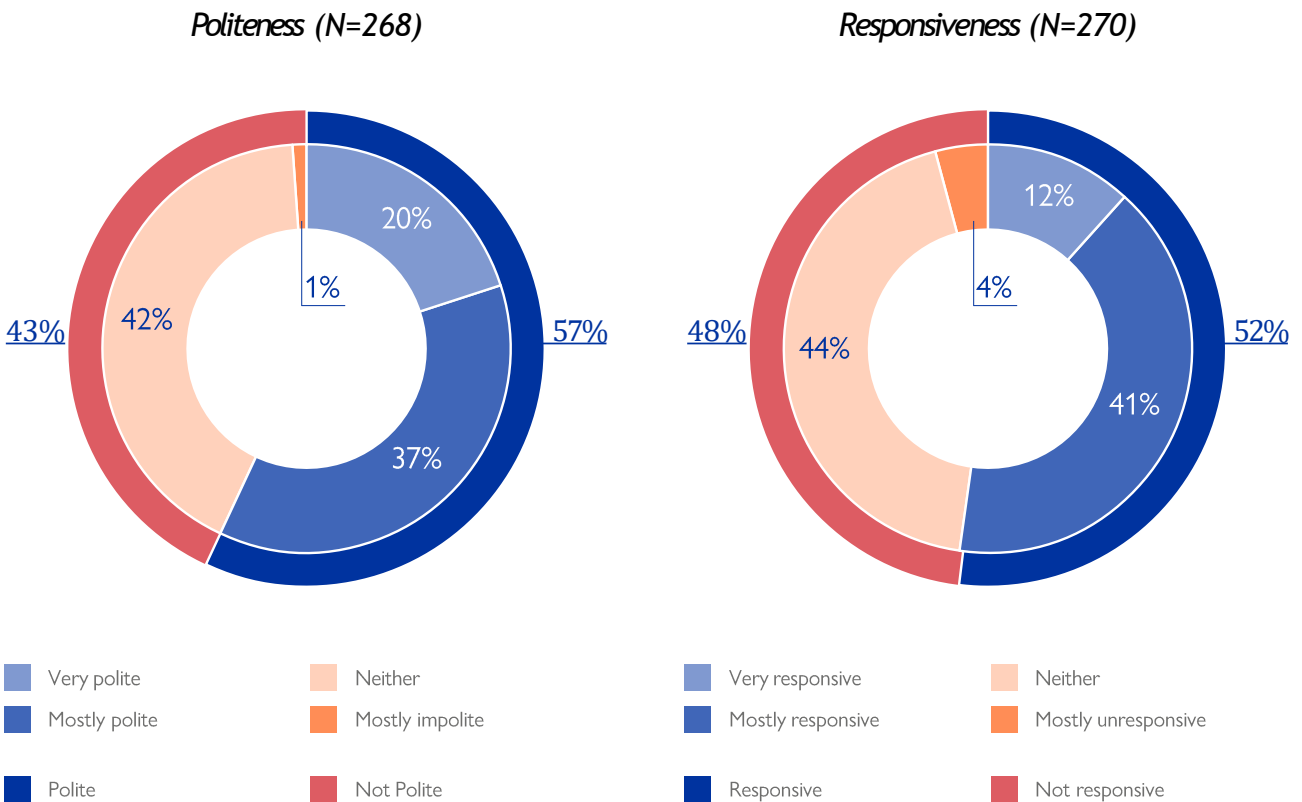
Refugee reception point in Przemyśl, IOM 2023 / Alexey Shvirin

6.1 PERCEPTIONS: UKRAINIAN PERSPECTIVE

UKRAINIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

The survey participants were asked to rate their perceptions of Polish law enforcement on three perception dimensions developed by Skogan and Hartnett¹: politeness, responsiveness, and efficiency, and an additional attribute regarding catering to special needs, on a five point scale.

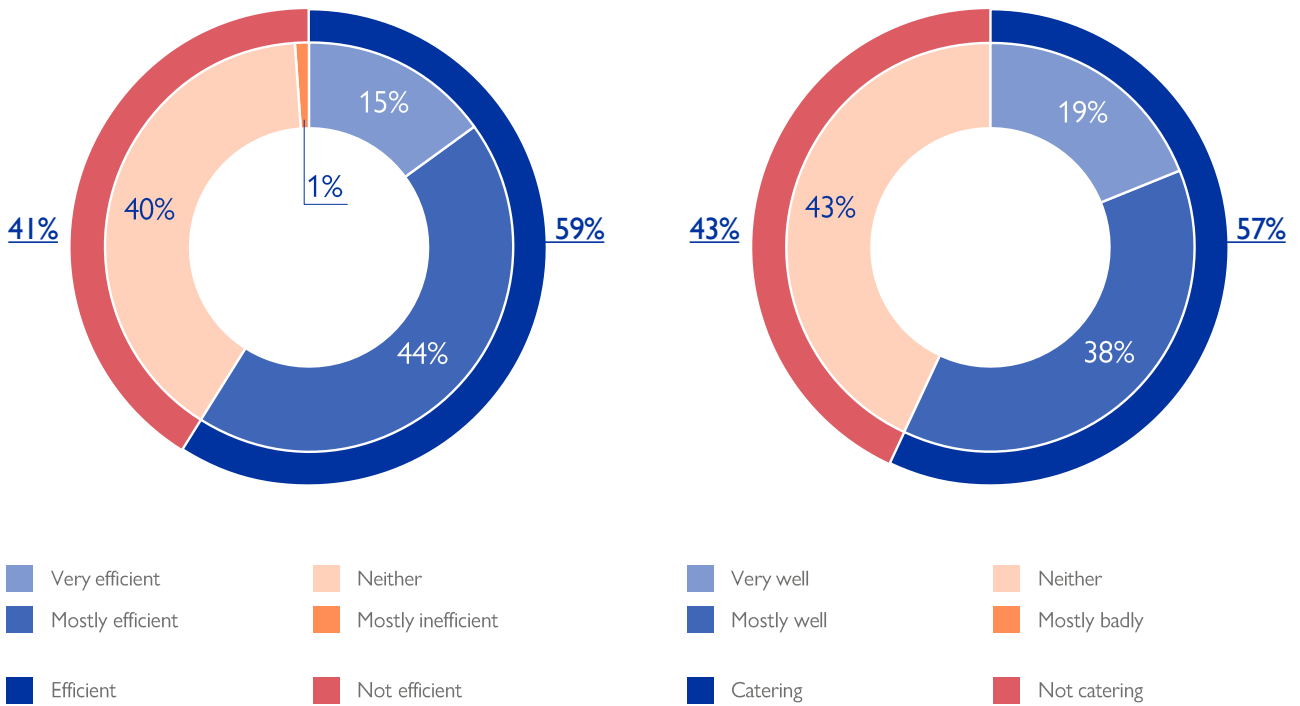
FIGURE 19: LAW ENFORCEMENT PERCEPTIONS ON FOUR DIMENSIONS: POLITENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, AND CATERING TO SPECIAL NEEDS



¹ Skogan, W. G. and S. M. Hartnett. 1997. Community Policing, Chicago Style. Oxford University Press, New York

Efficiency (N=268)

Special needs (N=270)



PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT BASED ON CITY OF RESIDENCE

FIGURE 20: AVERAGE PERCEPTION OF POLITENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, AND CATERING TO SPECIAL NEEDS BY CITY



Response options were assigned values ranging from 1 (very impolite/unresponsive/inefficient/badly catering to special needs) to 5 (very polite/responsive/efficient/well catering to special needs), and adjusted to a 0 to 1 scale, with 0 being the worst perception and 1 being the best. Scores for each of the perception dimensions were significantly differing between cities. Przemyśl had a significantly lower score than Kraków regarding responsiveness, and significantly lower than Kraków and Piaseczno regarding politeness, efficiency, and special needs.

