

A photograph of two women standing in a transit area. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue jacket and glasses, looking at her phone. The woman on the right is wearing a blue vest over a grey hoodie, also looking at her phone. Between them is a large green backpack on top of a tan rolling suitcase. In the background, other people and a tiled floor are visible.

POLAND

UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Cover photo: An enumerator speaks with a refugee family from Ukraine. © IOM 2023

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Socio-Demographic Profile	<u>6</u>
.....	
2. Group Composition	<u>7</u>
.....	
3. Regions of Origin and Destination	<u>8</u>
.....	
4. Time Outside of Ukraine	<u>9</u>
.....	
5. Intentions and Reasons to Cross Back to Ukraine	<u>10</u>
.....	
6. Needs, Assistance Received, and Challenges	<u>11</u>
.....	
7. Methodology	<u>12</u>
.....	

KEY FINDINGS

Demographics

 **4,650** Ukrainian respondents

 **95%**  **5%**

Countries of stay

50%
Poland


14%
Germany


10%
Czechia




26%
Others

Households

 **28%**
travel with at least one child (0-17 years-old)

 **21%**
travel with children as the only adult

 **1%**
travel with at least one child and an older person

More than one answer possible

Length of stay

44% long-term

43% short-term

13% do not know

Long-term (prospective returnees)

 **> 30 days**


52% Missing home

20% Reunite with family

16% Work in essential services

More than one answer possible

Short-term

 **≤ 30 days**

76% To meet with family

32% To receive medical care

27% To obtain/renew documents

More than one answer possible

Destination

- Dnipropetrovska (19%)
- Kyiv city (17%)
- Zaporizka (13%)




86%


travel to the region of origin in Ukraine

Assistance

 Financial support (86%)

 Food (44%)

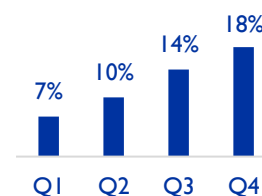
 Accommodation (41%)

 Personal hygiene items (23%)

 Clothing (18%)

