

# ROMANIA

## UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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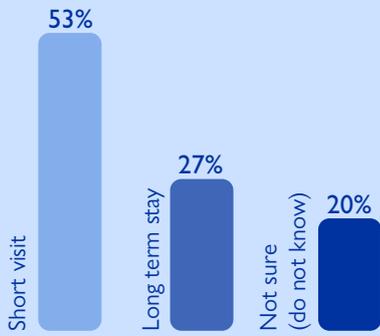
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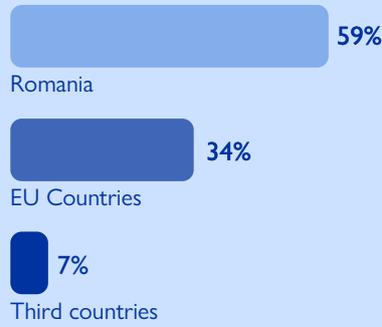
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# KEY FINDINGS

## Intentions



## Primary country of stay



## Oblasts of origin

**74%**  
from Odeska, Chernivetska, Mykolaivska, Ivano-Frankivska, City of Kyiv, Kharvivska

## Main oblasts of destination



## Traveling to

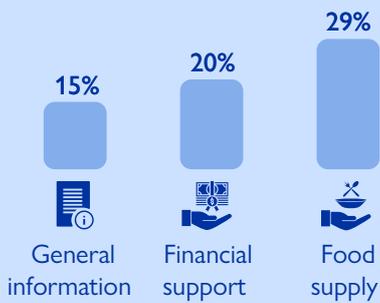
**93%**

Oblast of origin

**7%**

Different oblast

## Needs

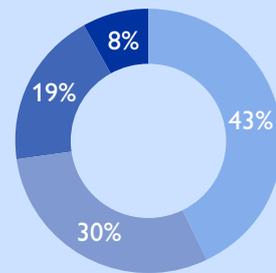


More than one answers possible

## Entries and exits

**73%**

have crossed back to Ukraine twice or more prior to the survey



● None ● Once ● Twice ● More

## Assistance



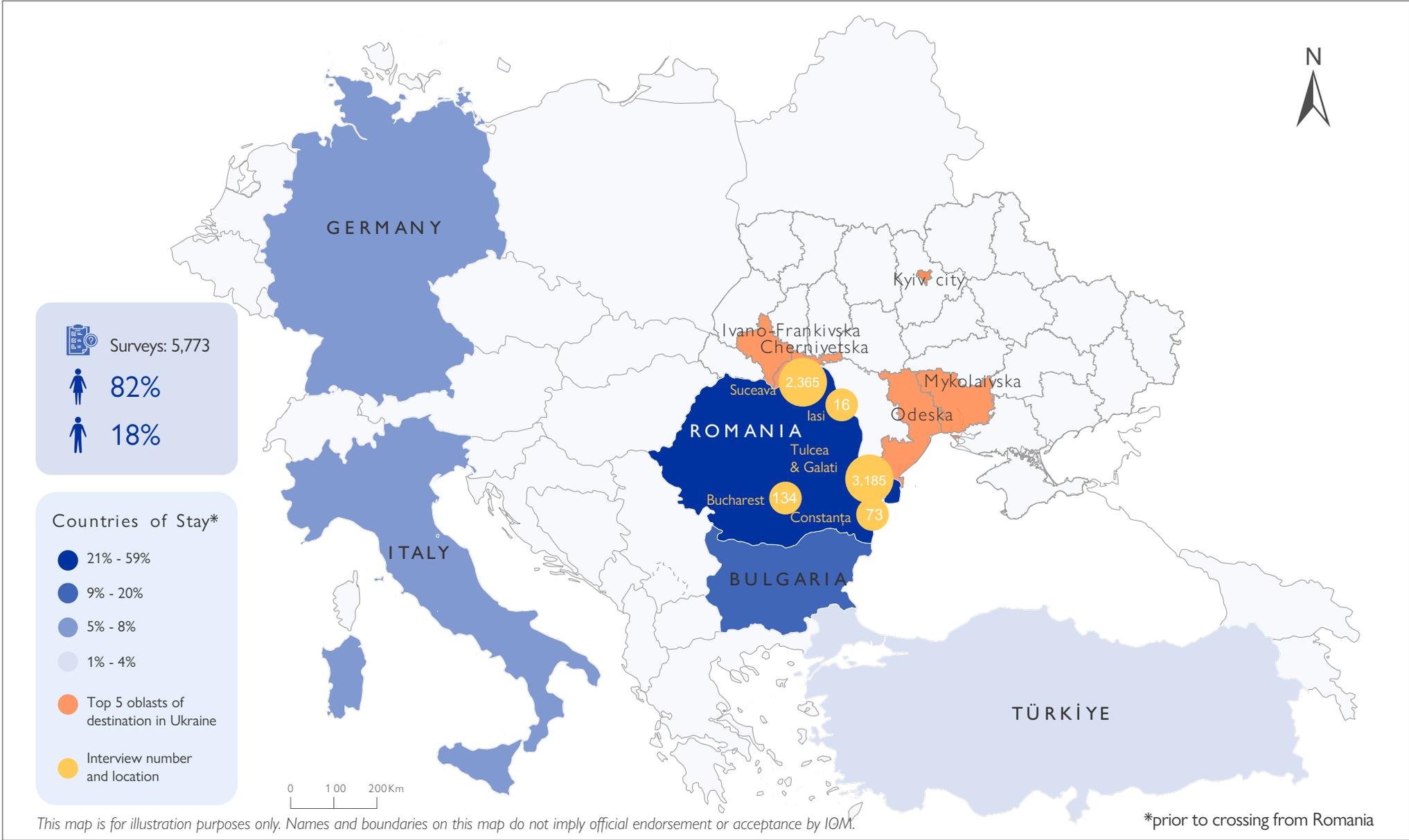
More than one answers possible

## Information

**69%**

check on social media for aid and support

Map 1: Surveys deployed, main countries of stay, and main oblasts of destination among respondents crossing back through Romania in 2023