All of the perceptions dimension scores highly correlated with each other. A single perception score was calculated by adjusting the sum of perception dimensions to a 0 to 1 scale, with 0 being the worst overall perception and 1 being the best (average 0.68, minimum 0.31, maximum 1). The scores notably differed between cities. Respondents in Przemyśl had overall perception scores significantly lower than those in Kraków and Piaseczno. Additionally, those who had previous interactions with law enforcement had significantly higher general perceptions score than those who had no interactions.

FIGURE 21: AVERAGE GENERAL PERCEPTION SCORE BY HAVING INTERACTIONS WITH THE LAW ENFORCEMENT IN POLAND

To illustrate the difference, the figure's lower bounds are equal to 0.5

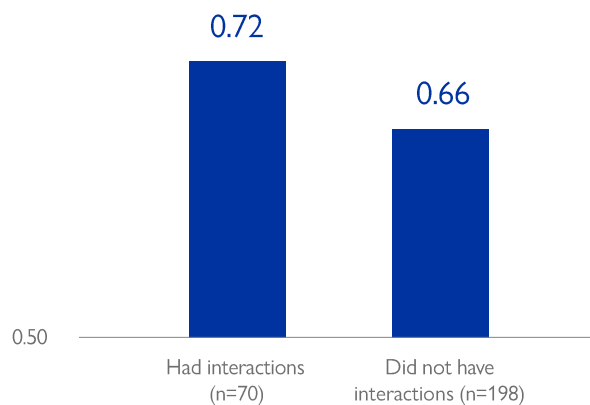
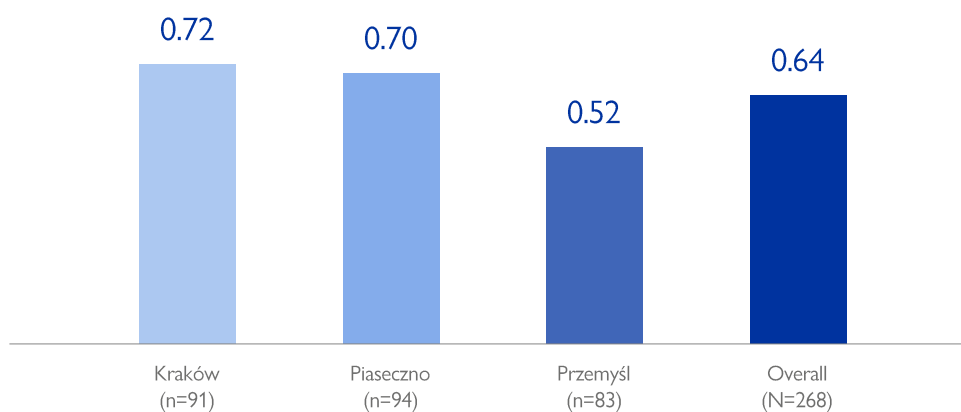


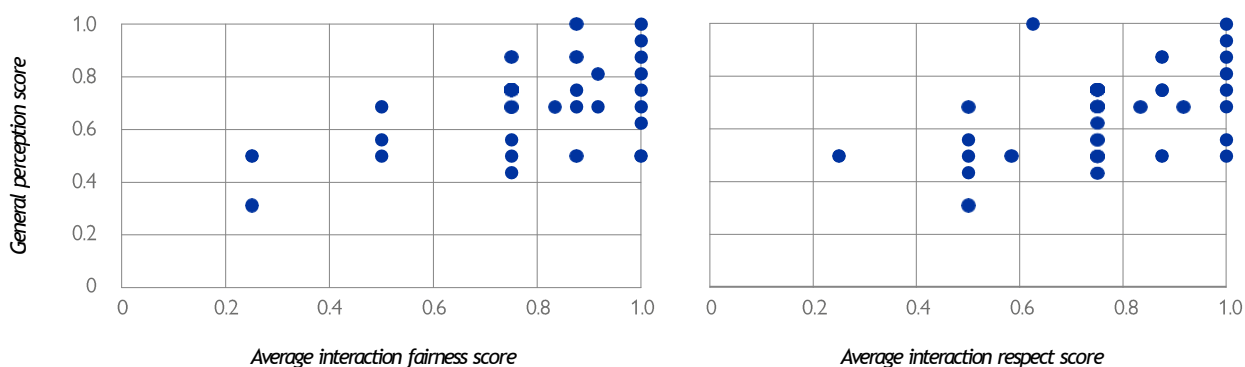
FIGURE 22: AVERAGE GENERAL PERCEPTION SCORE BY CITY



UKRAINIAN REFUGEES' PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Among the 70 persons who had interactions with law enforcement and answered the questions about law enforcement perception, average perceived fairness and respectfulness (but not safety nor communication) of the interactions highly correlated with the general law enforcement perception score.

FIGURE 23: GENERAL PERCEPTION SCORE BY AVERAGE INTERACTION FAIRNESS AND RESPECT SCORES (N=70)



PERCEPTIONS AND SUBMITTING A COMPLAINT

Approximately 15% of respondents knew how to submit a complaint against a law enforcement officer, but only 2 out of the 281 persons surveyed had done so in the past. Twenty-three persons wanted to submit a complaint in the past but did not proceed. 36% of all respondents would not consider filing a complaint in the future. Persons with less favorable law enforcement perceptions were less likely to consider submitting a complaint in the future.

FIGURE 24: WILLINGNESS TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT AGAINST A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENT IN THE FUTURE BY GENERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PERCEPTION SCORE

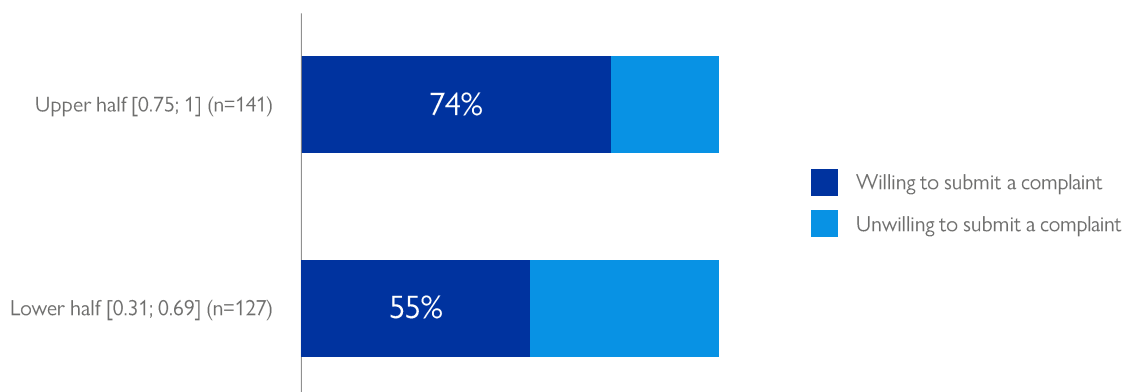
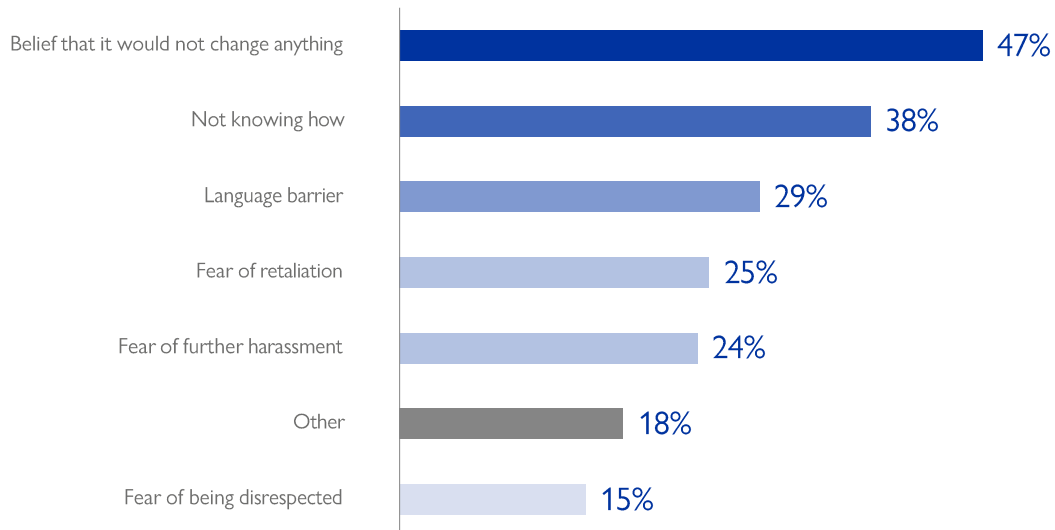


