LATVIA

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

2023 Annual Report

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KEY FINDINGS

Top 3 oblasts* of origin:

- Khersonska (20%)
- Donetska (20%)
- Zaporizka (15%)
- Luhanska (12%)
- Kharkivska (9%)

* Regions in Ukraine

Needs*:

General information (78%)

Food (31%)

Financial (15%)

Employment (13%)

Multiple answers possible

Intentions:

- To another country (56%)
- Another region in Ukraine (19%)
- Will not move soon (13%)
- To the region of origin in Ukraine (6%)
- Unsure (4%)
- Within Latvia (2%)

Top 3 desired destinations:

- Poland
- Russian Federation
- Germany

Assistance received*:

- Food (85%)
- Transportation (44%)
- Personal hygiene supplies (39%)
- Financial (33%)

Multiple answers possible

Income:

63% Sufficient to cover daily expenses

32% Insufficient to cover daily expenses

5% Prefers not to answer

Information needed*:

66% Financial support

66% Health services

64% Short-term housing

62% Hygiene items

Multiple answers possible

Map I: Number of surveys and locations of data collection in Latvia in 2023
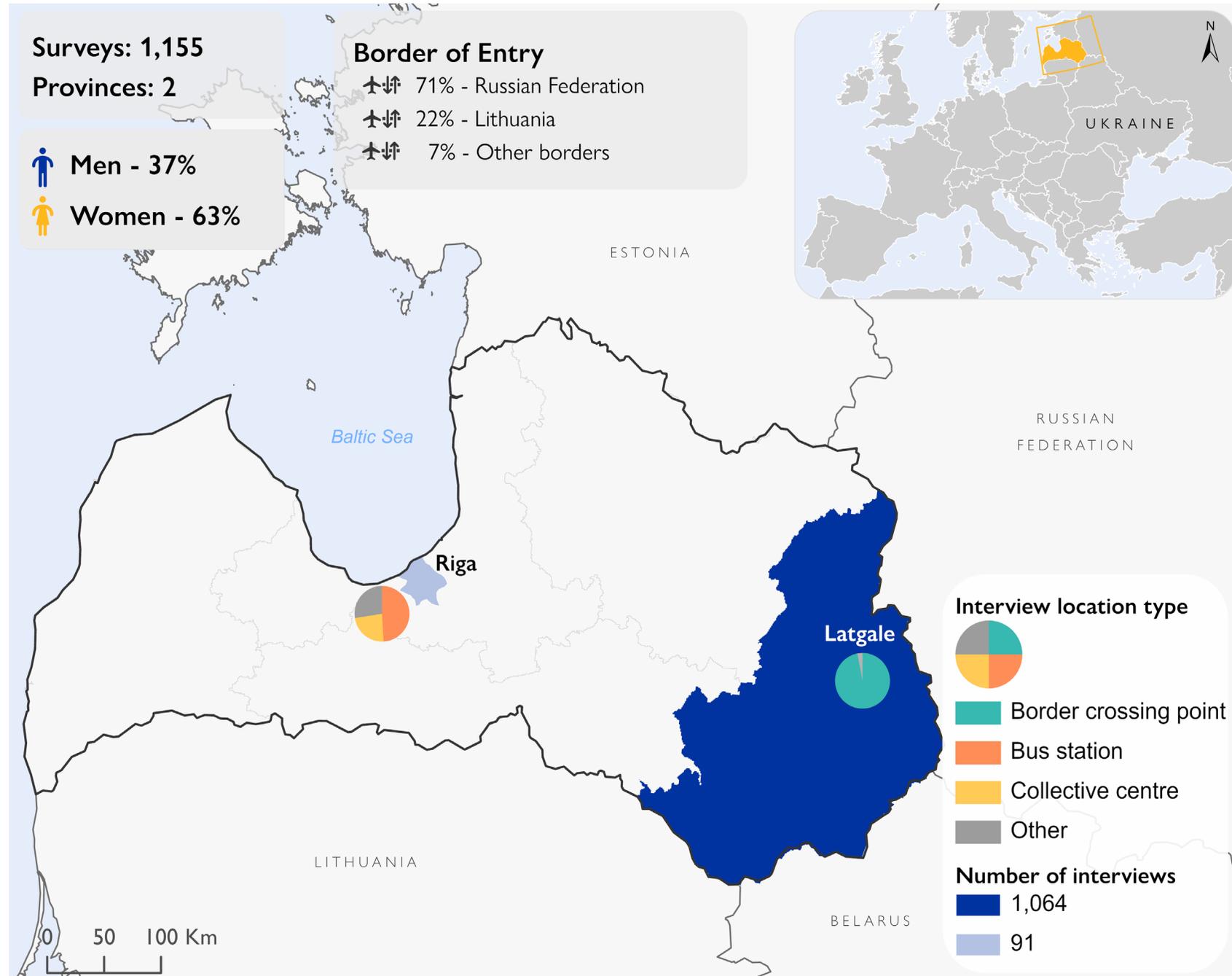
Surveys: 1,155
Provinces: 2

Men - 37%
Women - 63%

Border of Entry

71% - Russian Federation

22% - Lithuania

7% - Other borders

UKRAINE

ESTONIA

Baltic Sea

Riga

Latgale

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

LITHUANIA

BELARUS

0   50   100 Km

Interview location type

Border crossing point

Bus station

Collective centre

Other

Number of interviews

1,064

91

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.

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1. Socio-Demographic Profile

Oblast (region) of origin

Survey respondents originated from almost all regions of Ukraine, with a particular concentration in the eastern and southern parts of the country. Roughly half of respondents (55%) were from or previously resided in one of three regions before leaving Ukraine: Khersonska and Donetska (20% each), and Zaporizka (15%). The remaining respondents (45%) resided in 18 other regions throughout Ukraine. These included Luhanska (12%), Kharkivska (9%), Dnipropetrovska oblast and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (4% each), the city of Kyiv (3%), Kyivska, Odeska (2% each), Vinnytska, Cherkaska, Chernihivska, Lvivska, Sevastopol, Sumska, Mykolaivska, Khmelnytska, Zhytomyrska oblast (1% each).