# 1. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

## INTRODUCTION

A total of 5,826 individuals were surveyed crossing the border from Romania to Ukraine in 2023. The vast majority (5,773 or 99%) were Ukrainian citizens and 53 (1%) were Third-Country Nationals (TCNs). The analysis in this report focuses on Ukrainian nationals.

### DATA COLLECTION PERIODS – 2023

Q1

January to March

Q2

April to June

Q3

July to September

Q4

October to December

## GENDER, AGE, AND MARTIAL STATUS

Out of a total of 5,826 people surveyed in 2023, over 99 per cent (N=5773) were Ukrainian nationals, while less than one per cent were Third-Country Nationals (TCNs, N=53). Eighty-two per cent of the Ukrainian citizens surveyed were women, while 18 per cent were men.

The average age of surveyed Ukrainian nationals was 42.2 years old. The average age of surveyed men (49.3 years-old) is higher than the average age of surveyed women (39.3 years-old). Ninety per cent of respondents were of working age, between 18-60 years old.

Figure 1: Age, by gender (%)

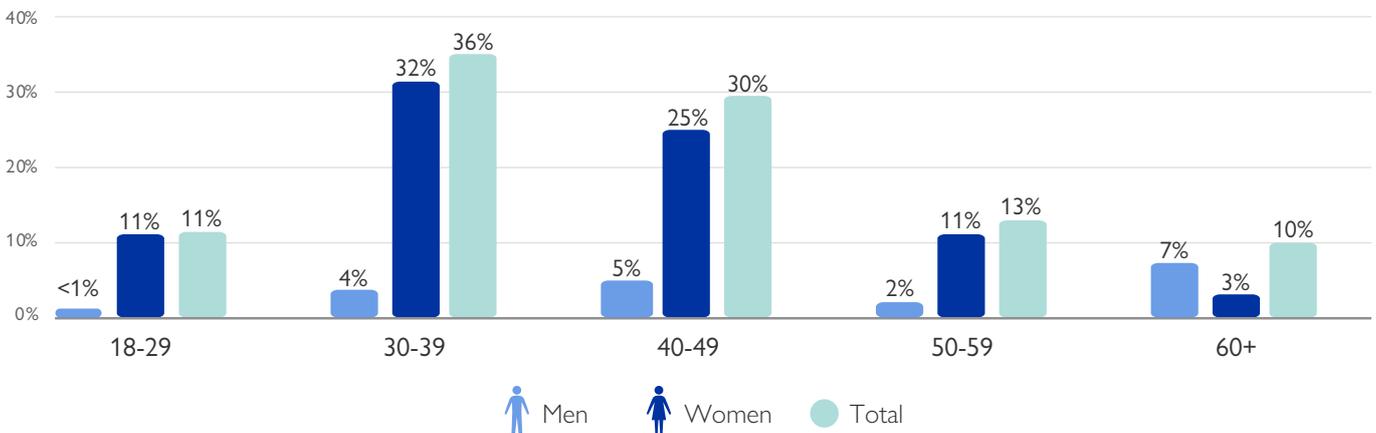
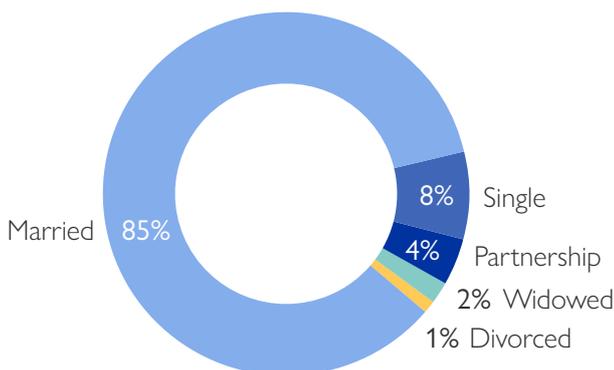