FIGURE 25: STATED REASONS FOR NOT CONSIDERING SUBMITTING A COMPLAINT IN THE FUTURE (N=100)

(more than one answer possible)



UKRAINIANS’ WILLINGNESS TO CONTACT LAW ENFORCEMENT

Respondents were asked about their willingness to contact Polish law enforcement in case of an emergency and non-emergency situation. 31% of respondents stated they would not feel comfortable calling in an emergency, and 21% would not feel comfortable with any possible way of contact in a non-emergency. Overall, the most popular stated reasons for not calling were language barriers, and fear of potential punishment for an unjustified call.

FIGURE 26: RESPONDENTS WHO WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE CALLING IN AN EMERGENCY (N=281)

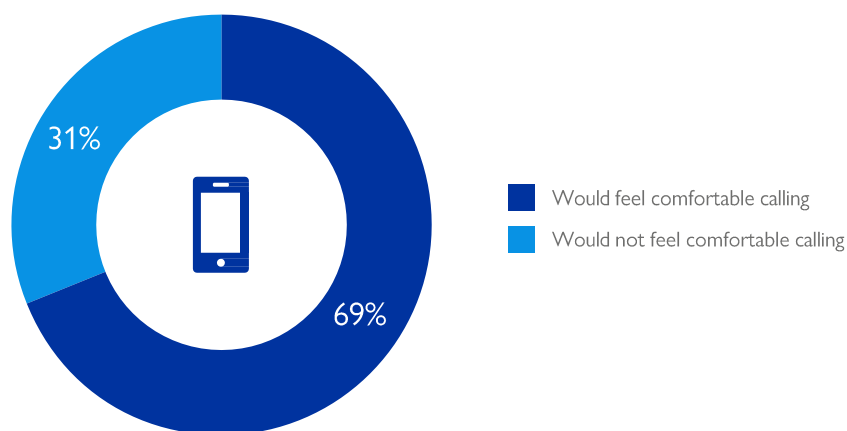


FIGURE 27: PREFERRED WAYS TO CONTACT LAW ENFORCEMENT IN A NON-EMERGENCY (N=281)

(more than one answer possible)

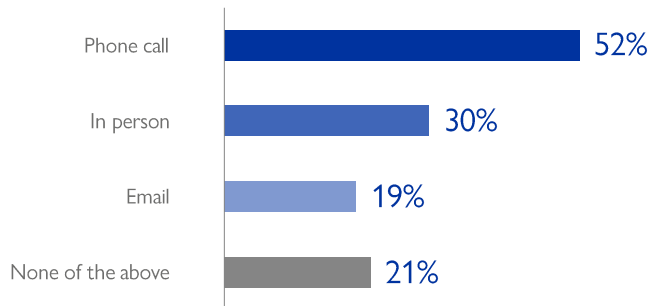


FIGURE 28: FEELING COMFORTABLE CALLING IN AN EMERGENCY AND A NON-EMERGENCY BY GENERAL PERCEPTION SCORE

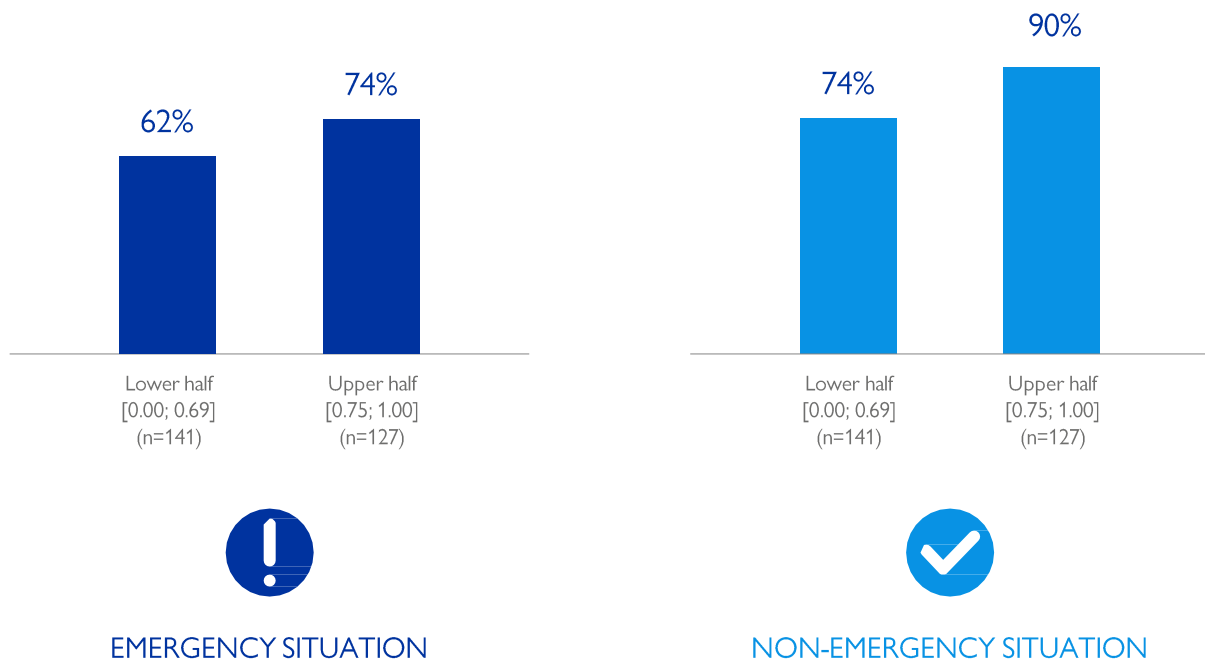
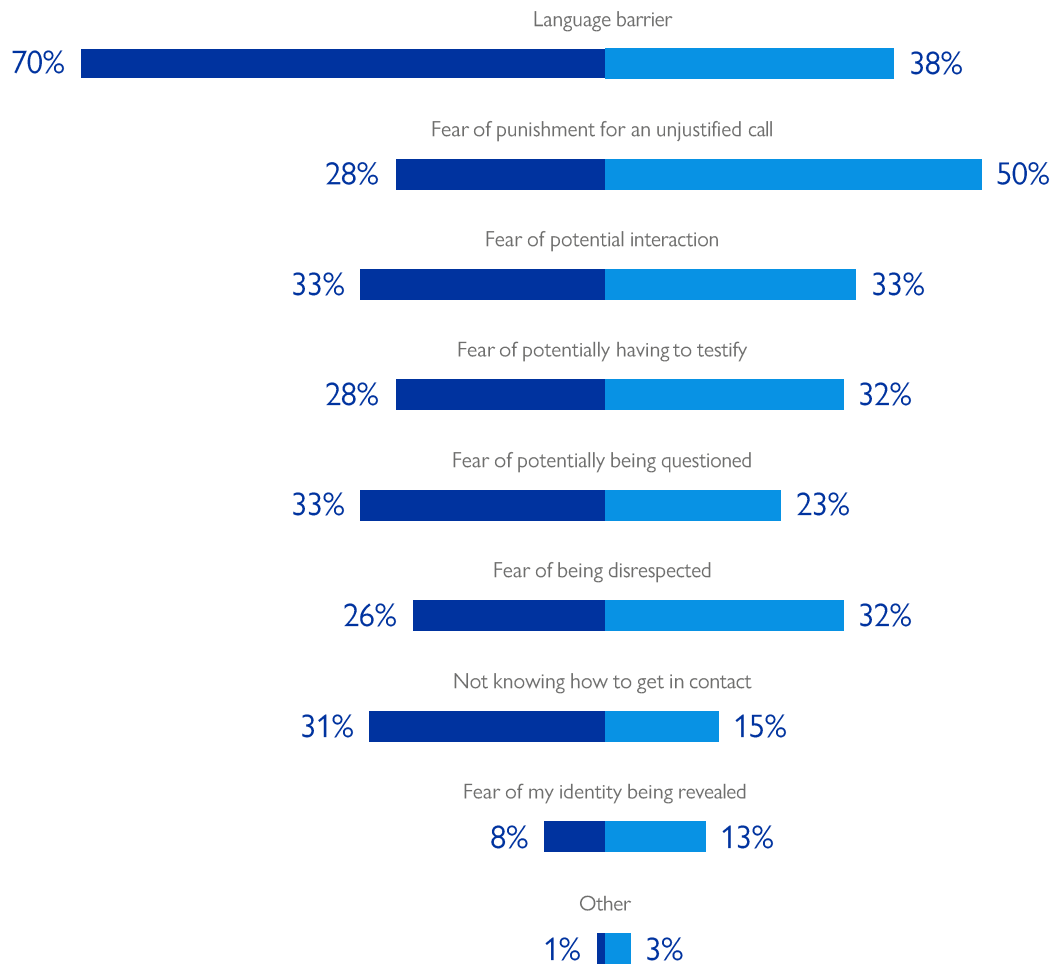