More than one answer possible

Unequal treatment

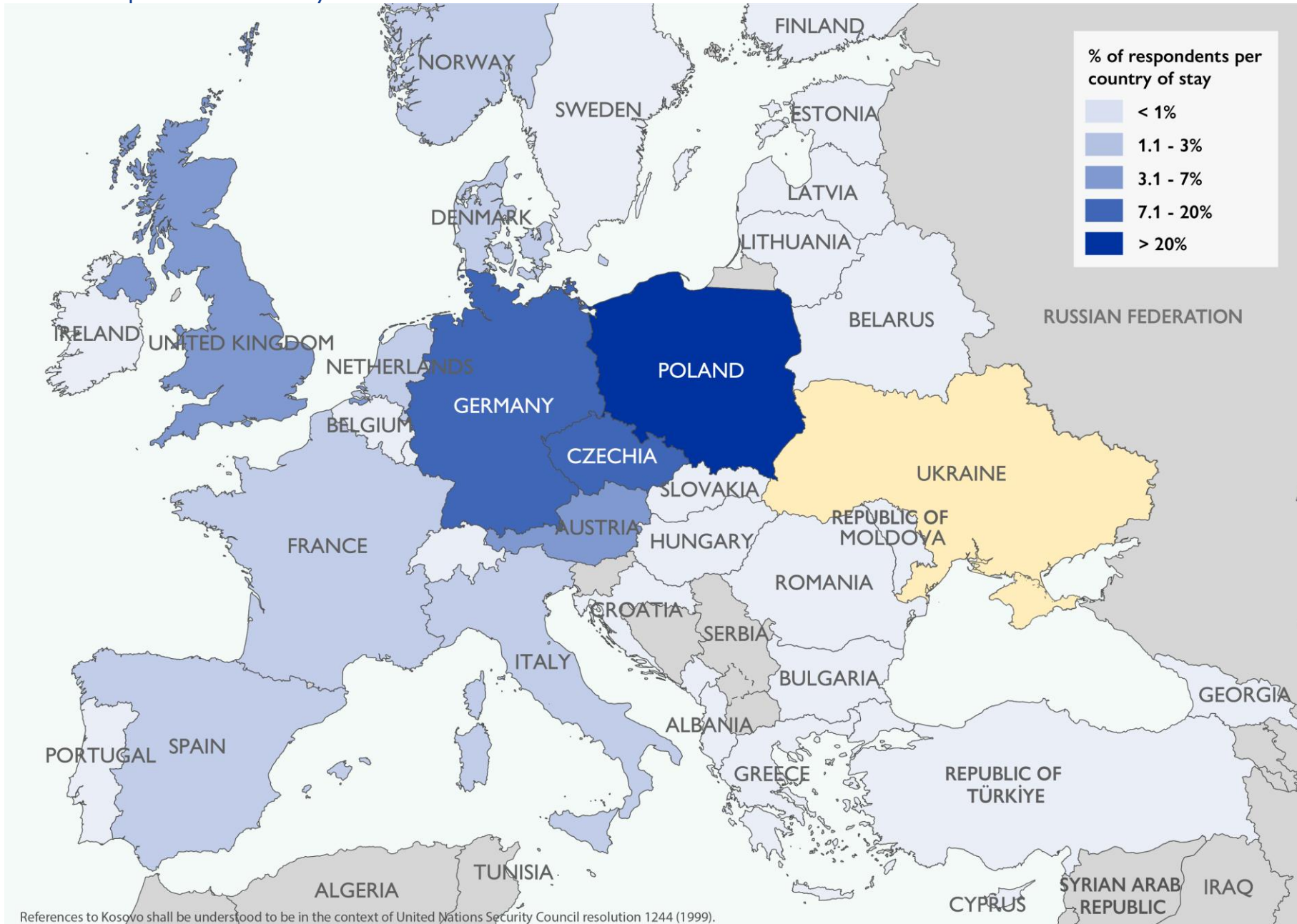


41%*

hostility or aggression

** out of those who experienced discrimination*

Map 1: Countries of stay while outside of 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.

I. Socio-Demographic Profile

Gender and age

Out of the 4,650 refugees from Ukraine who were interviewed prior to crossing back from Poland in 2023, 95 per cent were women, and five per cent were men. While 74 per cent of men were in the 60+ category, only 15 per

cent of women fitted into the category. Only two per cent of men were in the age range of 18 – 29, compared to 19 per cent of female respondents.

Figure 1: Surveyed individuals by gender (%), N=4,650

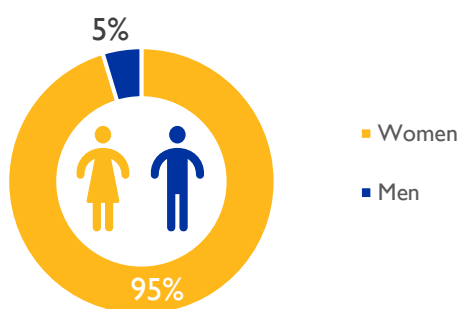
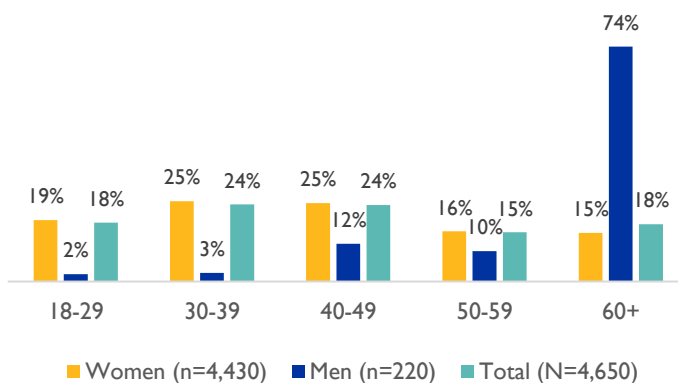