Figure 2: Marital status (%)



Around eighty-five per cent of persons interviewed stated that they were married. Another eight per cent have reported being single, under 4 per cent reported being in a partnership, or widowed (2%). One per cent were divorced.

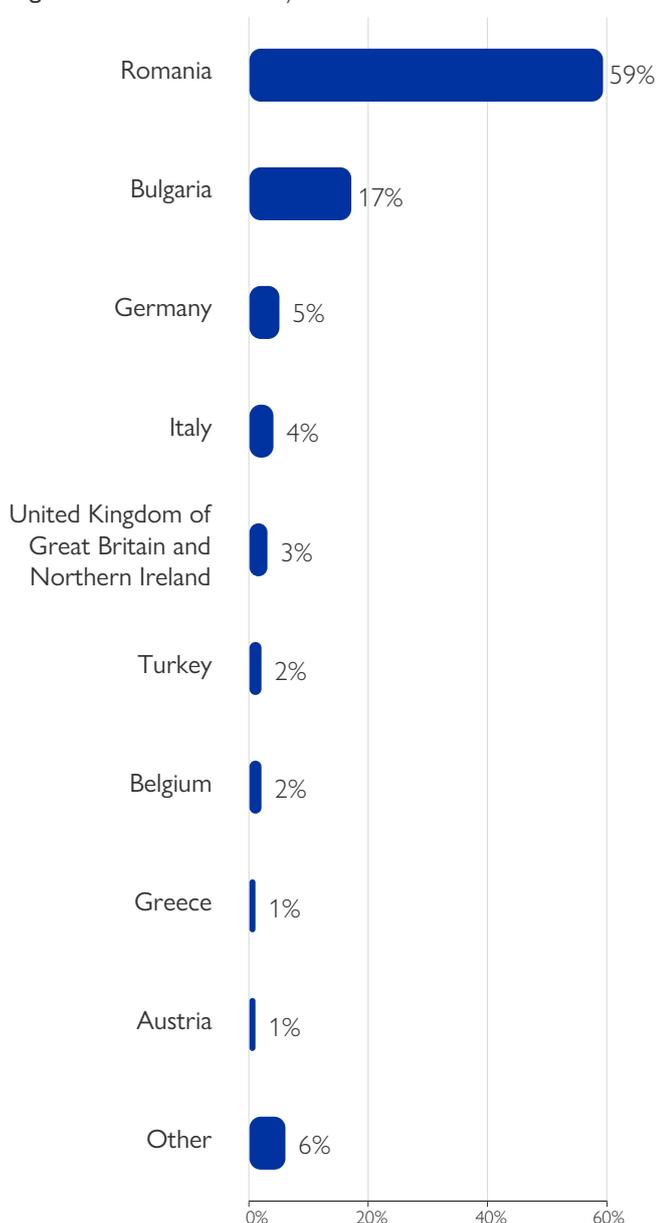
## 2. TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE

### COUNTRIES OF STAY

Fifty-nine per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian civilians had been staying in Romania for the longest amount of time before crossing back into Ukraine. Other Ukrainian nationals had been living in Bulgaria (17%), Germany (5%), Italy (4%), Turkey (3%), and Belgium (2%).