FIGURE 29: REASONS FOR NOT BEING COMFORTABLE CALLING IN AN EMERGENCY (N=86) AND IN A NON-EMERGENCY (N=60)

(more than one answer possible, please note the small sample sizes)



EMERGENCY SITUATION



NON-EMERGENCY SITUATION

6.2 PERCEPTIONS: COMMUNITY LEADER PERSPECTIVE

PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT BY COMMUNITY LEADERS

Interactions History

In the initial stages of the Ukrainian refugee response, law enforcement agencies played a crucial role in providing information, offering transport assistance, and ensuring overall safety for Ukrainians entering or transiting through Poland. However, over time, interactions became less frequent. Currently, it is observed that Ukrainian refugees often prefer addressing their concerns independently, which community leader key informants attribute largely to insurmountable language barriers as well as certain preconceived notions formed through past interactions with the police in Ukraine. Despite having relatively positive perceptions of police in Poland, there remains a level of mistrust when engaging with law enforcement agencies.

From the standpoint of community leaders, the interactions between local actors and the police, including municipal police, are predominantly positive. Coordinators and staff from various NGOs, accommodation, and integration centers have received requests from Polish law enforcement for assistance ranging from translation, communication, and accommodation to information provision and training on cultural differences, adaptation stages, and working with traumatized individuals.

The Police and Municipal Police have garnered commendation for their prompt responses, fair treatment, professionalism, and a general willingness to cooperate and engage with the Ukrainian refugee community. However, respondents have emphasized the importance of an individualized approach and highlighted the role of personal attitudes, with success in each interaction attributed to the open-mindedness and patience of each officer.

Barriers to Effective Interactions

While the interactions highlighted by community leaders predominantly exhibit positive attributes, this does not preclude their ability to discern several barriers faced by Ukrainian refugees in their interactions with law enforcement agencies in Poland.

These challenges include a **lack of understanding the rules and regulations of Poland**, coupled with a **lack of awareness regarding the distinctions between Polish and Ukrainian laws**. Ukrainian refugees often attempt to transpose their accustomed practices from Ukraine to the current reality in Poland, leading to tensions in encounters with the police or municipal police. Furthermore, their **unfamiliarity with complaint mechanisms**, rooted in the apprehension about potential repercussions, hinders the reporting of misconduct.

Communication issues, notably the **language barriers** and **cultural differences**, constitute additional obstacles for both the Ukrainian refugee community and law enforcement entities. Despite linguistic similarities, the oftentimes quite basic knowledge of the Polish language acquired by refugees over one to two years proves insufficient for comprehensive self-expression, particularly when engaging with the police. Consequently, a reluctance to seek law enforcement assistance arises from the fear of not being adequately understood, prompting individuals to address issues independently.

Moreover, a **lack of information concerning the specializations of various law enforcement agencies** contributes to a limited understanding of whom to approach for specific concerns and discerning matters that can be resolved without involving the police or municipal authorities.

6.3 PERCEPTIONS: LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE

PERCEPTIONS OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Demographics

The average age among interviewed law enforcement representatives is 49 years old, with the youngest being 27 and the oldest 62 years old. Out of the 35 respondents interviewed, 29 are male and 6 are female. These representatives hold various positions within the services, ranging from junior inspector, senior inspector to head of a department. Other roles include municipal officer inspector, junior officer and officer, among others. This range in positions suggests a breadth of work experience and perspectives, which is crucial for understanding their perspectives and interactions with refugees. In terms of service duration, the average length of time spent in the uniformed services by these respondents is approximately 21 years, indicating a significant level of experience in this field. The least experienced member of the group has 1 year of service, while the most experienced has 34 years.

Interactions History

Over time, the nature of interactions between Ukrainian refugees and Polish law enforcement has evolved. Initially, there was a significant emphasis on assistance and coordination of efforts, especially from February 2022. The influx of refugees led to an increased workload for police officers, necessitating more interventions. This period saw extensive efforts in coordinating areas like train stations and mass accommodation sites for refugees, with city services working around the clock to organize humanitarian aid and support (e.g. providing safe housing, food, and clothing). The head of department noted that initially, there was a strong focus on providing help and coordinating actions.

However, as the situation stabilized and refugees began integrating into Polish society, the interactions gradually shifted. Municipal police officers and other service representatives returned to their regular duties, indicating a transition from emergency response to a more normalized interaction pattern with the refugee community. The officers found themselves dealing with more instances of public disorder, improper parking, and alcohol consumption in inappropriate places.

Currently, the interactions of officers with Ukrainian refugees vary widely in reasons and nature. Most responses point to interactions occurring in the context of police interventions, often linked to issues like alcohol intoxication or aggressive behavior. Additionally, public order problems, such as failure to obey traffic laws, along with issues like inadequate garbage segregation, are frequently cited. Daily tasks of municipal police officers also lead to interactions with refugees, often involving activities like parking control or city patrolling. Some officers mentioned providing assistance and support to refugees, such as offering information, help with transport packaging, or placement in appropriate locations.



Positive Interactions

Some law enforcement representatives describe interactions with Ukrainian refugees as positive and constructive, particularly when solutions are reached collaboratively, others highlight negative aspects, especially related to behaviors involving alcohol consumption. Many respondents report a lack of distinctly positive experiences, which could be attributed to the nature of their work, often centered around interventions in challenging or conflictual situations. This lack of positive experiences does not necessarily

reflect the overall nature of interactions but rather the specific contexts in which these respondents operate. Some respondents differentiate between personal and professional experiences with refugees, with personal encounters often being more positive.

Most officers' responses highlight the gratitude shown by refugees, particularly for the assistance they received at key locations like the Western Train Station in Warsaw and various medical points. Examples of this assistance include the provision of clothing and food by municipal police officers during colder periods and help with understanding parking regulations and other local rules.