Figure 2: Age of respondents, by gender (%)*



* Presented percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding

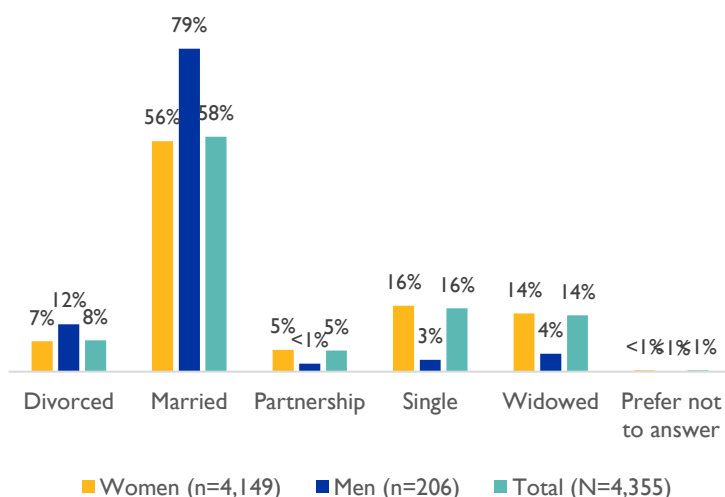
Marital status

More than half of the respondents (58%) were married. A greater share of male respondents (12%) were divorced, compared to female respondents in the sample (7%). 14 per cent of female respondents were widowed, while only four per cent of male respondents were in this category.

Time spent in displacement

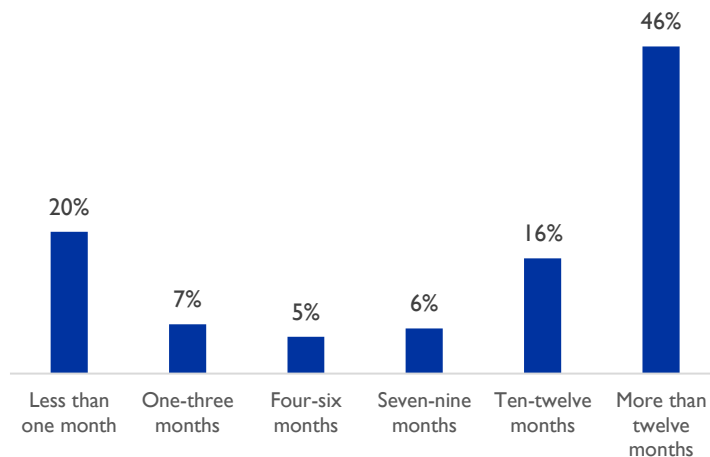
46 per cent of respondents spent more than one year in displacement. 20 per cent of respondents had spent less than a month in displacement at the time of the interview. This group was followed by those who had spent 10 to 12 months in displacement (16%).

Figure 3: Marital status, by gender (%)*



* Presented percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding

Figure 4: Approximate time in displacement until the date of the interview (%), N=4,649 *



* Presented percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding

2. Group Composition

Travel mode

The majority of respondents (57%) were travelling back to Ukraine alone. 38 per cent had left and returned to Ukraine on their own, and 29 per cent had initially left the country as part of a group but then were returning alone. The remaining 43 per cent of survey respondents were crossing back into Ukraine as part of a group. Among these, most respondents were travelling with the same group (36% overall). Six per cent of respondents had some changes in their travel group, while one per cent were travelling with a different group.

95 per cent of respondents travelling with a group (N=1,998) were travelling with their immediate family. At the same time, 66 per cent of respondents who travelled with a group had at least one child (0-17 y.o.) in the group (28% respondents overall), and only three per cent had at least one child and an older person in the group (1% overall). Out of the respondents travelling with children (N=1,313), 74 per cent were the only adults in the group (21% respondents overall).

Age groups

Among all travel group members reported (N=4,803), adults made up 48 per cent, followed by children between ages 5–17 (29%), older persons (15%) and infants between 0–4 years old (8%).