A small share of the surveyed persons had stayed in the United Kingdom (2%), Greece (1%), or Austria (1%). The remaining six per cent had spent most of their time outside of Ukraine in 38 other countries before crossing back through Romania.

Figure 3: Countries of stay



### AVERAGE TIME SINCE DISPLACEMENT

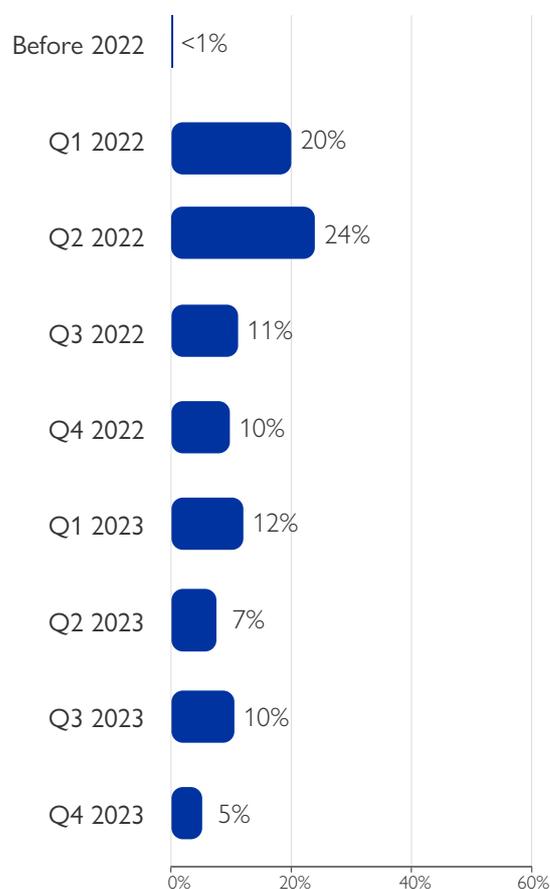
The approximate duration of displacement can be assessed by looking at the difference between respondents' initial date of displacement from Ukraine and the date when the survey was conducted.

Most civilians were displaced between January and March 2022 (20%) and between April and June 2022 (24%), a time period closest to the start of the war. They had spent in displacement around a year and a half or more. Twenty-one per cent have been displaced between July and December 2022, having spent in displacement around a year and a few months.

Thirty-four per cent of the Ukrainian nationals have been displaced in the beginning of 2023, having spent a year or less in displacement.

Starting June 2022, the influx of Ukrainian citizens has remained somewhat stable, every trimester arriving about the same share of Ukrainian nationals (10%).

Figure 5: Approximate time spent in displacement (%)

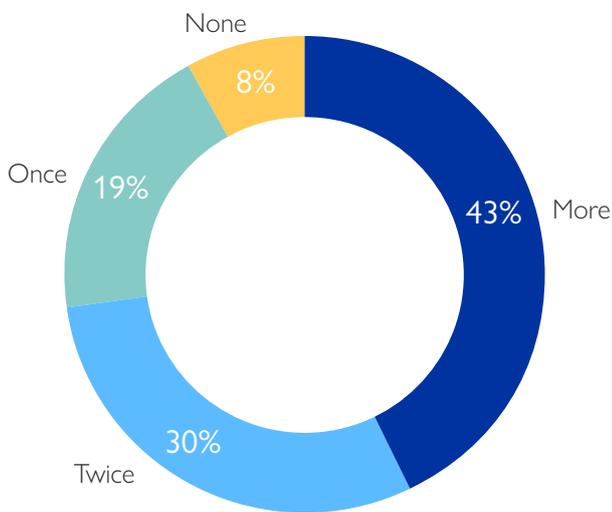


## EXITS AND ENTRIES

Given Ukraine and Romania are neighbouring countries, many Ukrainian nationals cross back on a regular basis. Most respondents report having crossed the Ukrainian border either twice (27%) or more than twice (46%) since their initial displacement.

Twenty-one per cent of respondents report having entered and exited Ukraine only once since February 2022. Another eight per cent have never travelled back to Ukraine since their initial displacement.