Map 2: Oblast of origin before leaving Ukraine (%)
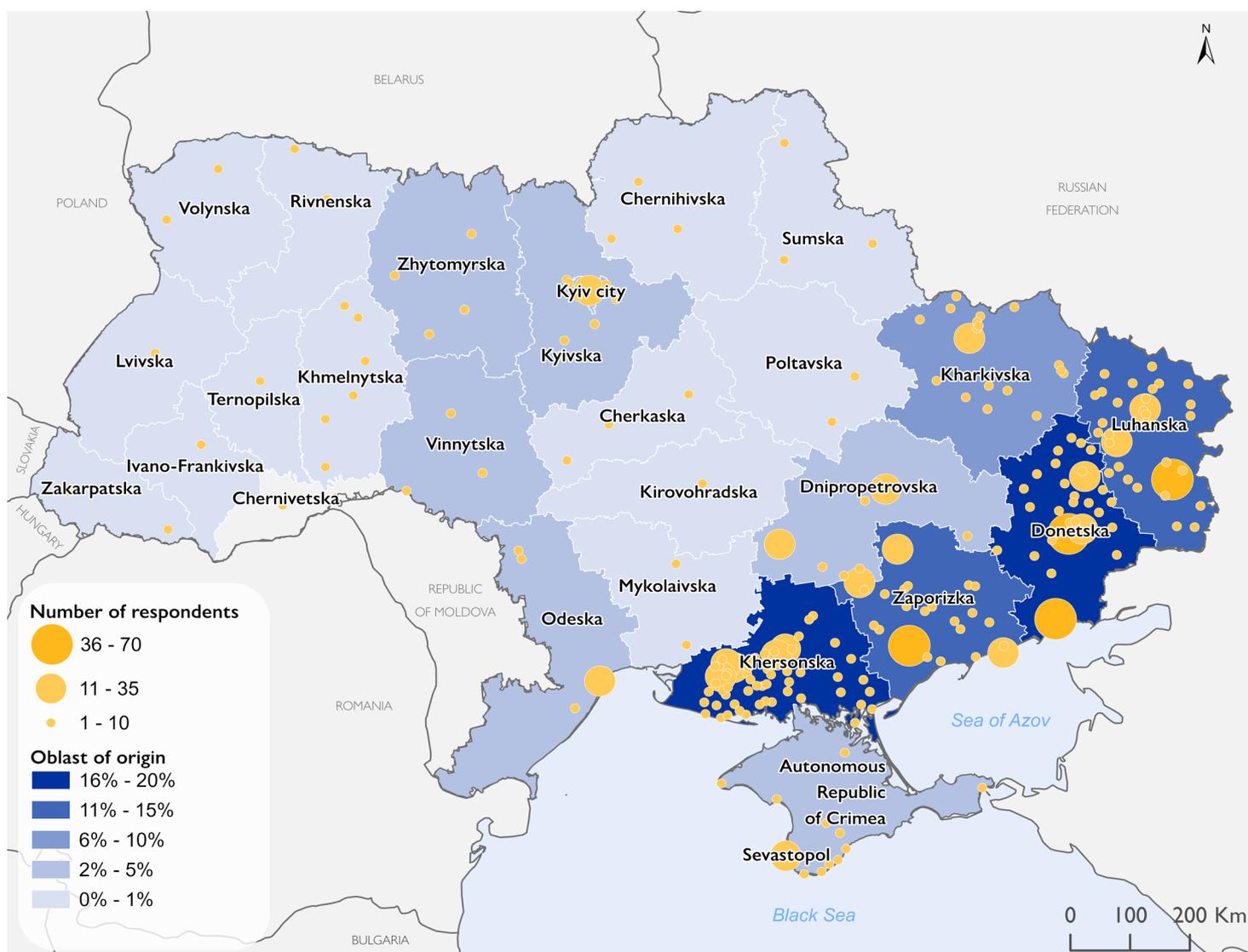
This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Gender and age

Sixty-three per cent of sampled respondents were women, while 37 per cent were men. Almost one-third of respondents were 60 years old or older (26%), while the group of 30 to 39 year-olds represented 21 per cent of the sample. The groups aged 40 to 49 and 50 to 59 accounted for 21 and 20 per cent of the participants respectively. Among women, the most represented age group was 60 year-olds and above (25%), followed by 50 to 59 year olds (22%). The most represented age groups among men were 60 years old or above (28%), followed by 30 to 39 year-olds (23%).

Figure 1: Age, by gender and total (%), (N=1,155)
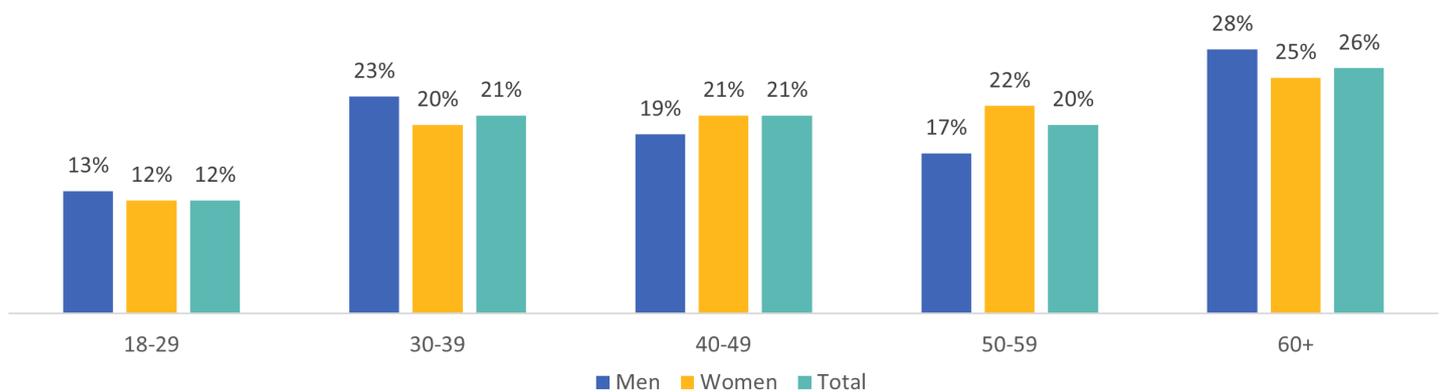
Marital status

Over half of the respondents were married (53%), while another eighteen per cent were single. Others were widowed or divorced (11% and 10%, respectively). The remaining seven per cent were in a partnership. Men were more likely to report being single than women (23% versus 14%), while women were more likely to report being widowed (14% versus 6%). Additionally, a higher percentage of women reported being divorced compared to men (11% versus 8%).