The impact of refugees' attitudes and behavior on positive interactions is significant. Respondents underline that refugees' politeness, civility, and rule awareness contribute to positive experiences. Additionally, sensitivity to cross-cultural differences is crucial. Understanding and respecting cultural differences aid in building trust and improving communication.

The behavior of Ukrainian refugees in Poland varies, particularly based on how long they have been in the country. Those who have lived in Poland for a longer time generally have a better understanding and compliance with local laws and norms, leading to more positive interactions. On the other hand, newer arrivals, who came to Poland because of the war, often face challenges in adapting to local laws and customs. This lack of familiarity can lead to more frequent misunderstandings or conflicts with the law among this group.

Over time, a noticeable shift in attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees has occurred. Initially, there was significant enthusiasm and a strong willingness to help. However, as many refugees have now resided in Poland for over a year and have had more time to adapt to their new environment, a more nuanced approach has been observed. The focus of law enforcement regarding Ukrainians has shifted from being a provider of assistance to refugees to primarily enforcing Polish law.



Negative Interactions

The responses regarding negative experiences with Ukrainian refugees highlight several challenges faced by officers. A significant issue is alcohol abuse among migrants and refugees, leading to loud and vulgar behavior, disobedience, and sometimes aggression. Traffic and parking violations are also noted, with specific instances like disregarding the no-stopping rule in some places and near hotels. Criminal matters, including theft, rape suspicions, drug possession, and violent incidents, are mentioned as well.

Some responses indicate a problem with cultural differences and the claiming attitude of some refugees, who expect special treatment or have inadequate expectations for help. Some negative experiences arise from the language barrier, a lack of knowledge or respect for local laws and social norms by some refugees.

Some of these situations have been resolved through interventions by services, dialogue, or by imposing fines. More serious cases, such as those involving suspicions of theft and rape, drug possession, and violent incidents, are referred to the appropriate police services.

These negative incidents influence the overall approach to refugees, though the impact varies. While some officers stress the importance of maintaining a positive approach and understanding, others express feelings of frustration or disappointment. This variation is indicative of individual differences in perceptions of refugees, shaped by personal experiences with them.

Perception of Ukrainian Refugees Regarding Law Enforcement

The analysis of officers' responses regarding the perception of Ukrainian refugees towards Polish uniformed services reveals a complex picture. There is a spectrum of perspectives, ranging from negative to positive, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the relationship between refugees and these services.

Some responses indicate a negative attitude among migrants and refugees, stemming from an expectation of punishment rather than support. On the other hand, many responses point to a positive perception of the uniformed services by refugees, particularly in terms of appreciating the assistance and kind treatment received. Instances such as offering sweets or invitations to visit Lviv reflect gratitude and good relations. Over the last two years, the attitude of refugees has evolved from initially avoiding confrontation with uniformed personnel to engaging in more open dialogue and viewing these services as partners in conversation.

Individual characters and diverse experiences of refugees influence their perception of the services, and while the language barrier is present. The responses suggest a need for continued efforts to enhance communication and cross-cultural understanding to better align with the expectations and needs of refugees.

Treatment of Ukrainian Refugees by Polish Law Enforcement

Most officers have not noticed any differential treatment between Ukrainian refugees and Polish citizens, emphasizing adherence to professionalism and equal treatment for everyone, irrespective of nationality. This is a consistent observation across responses, highlighting no disparity in treatment and an approach based on equality.

In terms of legal compliance, the responses suggest that officers abide by laws that apply equally to both citizens and refugees. Decisions are reportedly based on the specifics of each situation and individual behavior, rather than on nationality.

Several respondents mentioned that some migrants might perceive certain actions as discriminatory, possibly due to cultural misunderstandings or misinterpretation of officers' intentions. The collected responses suggest a prevailing belief among officers in professional and equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their status or nationality. Instances of discrimination in the workplace are rare and not a widespread observation among the officers.



An enumerator conducting a survey, IOM 2023 / Alexey Shvirin

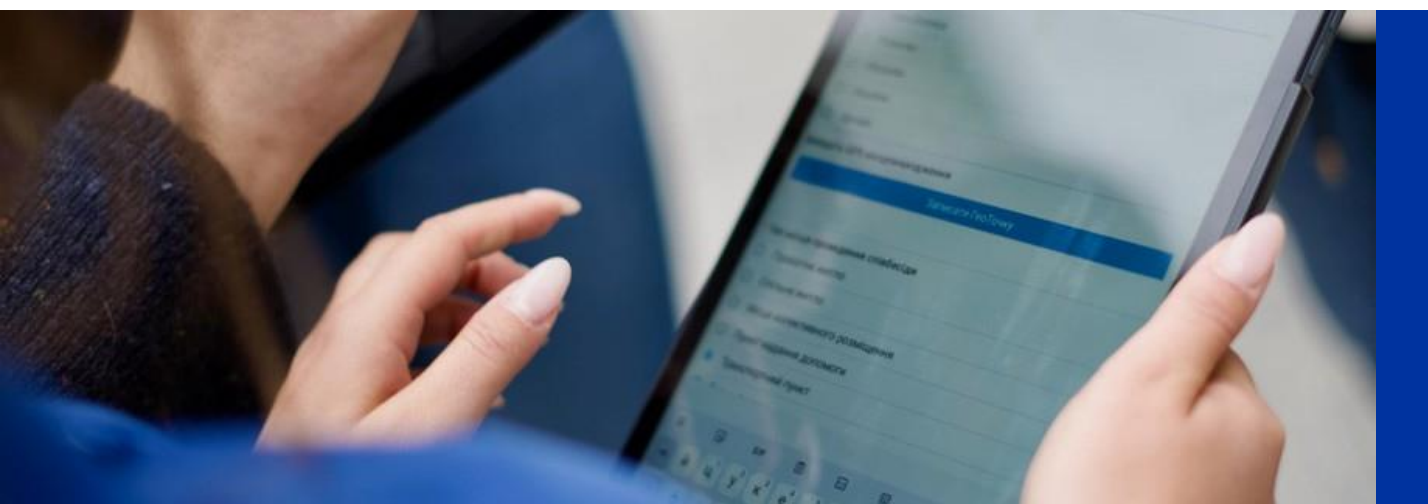
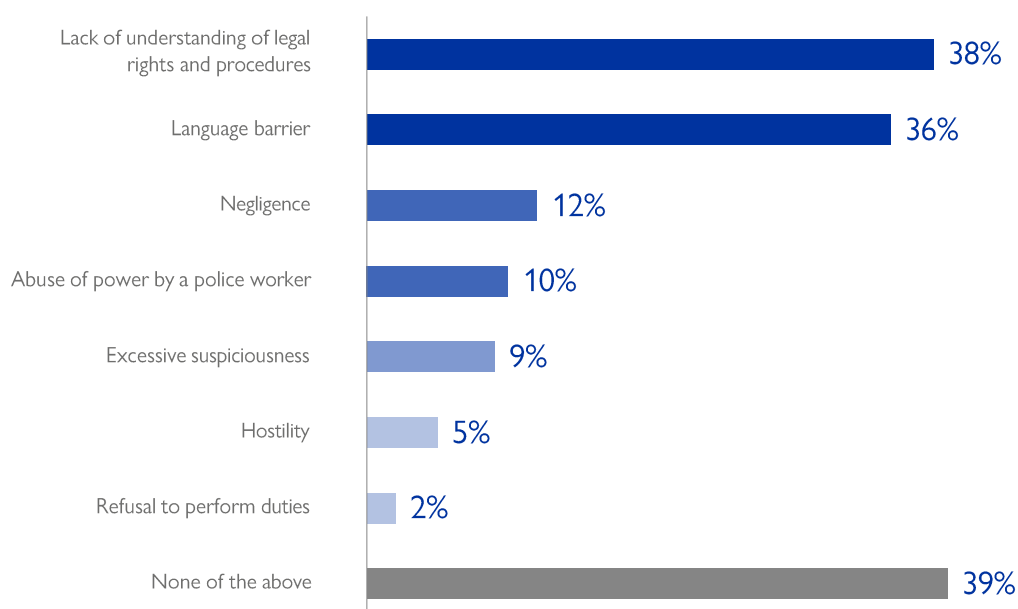
7.1 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT: UKRAINIAN PERSPECTIVE