Figure 7: Respondents who were the only adults in a group with children (%), N=1,313

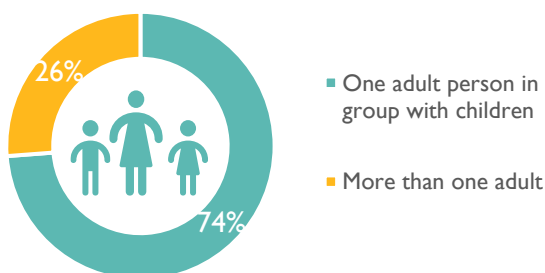


Figure 5: Travel mode when leaving compared to when returning to Ukraine (%), N=4,650

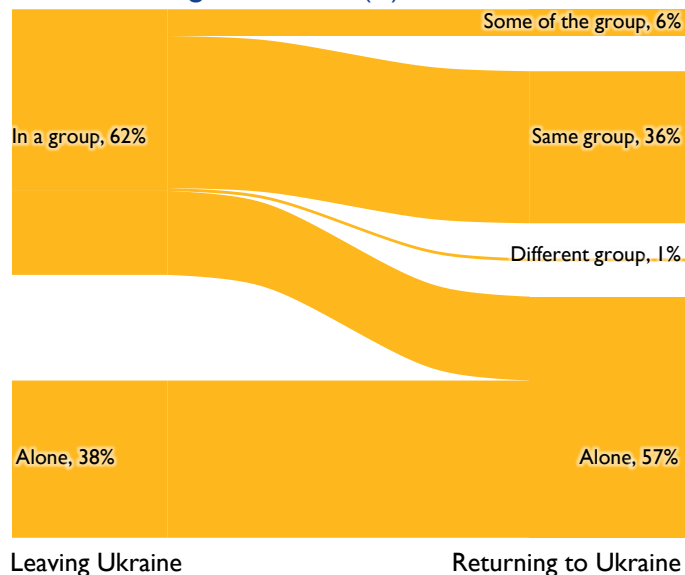


Figure 6: Top three travel group modes (%), N=1,998 (more than one answer possible)

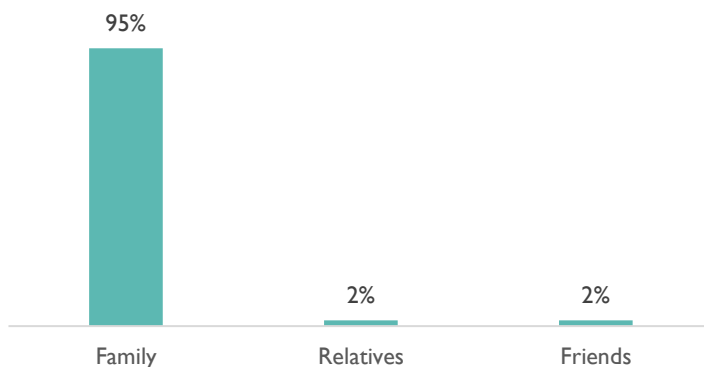
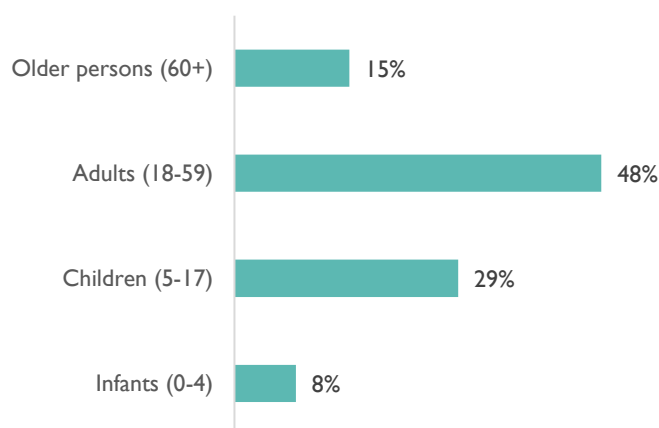


Figure 8: Travel groups age breakdown (%), N=4,803



3. Region of Origin and Destination

Origin or habitual residence

Half of respondents (N=4,650) came from one of three administrative divisions in Ukraine: Dnipropetrovska (19%), Kyiv city (17%), and Zaporizka (13%). Other notable divisions include Kharkivska (13% of respondents), Odeska (7%), Lvivska (4%), Kyivska oblast (4%), Donetsk (3%), Poltavska (3%), Vinnytska (3%), Mykolaivska (2%), Cherkaska (2%), Kirovohradska (2%), Sumska (2%), Khersonska (1%), Zhytomyrska (1%), Khmelnytska (1%) and Ternopilska (1%). The remaining 9 administrative divisions accounted for about three per cent of respondents.