Figure 2: Marital status by gender and total (%), (N=1,155)
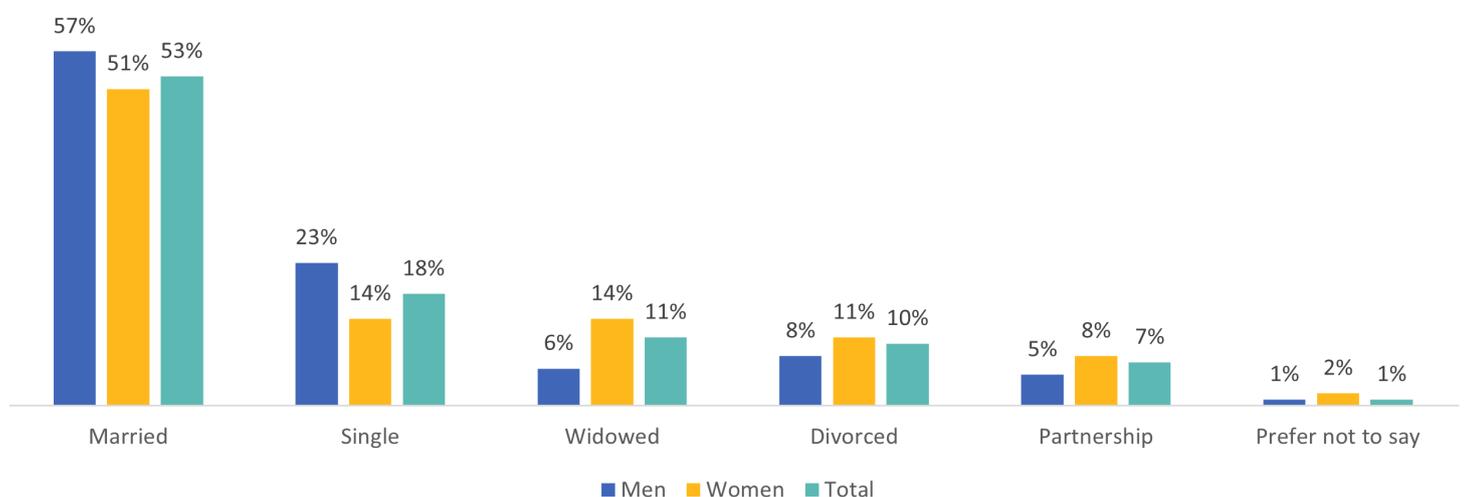
2. Intentions

Move elsewhere or stay

Most respondents did not intend to remain in Latvia and considered it as a transit country in their journey to another destination or before their return to Ukraine. Fifty-six per cent of respondents intended to move to another country. A quarter intended to return either to a different location in Ukraine (19%) or to their place of origin in Ukraine (6%). Thirteen per cent stated that they have no intention to move, while another two per cent intended to move to a different location within Latvia. The remaining four per cent were uncertain about their plans. Men were more likely to report intending to move to another country than women (60% versus 54%). However, women showed a higher probability of relocating to a different location within Ukraine compared to men (21% versus 16%).

Out of 994 respondents, 75 per cent of respondents intended to return to Ukraine when it is safe to do so, while eighteen per cent remained unsure about their plans. The remaining seven per cent did not intend to return at all.

Figure 3: Respondents' intention to move from current location, by gender and total (%) (N=1,134)
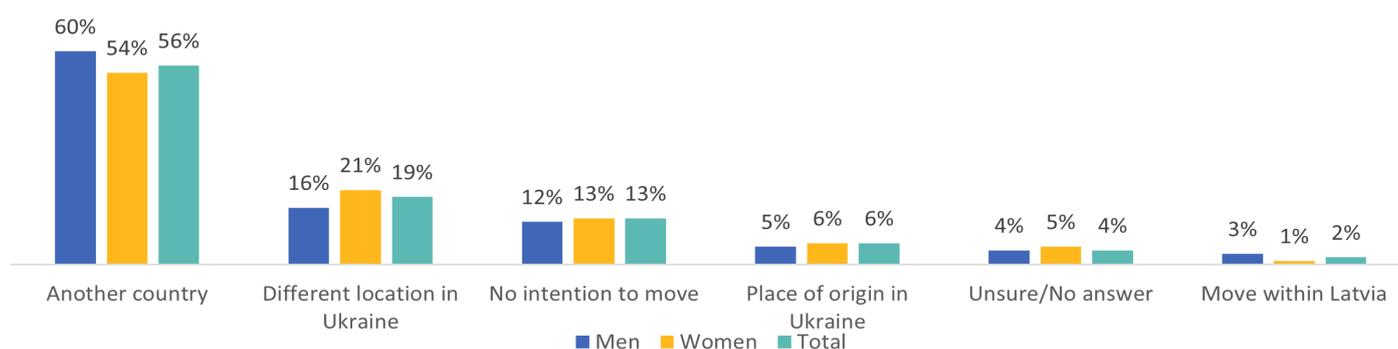
Intended length of stay

Respondents who intended to either relocate within Latvia, return to their place of origin in Ukraine, or move to another destination were asked how long they expect to stay in their current location. Ninety-five per cent of respondents intended to stay in their current location for less than a week before moving. Two more per cent remained uncertain about the duration of their stay, meanwhile three per cent planned to stay for less than a month, one to three months, or a year.