**Figure 6:** Number of exits from and entries to Ukraine between 24 February 2022 and 21 of December 2023 (%)

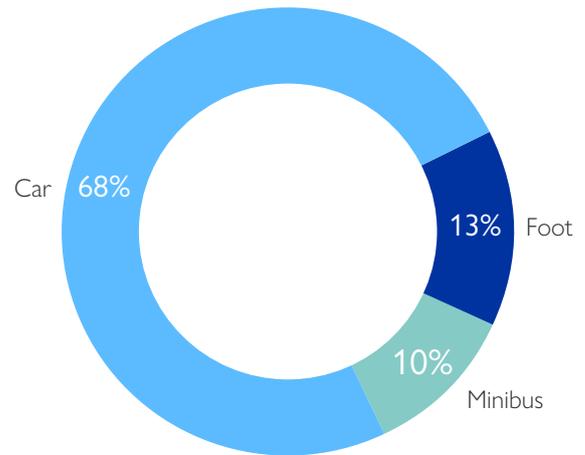


## TRANSPORT

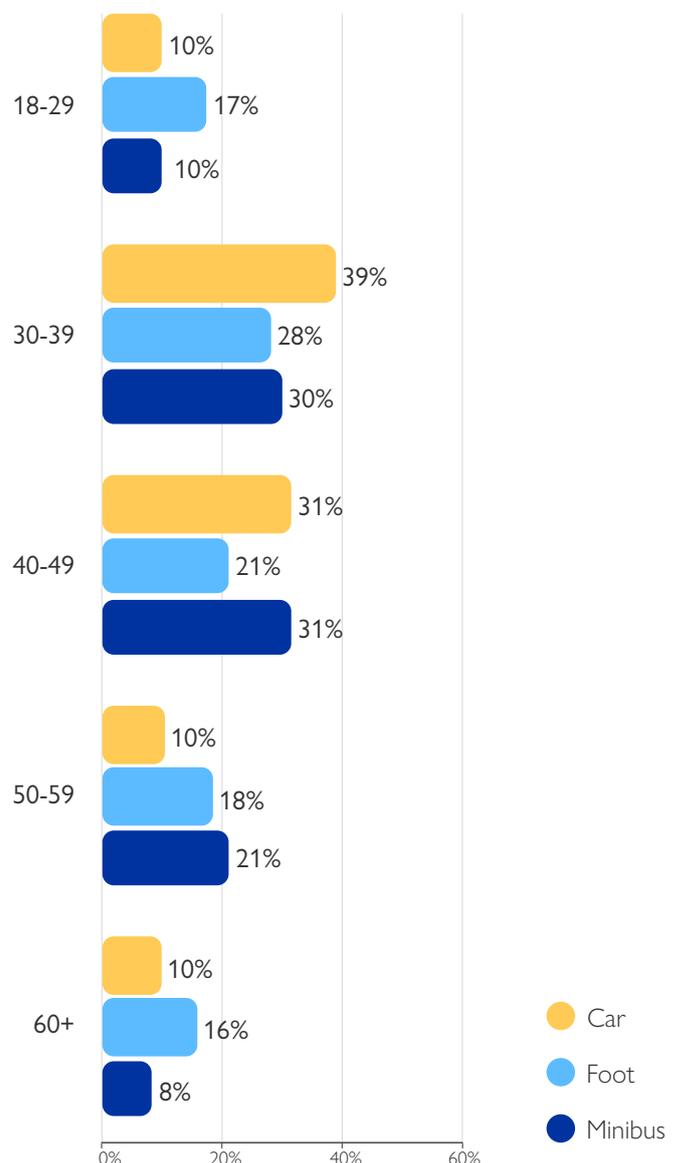
Among the main means of transport used by the Ukrainian nationals included cars, used by 68%, the minibus (10%) and the bus (9%) Due to the closeness to the Romanian borders, some UA civilians have reported crossing back to Ukraine on foot (13%). Less than 1% have reported using other means of transport such as the train.

When asked about the mode of transport used when crossing back to Ukraine, most of the people aged between 30 and 39 used cars, those aged between 40 to 49 used cars and the minibus in the same measure. The persons aged between 18 to 29 and over 60 years old preferred to cross by foot.