Intended destination

Out of 4,650 respondents, 86 per cent were planning to return to the same oblast of origin while the remaining 14 per cent aimed to reach a different one. Out of those returning to a different oblast (N=667), 16 per cent were originally from Donetsk oblast, 14 per cent from Dnipropetrovska, 13 per cent from Zaporizka, and 12 per cent from Kyiv city. The main oblasts of destination of those returning to a different oblast (N=365 due to gaps in data) are Kyiv city (30%), Lvivska (24%), Dnipropetrovska (14%), and Odeska (7%).

Map 2: Intended oblasts of destination versus oblast of origin in Ukraine (%)



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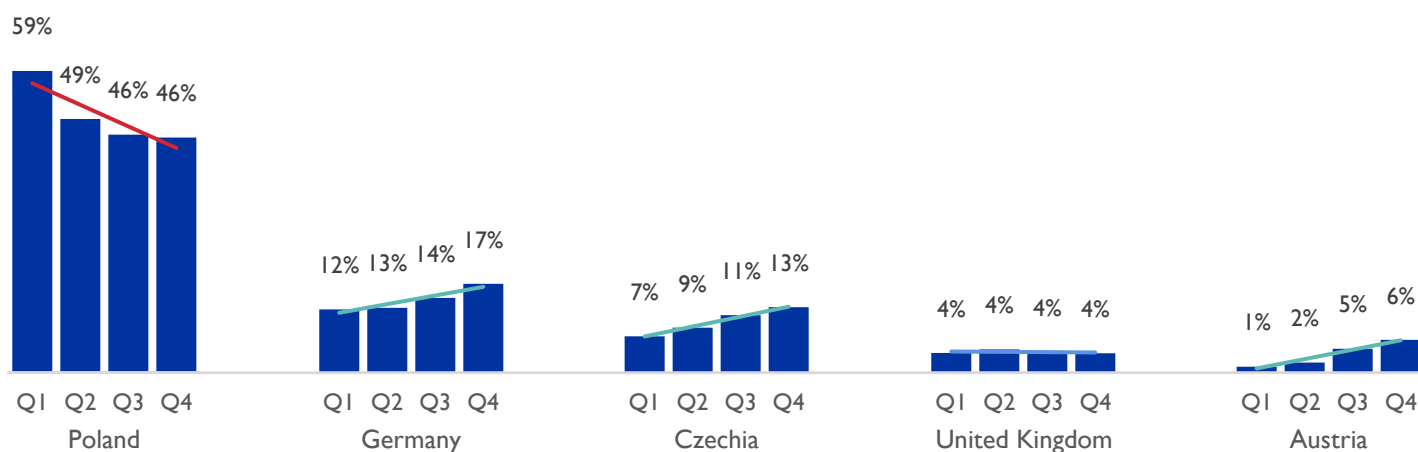
4. Time Spent Outside of Ukraine

Countries of stay

The percentage of respondents that had been residing in Poland prior to crossing back to Ukraine decreased steadily from 59 per cent in the first quarter of 2023 to 46 per cent in the fourth quarter (overall 50%). Meanwhile, the proportion of individuals who had been living in other countries increased in the cases of

Germany (from 12% to 17%, overall 14%), Czechia (from 7% to 13%, overall 10%), and Austria from one to six per cent (overall 4%). The percentage of those who had been residing in the United Kingdom has remained constant (at 4%).