Figure 4: Intended length of stay (%), (N=966)
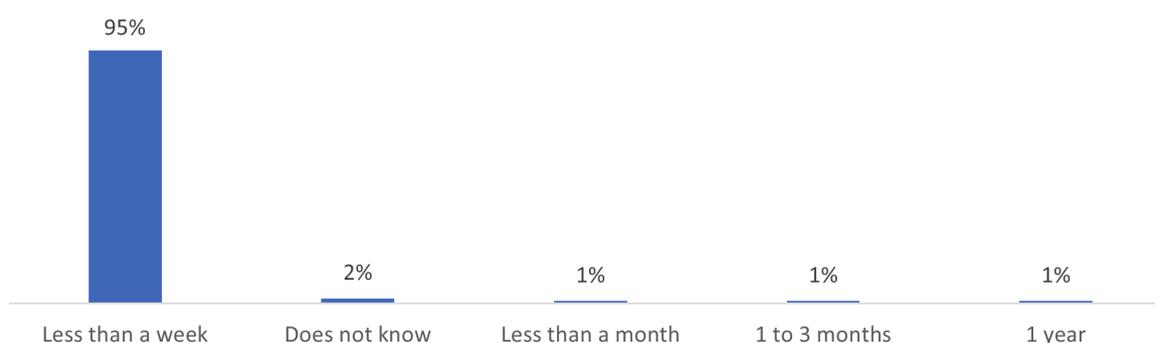
Intended oblast of destination in Ukraine and reasons to go back

Of the respondents who intended to return to Ukraine (25%), 23 per cent planned to return to the same oblast of origin, while 77 per cent intended to go to a different region in Ukraine. Among those who intended to relocate to a different region in Ukraine, thirty-one per cent of respondents aimed to go to the city of Kyiv, followed by Donetska (8%), Luhanska and Lvivska (7% each), the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Dnipropetrovska (6% each), Odeska and Zaporizka (5% each), Kyivska (4%), Khersonska, Zakarpatska, and Khmelnytska (3% each), Poltavska, Kharkivska, and Vinnytska (2% each), Volynska, Mykolaivska, Rivnenska, Chernivetska, Cherkaska, and Ivano-Frankivska oblast (1% each). Of those intending to go back to Ukraine, 65 per cent cited reuniting with family members as the purpose of their return, while 30 per cent of respondents cited an improved situation in Ukraine. Other reasons included assistance to family members (12%), concerns about family safety (10%), improved situation in the region of origin (9%), lack of resources (7%), experiences of discrimination (6%), and checking on property (5%). Less respondents indicated additional reasons, such as bringing supplies and retrieving belongings (4% each), planning to defend Ukraine, lack of jobs, start of employment in Ukraine, need of healthcare,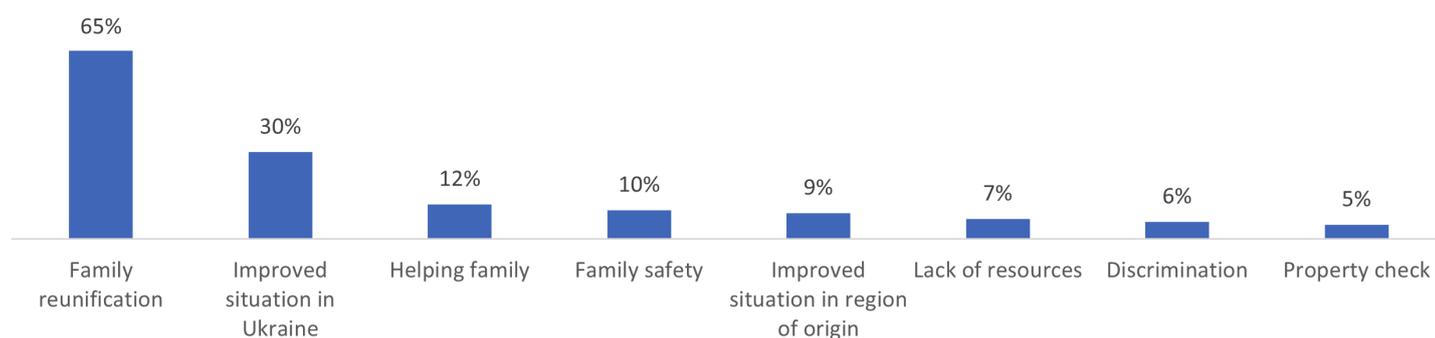 and helping family leave Ukraine (2% each). The lack of shelter or education as well as the need to retrieve documents were present only in one per cent of responses.

Figure 5: Reasons for choosing Ukraine as intended destination, total (%), (N=246) (multiple answers possible)

65%	30%	12%	10%	9%	7%	6%	5%
Family reunification	Improved situation in Ukraine	Helping family	Family safety	Improved situation in region of origin	Lack of resources	Discrimination	Property check

Immediate needs upon return

Among the respondents who intended to return to Ukraine (N=249), more than a half of them indicated that their top needs would be financial support (29%), housing (18%), and job placement (18%). Other needs included medical support (13%), the need for information (10%), education for children (6%), and transportation (2%). Fifty-five per cent reported having no specific needs upon their return.

Figure 6: Main needs upon return (%), (N=249) (multiple answers possible)

55%	29%	18%	18%	13%	10%	6%	2%
No needs	Financial support	Housing	Job placement	Medical support	Information	Education for children	Transportation