INTERACTION ISSUES AND POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

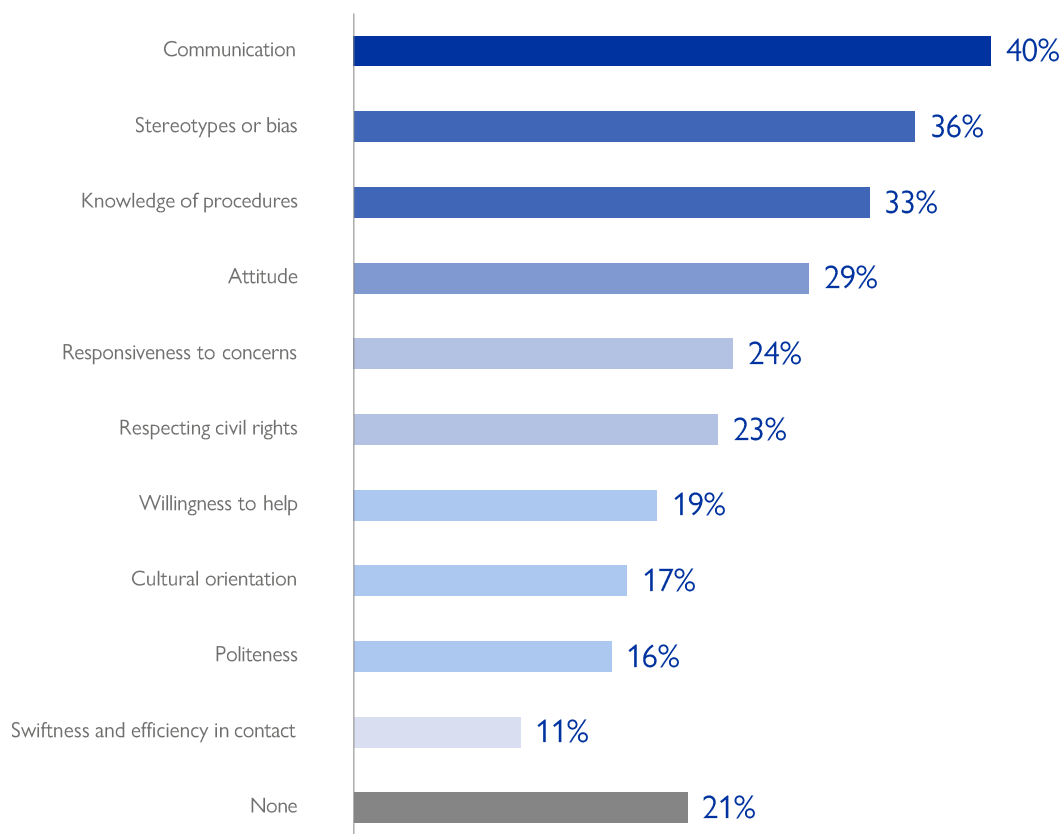
The respondents reported a high number of issues related to the interactions (overall 115, median 1), as well as possible improvements (overall 272, median 2). 39% of interactions were reported to have no issues, and 21% of interactions had no improvement suggestions.

FIGURE 30: STATED ISSUES OF REPORTED INTERACTIONS (N=104)

(more than one answer possible)



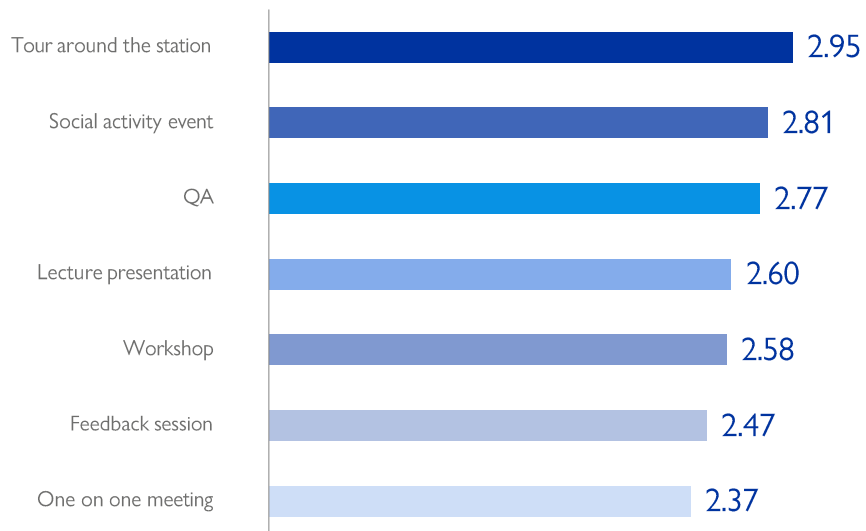
A survey being completed on a tablet, IOM 2023 / Alexey Shvirin

FIGURE 31: TOP 10 POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS OF REPORTED INTERACTIONS (N=104)*(more than one answer possible)*

UKRAINIANS' WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND ACTIVITIES

Survey participants were asked to rate their willingness to attend various activities with local law enforcement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 – unwilling to attend, 5 – very willing to attend. The most popular option was a **tour around the station** (average 2.95), while the least attractive was a **one on one meeting with an agent** (2.37). Interaction fairness and respect, and the general perception of law enforcement moderately correlated with the willingness to attend the activities, and general perception predicted willingness to attend – people who had worse perceptions were less likely to be willing to attend the activities. Without intervention this could result in a cycle of persons with poor intergroup perceptions avoiding contact that could improve these perceptions.

FIGURE 32: WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ON A 1 – 5 SCALE (N=281)



Refugees waiting in the reception point in Przemyśl, IOM 2023 / Alexey Shvirin

7.2 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT: COMMUNITY LEADER PERSPECTIVE

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY LEADERS

To address the identified barriers, community leaders participating in the interview round proposed potential solutions.

Regarding the lack of understanding of rules and regulations in Poland, recommendations include providing Ukrainian refugees with [informational materials on Polish law](#), clarifying [differences between Ukrainian and Polish laws](#), specifying the [roles of various law enforcement agencies](#), offering [step-by-step instructions in Ukrainian](#) on filing reports or complaints, holding [regular meetings on changes in temporary protection directives](#), and [enabling individuals to inquire](#) about their case status.

In response to communication issues, such as language barriers and cultural differences, suggested actions involve raising awareness about different Ukrainian population segments in Poland, conducting workshops for local actors and law enforcement agencies on referral pathways, establishing a translation network, encouraging law enforcement to seek NGO assistance, and organizing events to dispel stereotypes.

Additionally, community leaders outlined activities to improve cooperation, including organizing meetings between the police, community representatives, and local actors to establish better referral pathways, providing information on law enforcement agency structures, introducing a cultural mediator/assistant within the police, and facilitating thematic workshops and lectures on humanitarian actions and responsibilities.

The majority of respondents expressed keen interest in participating in various activities, providing examples.

ACTIVITIES COMMUNITY LEADERS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN

Thematic workshops
Municipality and police-organized meetings on rights and responsibilities
Migrant days
Gatherings with local actors and the police to discuss common issues
Networking events
Active workshops like self-defense courses

7.3 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT: LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement representatives have identified several key barriers to effective interactions with refugees from Ukraine.