Figure 9: Top 5 countries of stay across quarters in 2023 (%), Q1 n=792, Q2 n=2,034, Q3 n=925, Q4 n=899 *

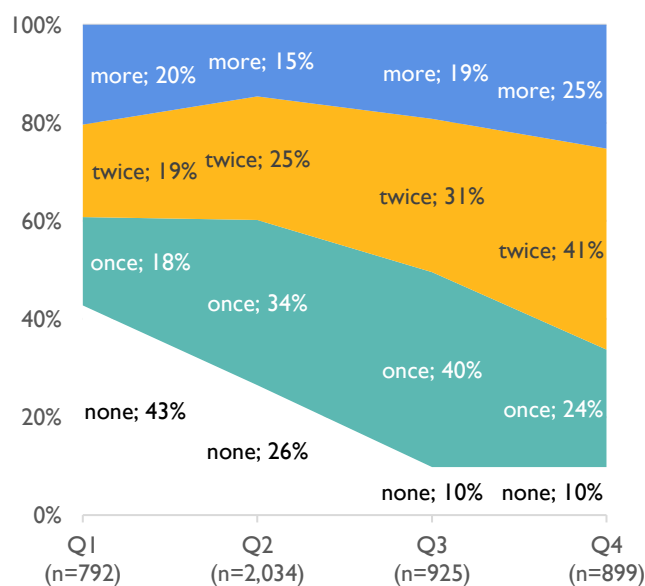


* Presented percentages are rounded up

Number of entries/exits

In the fourth quarter of 2023, most respondents had entered or exited Ukraine twice since February 24, 2022 (41%). This percentage has doubled since the first quarter of 2023. The proportion of respondents who entered or exited more than twice also seemed to increase, although some fluctuation is visible. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who had not crossed the border even once has fallen from 43 per cent in the first quarter to 10 per cent in the third quarter, and remained roughly stable in the fourth quarter. Though the proportion of respondents who entered or exited once accounted for the greatest percentage in the second and third quarter, it decreased by the fourth quarter of the year.

Figure 10: Number of entries/exits between 24 February 2022 and the date of interview, (%)



5. Intentions and Reasons to Cross Back

Intentions to stay

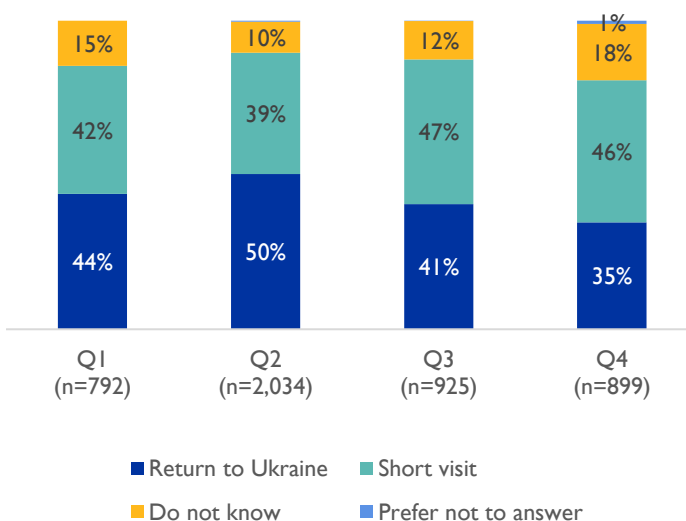
While in the first two quarters of 2023 the greatest proportion of respondents were crossing the border in order to stay in Ukraine (44% overall), in the third and fourth quarters the most popular intention was to return to Ukraine for a short visit (43% overall). The proportion of respondents who were uncertain if they would stay in Ukraine permanently or only for a visit steadily increased from 10 per cent in the second quarter of 2023 to as much as 18 per cent of in the last quarter (13% overall).

Overall, the top four most frequently indicated reasons for returning to Ukraine for the long-term were missing home (52%), reuniting with family (20%), working in essential services (16%), and because they had been visiting someone abroad but reside in Ukraine (15%). While the proportions of respondents reporting the first three reasons decreased, returning from visiting someone became the main reasons for crossing the border in the third and fourth quarters of 2023.

The top reasons for a short visit included meeting with family (76%), receiving medical care (32%), and obtaining or renewing documents (27%). While already a very frequently stated motivation, meeting family increased throughout the quarters of 2023. Conversely,

the percentage of respondents who reported obtaining documents as their motivation for a short visit to Ukraine decreased from 31 per cent in the first quarter to only 13 per cent in the fourth quarter.