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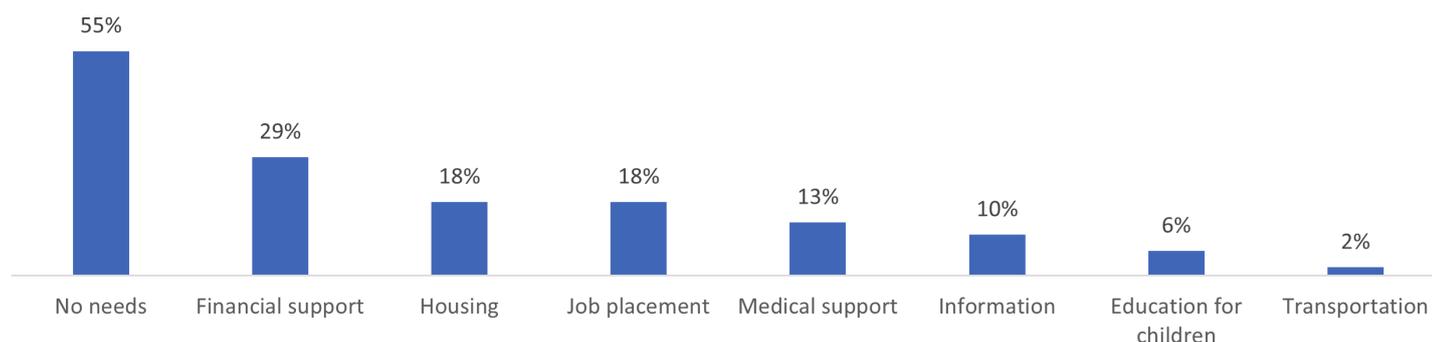
Intended country of destination

Among those who intended to go to another country (N=625), the top three intended destinations were Poland (33%) and the Russian Federation (21%), and Germany (18%). Other respondents intended to relocate to Czechia (6%), Finland, Norway, and Lithuania (3% each). Less common destinations included the Netherlands and Estonia (2% each), as well as Canada, France, Denmark, Italy, Hungary, Ireland, Spain and Switzerland (1% each).

Reasons for selecting intended destination

The survey asked respondents who planned to relocate to another country (N=78) to indicate the reasons for selecting their intended destination. Thirty-three per cent cited the presence of friends in the destination country as a significant factor impacting their decision. Additionally, 22 per cent of respondents mentioned that relatives played a crucial role in shaping their choice to relocate to the destination country, while 15 per cent referenced the protection system. Eight per cent mentioned job opportunities in the destination country, while six per cent pointed to the availability of accommodation as a factor affecting their decision. A few respondents mentioned a job offer (4 respondents), schools for children, and other individuals in the destination country, or because they lived there (3 respondents each).

Figure 7: Reasons for Intending to Move (either within Latvia or to another country), (%), (N=657) (multiple answers possible)

Relatives	Friends	Job opportunity	Protection system	No reason	Accommodation	Job offer	Other
55%	32%	11%	9%	4%	4%	4%	3%
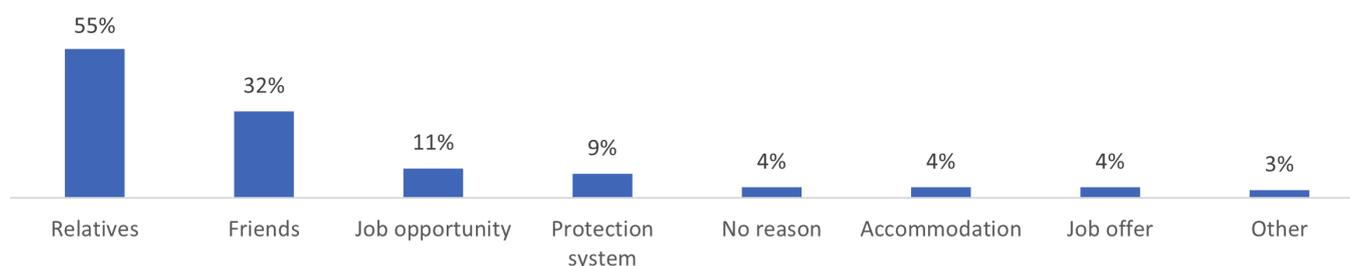
3. Language and Education

Main language

Fifty-six per cent of respondents speak Russian as their main language at home, while 44 per cent cited Ukrainian as their main language. When asked about additional languages spoken, 55 per cent of respondents mentioned Ukrainian, while 45 per cent mentioned Russian. Thirteen per cent spoke English and four per cent spoke Polish language. Other mentioned languages included German (2%), as well as French, Latvian, and Romanian (1% each).

Figure 8: Other spoken language(s) (%), (N=1,123) (multiple answers possible)

Ukrainian	Russian	English	Polish	German	Other	Romanian	Latvian	French
55%	45%	13%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
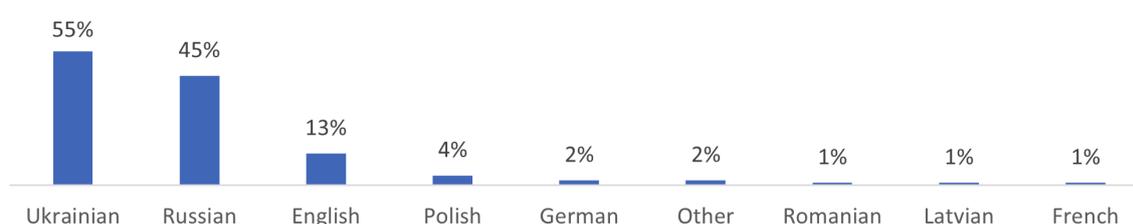
Education level