**Figure 7:** Modes of transportation to Ukraine (%)



**Figure 8:** Modes of transportation according to the age of respondents (%)



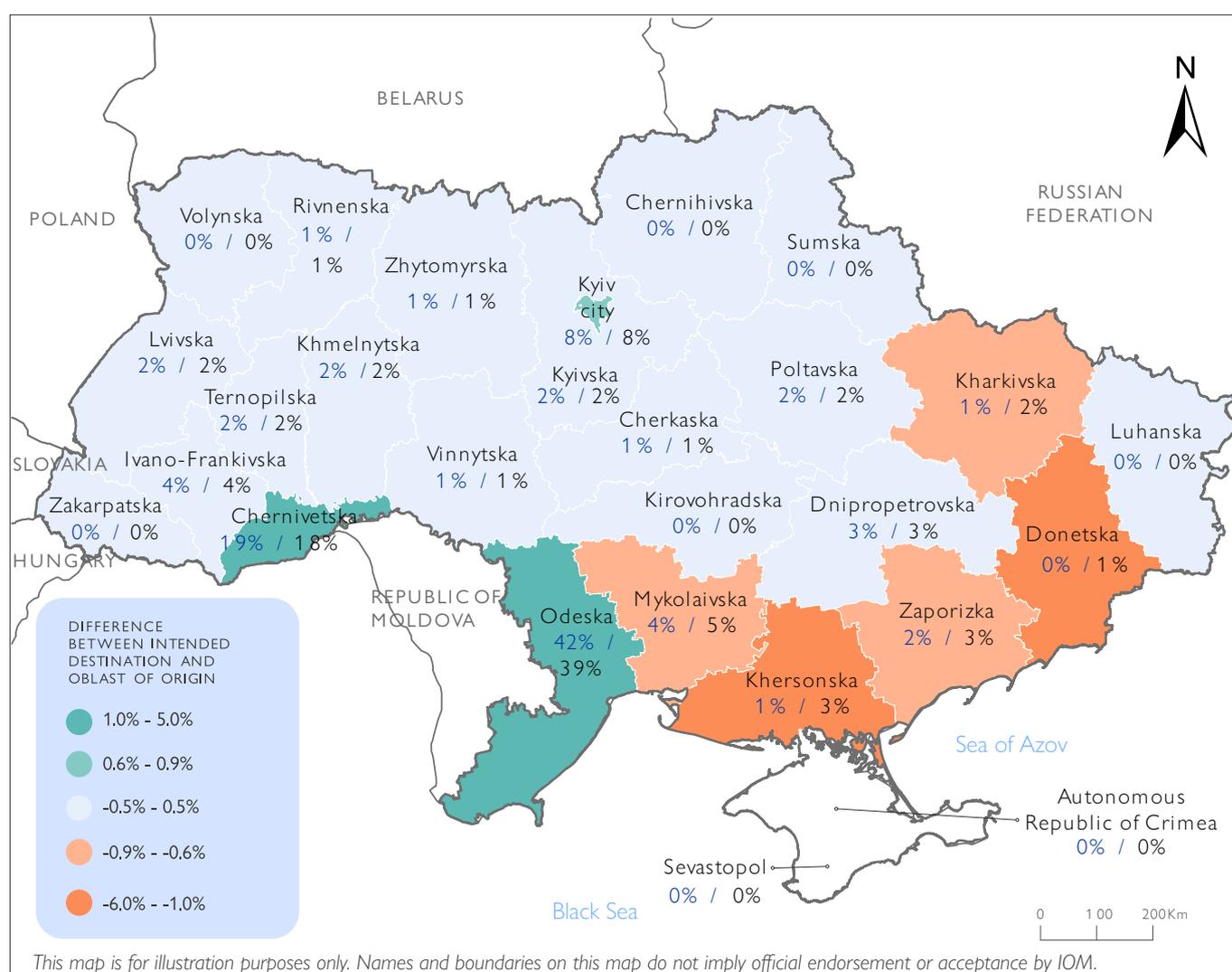
### 3. OBLAST (REGION) OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

Seventy-four per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian civilians came from six oblasts in Ukraine: Odeska (39%), Chernivetska (18%), Mykolaivska (6%), Ivano-Frankivska (4%), the city of Kyiv (4%), and Khersonska (4%). The remaining 26 per cent came from 21 other oblasts.