Firstly, the **language barrier** stands out as a significant difficulty in interactions. Despite similarities between the Polish and Ukrainian languages, communication challenges are frequent. Some refugees have shown hesitancy to interact with law enforcement due to their general lack of Ukrainian speaking abilities, and in some situations, communication is severely hampered without an interpreter. It was noted that negative experiences often stem from refugees' lack of knowledge or understanding of local laws and social norms.

Second, **legal and cultural differences** are also highlighted. The differences in laws and social norms unfamiliar to refugees require both the refugees and the services to adjust, have patience and provide explanations to bridge these gaps.

Third, **behavioral problems**, particularly aggressive behavior under the influence of alcohol, are cited as a major concern. This issue often leads to conflicts and misunderstandings. **Problems related to parking** are also frequently mentioned as a source of conflict. Refugees' unfamiliarity with Polish law can further exacerbate these misunderstandings.

Fourth, **assimilation and adjustment difficulties** are noted, especially among younger refugees who struggle to adapt to new living conditions in Poland. This can result in educational challenges and legal conflicts.

Finally, **documentation issues** have been identified as an area for improvement, with refugees sometimes lacking necessary documents or being reluctant to present them. This reluctance can include not disclosing a PESEL number, which complicates identification processes.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Several initiatives for law enforcement representatives were mentioned during the interviews, namely **training on avoiding discrimination and managing difficult situations**, which have been helpful in interactions with refugees. Additionally, educational meetings have been conducted with children to familiarize them with the uniformed services. Broader educational efforts were also noted, such as **offering exams for bicycle cards** in Ukrainian and implementing preventive programs for Ukrainian children on traffic rules and stranger safety.

Most respondents indicate that they are **unaware of any specific initiatives or programs by the uniformed services to enhance interactions with and understanding of refugees from Ukraine**. This suggests either a gap in the promotion of these programs, or insufficient access to or unavailability of them.

For future initiatives, there are **recommendations for training** and workshops for both officers and refugees. For officers, training could focus on cultural differences and customs, while for refugees, information about services, their roles, responsibilities, important contacts, and procedures in Poland could be beneficial. It was also suggested by municipal police interviewees to expand this cooperation to include firefighters and education about alarm signals in Poland. Organizing joint events is proposed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and views, aiding in understanding the expectations and behaviors of both groups.

ADVICE FOR NEW FUNCTIONARIES

During the interviews, IOM asked law enforcement to provide advice for new functionaries who will interact with Ukrainian refugees. Several pieces of advice emerged as crucial for effective interaction:



Developing communication skills is paramount. This involves not only language proficiency but also an understanding of cultural nuances. Utilizing tools such as translation phones to bridge language gaps is highly recommended.



Empathy and understanding are essential qualities. Officers are encouraged to appreciate the backgrounds and experiences of the refugees, recognizing that they may have endured difficult circumstances. Respecting and empathizing with refugees, while being aware of cultural and linguistic differences, is seen as vital for establishing effective communication and trust.



Openness and patience in dealing with refugees are also critical. Officers are advised to be receptive to learning and not make hasty judgments based on first impressions. They should exhibit patience in understanding the unique situations of each refugee, realizing that building relationships takes time.



A proactive approach is encouraged. Officers should initiate contact and offer assistance, demonstrating a readiness to meet the varied needs of refugees. Avoiding theoretical approaches and focusing on practical, culturally sensitive strategies is recommended to build experience in working with refugees.

WILLINGNESS TO TAKE PART IN PROGRAMMING

About half (48.5%) of the respondents show a positive attitude towards volunteering for refugees from Ukraine, finding it rewarding and enjoyable. They are open to various forms of assistance, ranging from personal involvement to organized activities. While some are already helping individually, others are considering joining organized efforts. Almost one third (31.5%) of respondents are either unsure or only willing to help during work hours, citing other responsibilities and activities outside of work. 20% express a lack of time, willingness, or ability to engage in such activities.

Overall, there is a general willingness to help among respondents, but it is constrained by factors like time constraints, personal responsibilities, and the willingness of refugees to engage in these efforts. This results in a mix of eagerness to assist and practical limitations affecting the level of engagement.

Proposals for Improving the Interactions with Ukrainian Refugees

Enhancing Polish language proficiency by Ukrainian refugees, and providing translators when needed for uniformed services, is crucial. Not all officers have access to translation services via phones or other devices, which compounds the problem.

Non-formal initiatives could foster closer relations by enhancing mutual cultural awareness.

An individualized approach, respecting each person's beliefs and backgrounds, regardless of their religion or sexual preference, is also vital.

The need for integration and education is emphasized. Educating refugees about Polish laws and societal norms is crucial to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts arising from unfamiliarity with local regulations.

Effective communication and compliance with the country's laws and norms are underscored. Dialogue and mutual understanding through meetings and discussions are considered key.

Overall, enhancing relations between refugees and migrants and uniformed services requires an integrated approach that includes education, training, mutual understanding, and proactive initiatives. Effective communication, both in language and interpersonal skills, is a critical component. Developing and promoting programs that improve mutual relations is essential for this effort.



Refugees heading for a border check, IOM 2023 / Alexey Shvirin

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

From each perspective emerged the same dominant challenges to successful police-community interactions: difficulties with **language barriers, lack of understanding of local laws and norms, and a lack of information surrounding incident reporting mechanisms.**



The language barrier was cited as the primary reason for Ukrainian respondents' unwillingness to call law enforcement in both emergency and non-emergency situations, and was the second most reported reason for difficulties encountered in past interactions with law enforcement. Language barriers were also cited regularly by law enforcement officers as a significant challenge in communicating successfully with Ukrainians who may not speak Polish. **Having interpreters available** either on-site or reachable via phone could drastically improve the quality of these interactions. Additionally, **incorporating a Ukrainian language option within the emergency and non-emergency call lines** would allow non-Polish speaking Ukrainians to report incidents and receive assistance.



A lack of understanding of local laws and norms stood out as another key factor impacting the overall relationship between Ukrainians and Polish law enforcement. Most interactions between Ukrainians and Polish law enforcement, as reported through the surveys with Ukrainians and interviews with law enforcement, were regarding traffic law violations. It was highlighted that there are significant differences in traffic laws of Ukraine and those of Poland, which many Ukrainians new to Poland may not yet be familiar with. **Information campaigns, workshops, and question and answer sessions** engaging the Ukrainian population on this topic could improve the general understanding of these differences and improve the level of adherence to Polish traffic law.



The third most pressing issue identified was the overall lack of information and understanding of incident reporting mechanisms (including for reporting complaints about law enforcement) and the processes that surround them. Fear of punishment for an unjustified call, fear of interaction with the police, and fear of having to testify or being questioned were the top reasons (following the language barrier) reported by Ukrainians who would be unwilling to contact law enforcement in emergency or non-emergency situation. This illustrates a confusion and lack of understanding around the process of filing reports, including the individual's personal rights and what is required upon initiating contact with law enforcement. Having **clear information on reporting processes publicly available in Ukrainian**, including addressing the previously mentioned fears, could increase willingness of Ukrainians to report crimes, behavioral issues and safety concerns.



Based on each target group's interests and willingness to engage in community-centered programming, activities that involve socialization between groups, opportunities to ask questions in an informal setting, and information sessions on specific topics would be well-suited to address these challenges. An **emphasis on personal interaction** as a way of breaking cultural barriers will be key in the success of any programming, as ultimately building trust and mutual understanding will have the greatest positive impact on the relationship between Ukrainian migrants and Polish law enforcement.

9. STATISTICAL APPENDIX

Months lived in the city surveyed in – number of interactions with law enforcement.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient showed significant, moderate correlation, $\rho = 0.256$, $p < 0.001$, $N = 281$. The results of linear regression analysis indicated that months lived in the city explained 24.6% of the variation in the number of interactions, $F(1, 279) = 92.21$, $p < 0.001$.