Seventy-three per cent of respondents (N=1,155) had completed secondary level of education (lower-secondary, upper-secondary, and post-secondary), while 24 per cent had completed upper tertiary level of education. Additionally, one per cent had post-graduate education, and another one per cent had primary education. There were also few respondents with other (nonformal) typ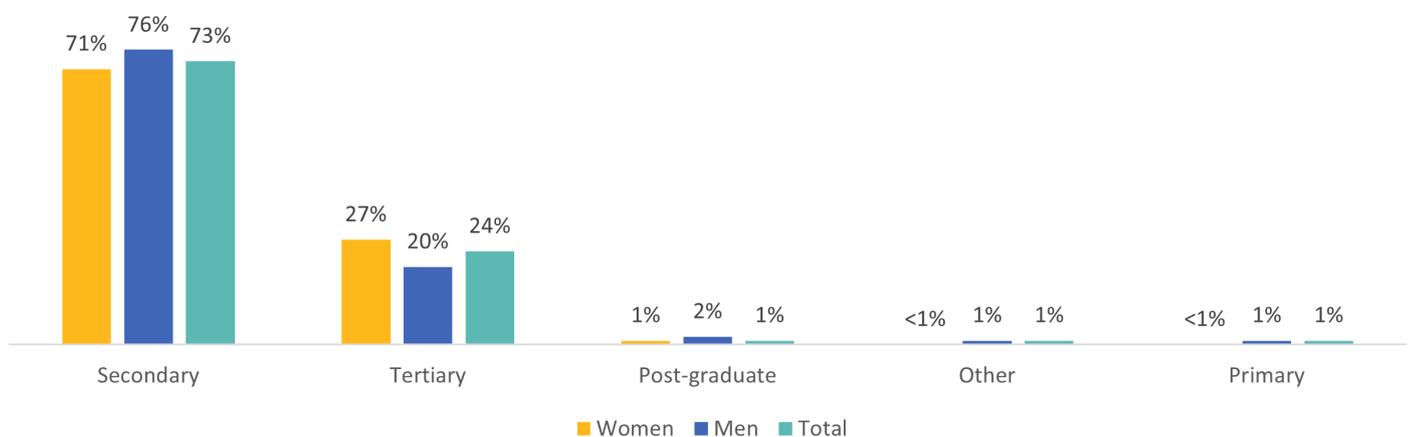es of education (1%). Men were more likely than women to have attained secondary education as their highest level of education (76% versus 71%), while tertiary education was more common among women (27% versus 20%).

Figure 9: Education level, by gender and total (%), (N=1,155)

4. Registration and Inclusion

Out of 1,155 respondents, 22 per cent had already registered for temporary protection or applied for some form of protection or refugee status with the national authorities in Latvia. Among those who had not applied or registered (78%), 54 per cent said they were planning to leave Latvia soon, while 40 per cent were planning to register. Four per cent claimed to be ineligible for temporary protection status, while the remaining two per cent cited other reasons for not registering.

Access to funds

Seventy-eight per cent of respondents (N=225) had been able to withdraw money from an ATM or make payments using their foreign debit or credit card. Twenty-one per cent faced difficulties that prevented them from accessing their funds, while another one per cent preferred not to answer. About half of the respondents (N=225) had a local bank account in Latvia registered under their name (52%), while the other 48 per cent had not registered for a personal bank account. Among those who had not registered (N=107), about a third did not have sufficient knowledge of how to do it (32%), 29 per cent planned to open a bank account, and 28 per cent claimed to be ineligible. Only seven per cent referred to having no need for a bank account, while the remaining four per cent had other unspecified reasons.

Ability to cover expenses

Sixty-three per cent of respondents reported that their average income was sufficient to cover their monthly expenses in Latvia. Thirty-two per cent reported not having sufficient income to cover their expenses, while five per cent preferred not to answer. Among respondents who answered the question about how they cover daily expenses (N=64), 69 per cent mentioned support from authorities and the government, 59 per cent of respondents mentioned income from work, and 38 per cent referred to support from family. Other common sources of income were personal savings (25%) and support from NGOs (20%). Few of those surveyed relied on borrowed money or other sources of income (2% each).

Figure 12: Sources for covering daily expenses (%), (N=64) (multiple answers possible)
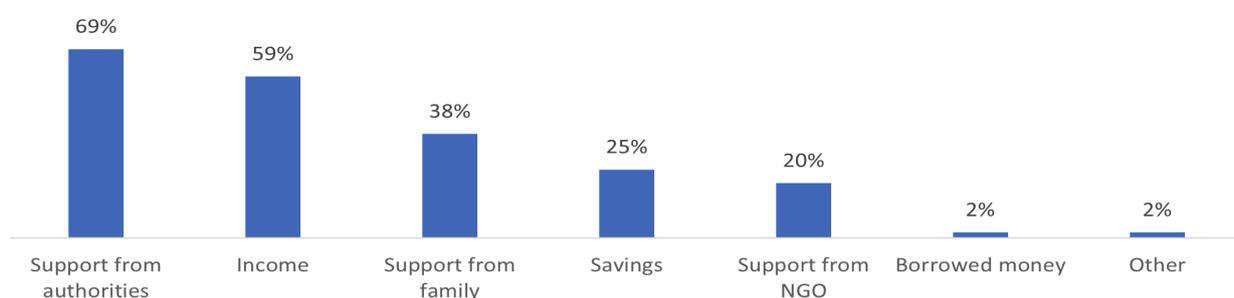
Consular services

Fifty-eight per cent of respondents (N=64) confirmed knowing how to contact consular representatives, while almost half of them did not have sufficient knowledge (42%). At the same time, only about a third (34%) had ever reached out for consular help. Fifty-eight per cent never contacted consular representatives, and another eight per cent preferred not to answer.

5. Immediate Needs and Assistance

The top 2 needs expressed by respondents were general information (78%) and food products (31%). Other reported needs included financial support (15%), employment (13%), language courses (11%), as well as long term (10%) and short-term (8%) accommodation. Some respondents expressed a need for clothing and footwear, health services, medicines, and transportation support (7% each).