Figure 11: Intended length of stay by quarter (%)*



* Presented percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding

Figure 12: Reasons for returning to Ukraine by quarter (%)

(more than one answer possible)

Reason for returning	Q1 (n=792)	Q2 (n=2,034)	Q3 (n=925)	Q4 (n=899)	Grand Total (N=4,650)	Trend
Missing home	69%	66%	26%	22%	52%	↓
To reunite with family	32%	24%	12%	7%	20%	↓
Work in essential services	15%	24%	7%	3%	16%	↓
Visiting someone abroad	2%	0%	33%	56%	15%	↑
Other	8%	8%	12%	4%	8%	

Figure 13: Reasons for a short visit by quarter (%)

(more than one answer possible)

Reason for visiting	Q1 (n=792)	Q2 (n=2,034)	Q3 (n=925)	Q4 (n=899)	Grand Total (N=4,650)	Trend
To meet with family	72%	73%	82%	80%	76%	↑
To receive medical care	26%	34%	28%	36%	32%	
To obtain/renew documents	31%	33%	28%	13%	27%	↓
To retrieve belongings	4%	7%	7%	3%	6%	
To check up on property	2%	8%	6%	3%	5%	

6. Experiences of Discrimination and Assistance Received

Experiences of Discrimination

The proportion of respondents that reported having experienced discrimination has steadily risen from seven per cent in the first quarter to 18 per cent in the fourth quarter. Among respondents who described their experiences of discrimination (N=295), the most frequently reported type of discrimination was open hostility or aggression (41%). Other frequently reported experiences were being refused a service because of nationality (11%), economic exploitation in the workplace (6%), being treated unfairly (6%), and refusal of employment based on nationality (5%).

Regarding the location of discrimination, 16 per cent reported that the discrimination occurred in the workplace, 10 per cent in school, eight per cent reported experiencing discrimination in privately own shops or services, and another eight per cent reported being discriminated against in public spaces. 36 per cent of respondents who reported discrimination did not provide further context of the experience.

Assistance received outside of Ukraine

Of respondents who received humanitarian assistance, the most frequently reported type was financial support (86%), for which the percentage has increased throughout the quarters of 2023. The second type of assistance reported overall was food (44%), and the proportion of respondents who indicated receiving this type of assistance decreased over the year. Other significant areas where respondents received assistance while outside of Ukraine were accommodation (41%), personal hygiene items (23%), clothing (18%), transportation support (12%), and psychological counseling (4%).

Figure 14: Experiences of discrimination (%)

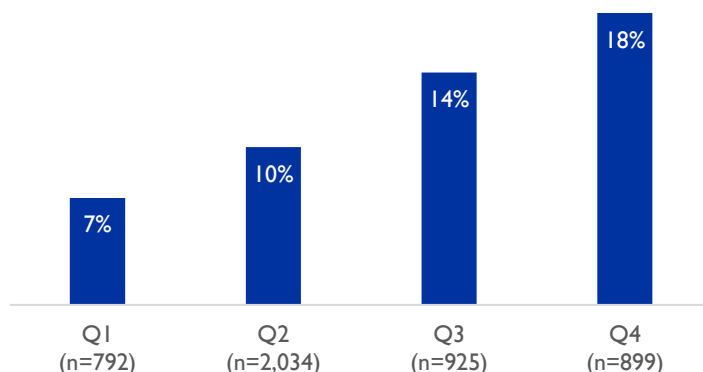


Figure 15: Types of discrimination experienced by respondents who reported experiencing discrimination (%), N=295 (more than one answer possible)