Initiating contact – law enforcement agency.

The proportion of interactions initiated by the respondent was significantly higher in case of interactions with Polish Police, 37/47, than with Municipal Police, 12/31, $\chi^2(1, N = 78) = 11.15$, $p < 0.001$.

Gender identity – number of interactions with law enforcement.

Men were found to be significantly more likely to have interactions with Polish law enforcement than women, $\chi^2(1, N = 75) = 4.45$, $p = 0.035$. The mean number of interaction among those who had at least one was significantly higher in case of men, compared to women ($W = 195$, $p < 0.001$).

Perception of safety, fairness, respect, and communication of interactions by city.

Results of four separate one-way analyses of variance indicated significant differences between cities in the average safety ($F(2, 101) = 7.70$, $p < 0.001$, $ges = 0.13$), fairness ($F(2, 101) = 16.24$, $p < 0.001$, $ges = 0.24$), and respect score ($F(2, 101) = 24.91$, $p < 0.001$, $ges = 0.33$), but not communication score ($F(2, 101) = 3.23$, $p = 0.176$, $ges = 0.06$). Table 1 presents the results of pairwise comparisons between the cities with Tukey correction to the p values (communication was not included because of non-significant results of ANOVA).

TABLE 1: PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF SAFETY, FAIRNESS, AND RESPECT INTERACTION PERCEPTION SCORES BETWEEN KRAKÓW, PIASECZNO, AND PRZEMYŚL

	Safety	Fairness	Respect
Kraków – Piaseczno	$t(101) = 3.87$, $p < 0.001$	$t(101) = 3.78$, $p < 0.001$	$t(101) = 4.37$, $p < 0.001$
Kraków – Przemyśl	$t(101) = 1.34$, $p = 0.377$	$t(101) = 5.57$, $p < 0.001$	$t(101) = 6.98$, $p < 0.001$
Piaseczno – Przemyśl	$t(101) = -2.72$, $p = 0.021$	$t(101) = 1.39$, $p = 0.349$	$t(101) = 2.13$, $p = 0.090$

Perception of politeness, responsiveness, efficiency, and catering to special needs by city.

Results of four separate one-way analyses of variance indicated significant differences between cities in the average politeness ($F(2, 267) = 14.35$, $p < 0.001$, $ges = 0.1$), responsiveness ($F(2, 265) = 5.63$, $p = 0.004$, $ges = 0.04$), efficiency ($F(2, 265) = 10.2$, $p < 0.001$, $ges = 0.07$), and catering to special needs ($F(2, 267) = 5.68$, $p = 0.004$, $ges = 0.04$). Table 2 presents the results of pairwise comparisons between the cities with Tukey correction to the p values.

TABLE 2: PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF POLITENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND CATERING TO SPECIAL NEEDS SCORES BETWEEN KRAKÓW, PIASECZNO, AND PRZEMYŚL

	Politeness	Responsiveness	Efficiency	Catering to special needs
Kraków – Piaseczno	$t(267) = 0.48$, $p = 0.883$	$t(265) = 1.72$, $p = 0.198$	$t(265) = 1.80$, $p = 0.172$	$t(267) = -0.54$, $p = 0.853$
Kraków – Przemyśl	$t(267) = 4.87$, $p < 0.001$	$t(265) = 3.36$, $p = 0.003$	$t(265) = 4.49$, $p < 0.001$	$t(267) = 2.62$, $p = 0.025$
Piaseczno – Przemyśl	$t(267) = 4.44$, $p < 0.001$	$t(265) = 1.70$, $p = 0.208$	$t(265) = 2.77$, $p = 0.017$	$t(267) = 3.17$, $p = 0.005$

Correlations between perceptions of politeness, responsiveness, efficiency, and catering to special needs.

Table 3 presents the Spearman correlation coefficients between each perception dimensions, with Bonferroni correction to the p values.

TABLE 2: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF POLITENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, AND CATERING TO SPECIAL NEEDS

	Politeness	Responsiveness	Efficiency	Catering to special needs
Politeness	-	$\rho = 0.73, p < 0.001$	$\rho = 0.70, p < 0.001$	$\rho = 0.73, p < 0.001$
Efficiency	$\rho = 0.73, p < 0.001$	-	$\rho = 0.80, p < 0.001$	$\rho = 0.66, p < 0.001$
Responsiveness	$\rho = 0.70, p < 0.001$	$\rho = 0.80, p < 0.001$	-	$\rho = 0.65, p < 0.001$
Special needs	$\rho = 0.73, p < 0.001$	$\rho = 0.66, p < 0.001$	$\rho = 0.65, p < 0.001$	-

General perception score.

The reliability of the general perception scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which presented a high level of reliability, $\alpha = 0.9$. Results of a one-way analysis of variance indicated significant differences between cities in the average level of the general perception score, $F(2, 265) = 10.78, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.08$. Pairwise comparisons with Tukey correction to the p values indicated significant differences between Kraków and Przemyśl ($t(265) = 4.43, p < 0.001$), and Piaseczno and Przemyśl ($t(265) = 3.52, p = 0.002$), but not between Kraków and Piaseczno ($t(265) = 0.97, p = 0.594$). Results of a two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that those who had interactions previously had significantly higher score than those who had not ($D = 0.21, p = 0.017$).

General perception score – average interaction perception.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was calculated for individual general perception score and average interaction perception dimensions scores for participants, who had at least one interaction, $N = 70$. Results indicated no significant correlation between general perception score and average safety, $\rho = 0.22, p = 0.06$, and average communication, $\rho = -0.01, p = 0.909$. Significant correlation was found regarding general perception score and average fairness, $\rho = 0.57, p < 0.001$, and respect, $\rho = 0.53, p < 0.001$. The results of linear regression analysis indicated that the average fairness score explained 38.49% of the variation in the general perception score ($F(1, 68) = 44.18, p < 0.001$), and the average respect score explained 32.18% of the variation ($F(1, 68) = 33.74, p < 0.001$).

Willingness to submit a complaint – general perception score.

The respondents were divided into two subgroups based on their general perception score, the cut-off value being the median score, $M = 0.69$, with lower half ($n = 127$) $0.31 - 0.69$, and upper half ($n = 141$) $0.75 - 1$. Based on the results of a Chi square test, the proportion of persons willing to submit a complaint against a law enforcement agent in the future was significantly higher in case of persons with higher perception score (74%), compared to those with lower score (55%), $\chi^2(1, N = 268) = 10.07, p = 0.002$.

Willingness to contact law enforcement – general perception score.

The results of the Chi square test regarding the proportion of persons willing to contact law enforcement in an emergency situation by general perception score did not reach the level of significance, $\chi^2(1, N = 268) = 3.61, p = 0.057$. In the case of a non-emergency situation, the proportion of those with higher perception score was significantly higher (90%), compared to those with lower score (74%), $\chi^2(1, N = 268) = 10.25, p = 0.001$.

Willingness to attend activities – general perception and interaction perception scores.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient indicated correlation between the sum of willingness to attend activities and the general perception score, $\rho = 0.35, p < 0.001, N = 268$, average interaction fairness, $\rho = 0.27, p = 0.019, N = 70$, and average interaction respect, $\rho = 0.35, p = 0.002, N = 70$, but not average interaction safety, $\rho = 0.16, p = 0.18, N = 70$, or average interaction communication, $\rho = 0.05, p = 0.699, N = 70$. The results of linear regression analysis indicated that the general perception score explained 12.84% of the variation in the sum of willingness attend activities ($F(1, 266) = 39.2, p < 0.001$). Neither the average interaction fairness ($F(1, 73) = 3.57, p = 0.062, R^2 = 0.0466$), nor the average interaction respect ($F(1, 73) = 8.05, p < 0.0087, R^2 = 0.0993$) reached the level of significance in terms of linear regression analysis.



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