Figure 13: Immediate needs (%), (N=994) (multiple answers were possible)
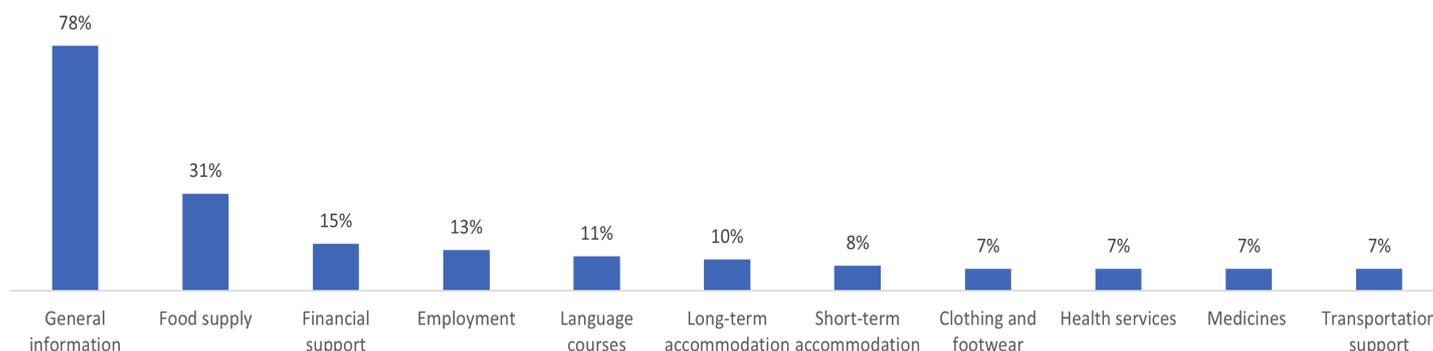
While general information and food products were the highest on the list of priorities throughout 2023, more respondents were in need of general information in the second half of the year as compared to the first half (86% versus 73%). In the case of food products, the percentage of respondents who specified them as an immediate need dropped from 39% in the first half of 2023 to 19% in the second half. The need for financial support also plummeted from 25% to only 2%. The general tendency for other immediate needs (employment, language courses, long-term accommodation, transportation support, clothing and footwear, medicines, and health services) followed the same pattern of higher demand in the first half of the year and a dramatic decrease in the second half.

Figure 13: Immediate needs (%), (N=994) (multiple answers were possible)

Legend: ■ I Half 2023 (%) (N=570) ■ II Half 2023 (%) (N=424) ■ Total (%) (N=994)
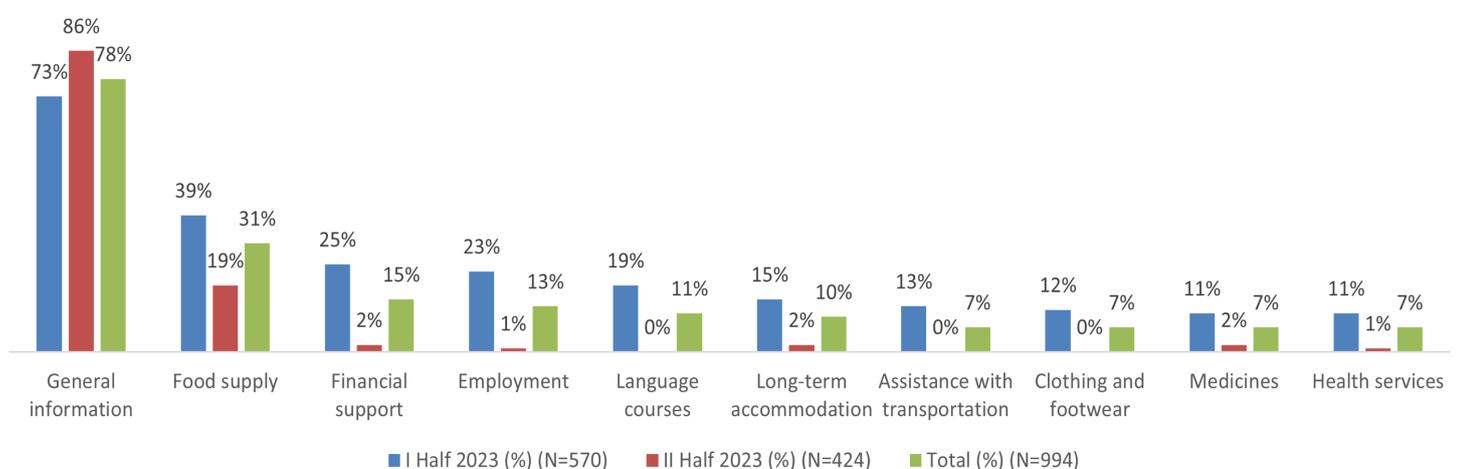
Assistance

Sixty-two per cent of respondents reported not having received support or humanitarian assistance, while 37 per cent indicated that they received support before the interview. One per cent preferred not to answer. Among those who had received support (N=431), the main types of assistance reported were food (85%), transport (44%), personal hygiene or sanitary supplies (39%), financial support (33%), accommodation (32%). The respondents also reported receiving clothing and footwear (25%), other help (16%), and toys (10%). Slightly fewer respondents benefited from vouchers (6%), psychological counseling (6%), language courses (5%), and employment support (3%).

Figure 14: Received assistance (%) (N=431) (multiple answers possible)
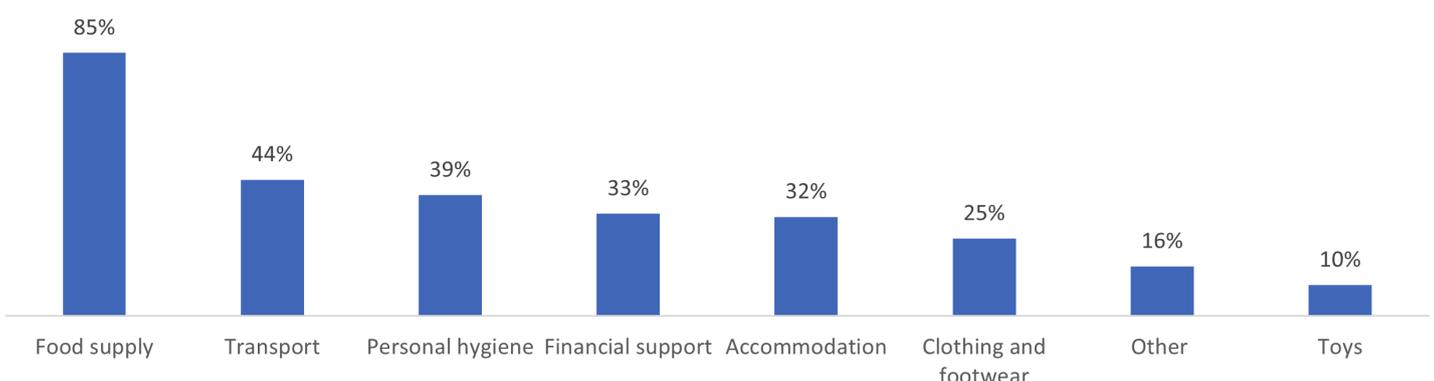
Areas in which information is needed to get more assistance

Despite the high percentage of those knowing where to seek assistance in general (92%, N=912), the respondents reported a lack of information on the available assistance within certain areas (N=207). The most frequently mentioned areas included financial support (66%), health services (66%), short-term accommodation (64%), and personal hygiene (62%). Fewer participants referred to the need to have more information on long-term accommodation (12%), general information (12%), and employment (10%).