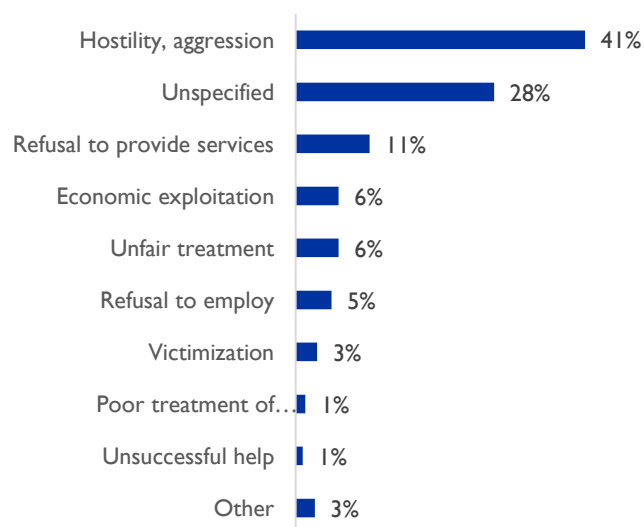
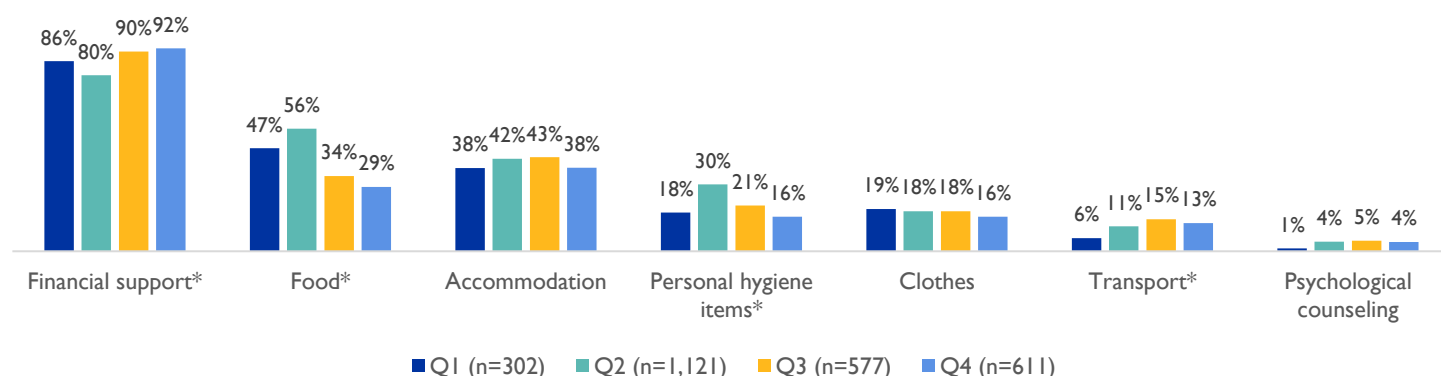


Figure 16: Top six areas of assistance received (%)

(more than one answer possible, asterisk indicates presence of significant linear trend)



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 December 2023, at various border crossings more than 17 million crossings from Ukraine to Poland were recorded, and 12 million crossings were recorded from Poland to Ukraine since February 2022.

IOM has deployed its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tools since mid-April 2022 to collect individual surveys in neighbouring countries with persons crossing into Ukraine, aiming to improve the understanding of the main profiles, displacement patterns, intentions and needs of those moving into Ukraine.

This report is based on surveys collected in Poland between 04 January and 26 December 2023, with a focus on the reporting period of 02 October – 26 December. The data was collected mostly at the train and bus stations in Przemyśl, one of the primary border crossing points between Ukraine and Poland.

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 main immediate needs of the Ukrainian refugees and TCNs crossing back to Ukraine since 24 February 2022.

In Poland, surveys were conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, and English by IOM's DTM trained teams of enumerators via mobile application.

The interviews were anonymous and carried out one-on-one with respondents, provided they consented 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 relative to the permanence in Ukraine; and it gathers information regarding a set of main needs at the moment of the interview.

Various settings were identified to conduct surveys, to maximise the number of interviews, and reach out to different profiles of individuals.

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

Among the limitations encountered during data collection were the reduced time to carry out surveys at transit points and the presence of only four enumerators at the moment of the interviews.

To address the aforesaid shortcomings, a mixed sampling strategy guided the data collection exercise.

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 Poland.

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.