6. Group composition

Fifty-three per cent of respondents reported travelling alone, while 47 per cent reported travelling in a group.

Among those travelling in groups (N=547), 91 per cent were accompanied by immediate family or household members, ten per cent were travelling with neighbours, nine per cent with relatives, and the remaining two per cent were travelling with colleagues.

The average group size was two persons (including the respondent).

Figure 16: Travel group (%), (N=547) (multiple answers possible)

Legend: Family, Neighbours, Relatives, Colleagues
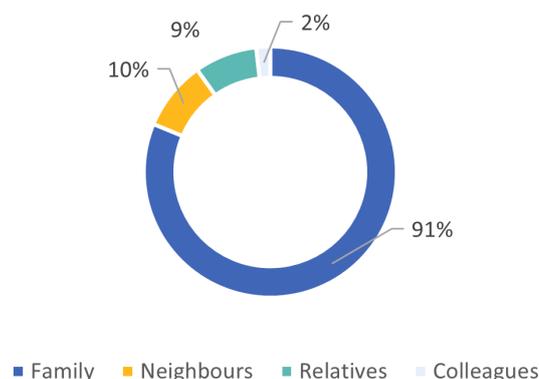
Travelling with persons with health conditions and disabilities

Twenty-three per cent of respondents (N=1,155) indicated that their group included individuals with serious health conditions or specific needs, while 75 per cent reported not traveling with anyone that had a serious health condition. Two more per cent did not know such information. Among those individuals with serious health conditions or specific needs (N=260), the majority had chronic diseases (96%), while 17 per cent had difficulty walking or climbing steps. Other mentioned health conditions included being wounded or injured (9%), pregnant or lactating (8%), having visual impairments (8%), difficulties with concentration (5%), with self-care (5%), hearing (4%), and communication (2%).

Figure 17: Individuals with serious health conditions in travel group (%), (N=260) (multiple answers possible)
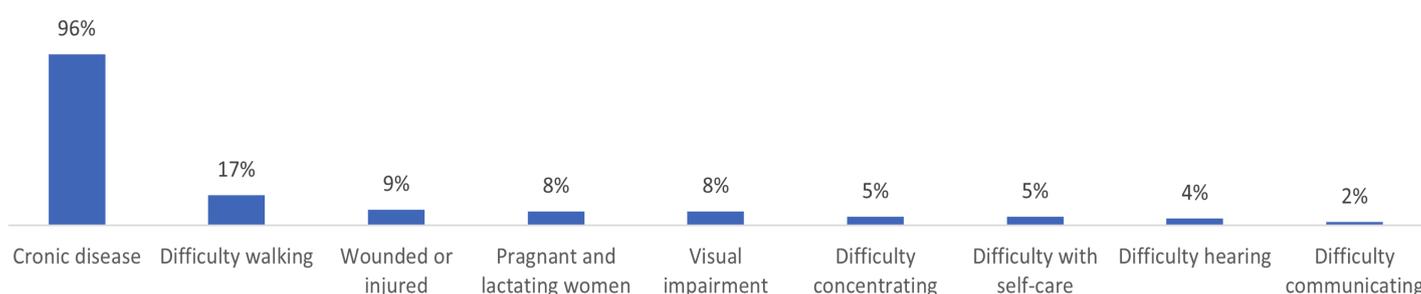
METHODOLOGY

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.

Since April 2022, IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix has been regularly surveying people who are residing in the eleven countries included in the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine. The aim of the survey is to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions and needs. The survey is deployed in 6 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia, and other 5 countries in Europe, particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine, including Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by four trained enumerators, with adult refugees from Ukraine (18+ years-old). Surveys were collected at selected locations (border crossing points, bus stations, collective centres, humanitarian aid distribution points, transit centres and IOM premises) in nine regions of Latvia. The survey is anonymous and voluntary, administered after obtaining consent from the respondent. Respondents can stop the survey at any time. In Latvia, the questionnaire is available in English, Ukrainian and Russian, and the preferred language is determined by the interviewee. Only fully completed surveys are taken into account for analysis.

Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained by IOM on DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM approach to migrants' protection and assistance, the ethics of data collection and the provision of information and referral mechanism in place.

About the Survey

Aim

To improve the understanding of the profiles of Ukrainian refugees residing in or transiting through Latvia, including their displacement patterns, intentions and needs.

Target population

The analysis focuses on the needs and intentions of Ukrainian refugees in Latvia.

Location and execution

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by four trained enumerators stationed at selected locations in nine regions of Latvia. Surveys are conducted in English, Ukrainian and Russian with the help of a mobile application.

Regional data collection and analysis

The survey is deployed in 11 countries: 6 neighboring countries (Belarus, Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia), and 5 other countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) impacted by the arrival of refugees from Ukraine.

LIMITATIONS

The sampling framework was not based on verified figures of refugees from Ukraine entering through all land border points or staying in the various regions where the surveys are conducted, due to the lack of baseline information.

The geographic spread of enumerators deployed captures all nine regions of Latvia. However, the majority of the locations encompassed border crossing points (BCPs) and bus stations where most of the individuals were in transit and not intending either to stay in Latvia or move within the country. Whilst the overall results cannot be deemed as representative, the internal consistency of data collection in each country and at the regional level suggests that the current sampling

framework produces findings of practical value.

While every attempt was made to capture all types of locations, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with different levels of accessibility of BCPs and other transit and stay locations, including the different availability of possible target individuals to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions. Other factors more related to the conditions at a specific location and period, such as organizational changes in the entry and transit areas from national authorities, or weather conditions, also play a role.

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.

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