The majority of respondents (93%) intended to reach their oblast of origin. Seven per cent intended to cross back to a

different oblast. The top intended destinations were Odeska (33%), Chernivetska, (15%) the city of Kyiv (4%), Ivano-Frankivska (3%) and Mykolaivska (3%). Twenty per cent wanted to return to 22 other oblasts. An important proportion, 22 per cent, did not answer to the question regarding their intended oblast of destination.

Map 2: Intended oblast of destination versus oblast of origin in Ukraine in 2023 (%)



## 4. INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS BACK

For the analysis, an important distinction was made between the Ukrainian citizens crossing back to Ukraine for 30 days or less (short term visitors) and those returning to Ukraine for more than 30 days (prospective returnees).

### DURATION OF STAY

An analysis of the duration of stay during the four quarters of 2023 shows that during quarters 1, 2 and 4, over 50 per cent of the surveyed civilians went to Ukraine for a short visit (less than 30 days) During quarter 3, which coincided with the replacement of the 50/20 accommodation program,<sup>1</sup> only 43 per cent went to Ukraine for a short visit, with 34 per cent registering as prospective returnees. Another quarter that registered a significant share of prospective returnees was the first trimester, with 28 per cent stating that they planned to return to Ukraine. Quarters 2 and 4 had a small share of

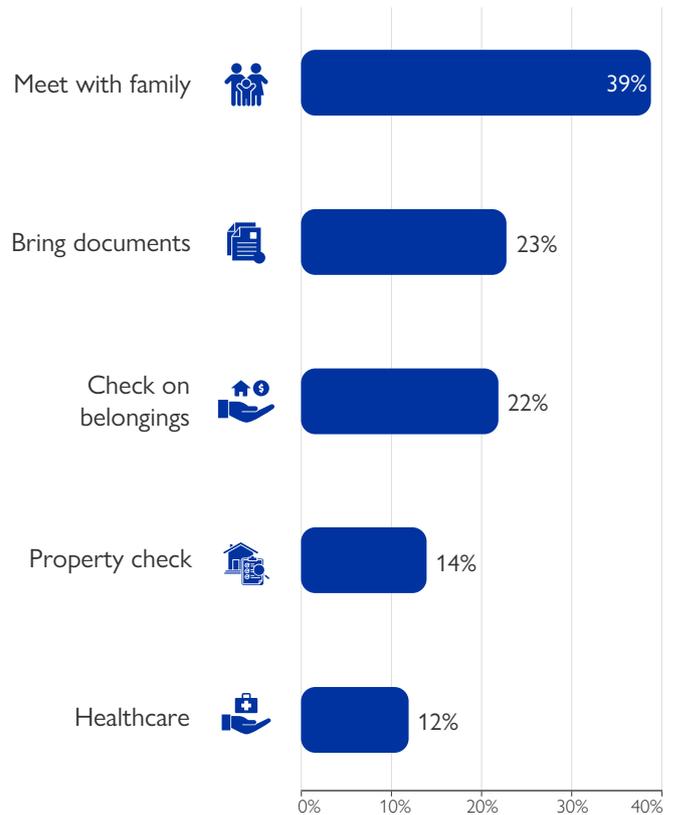
Ukrainian citizens planning to remain in Ukraine, 18 per cent for Q2, respectively 21 per cent for Q4.

As for the respondents that have not decided yet, in Q1, 13 per cent were not sure about the lengths of their stay, while in the other quarters, the share of the Ukrainian civilians that have not yet decided was at an average of 24 per cent.

Figure 9: Duration of stay (%)



Figure 9: Top 5 reasons for crossing back or returning, total (%) (more than one answer possible)



1. Assistance program dedicated to the Ukrainian civilians displaced in Romania including money for accommodation and food, <https://dopomoha.ro/ro/programul-5020>

## REASONS FOR CROSSING BACK

The main reasons for crossing back to Ukraine, be it for a short visit or as a prospective returnee, were to meet with family, reported by 39 per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian citizens across all quarters. The next most cited reason for visiting was to bring back documents in the country of residence, cited by 23 per cent of the people interviewed over all four quarters. An analysis between the four quarters shows a slight decrease in the intention to cross back or return to visit family members starting quarter 3, from 23 per cent to 17 per cent.

There has been a discernible rise in the motivation to cross back to Ukraine to bring back document from six per cent in quarter 1 to 17 per cent starting quarter 2 (April - June 2023). The trend remained stable until quarter 4 of the same year (October - December 2023).

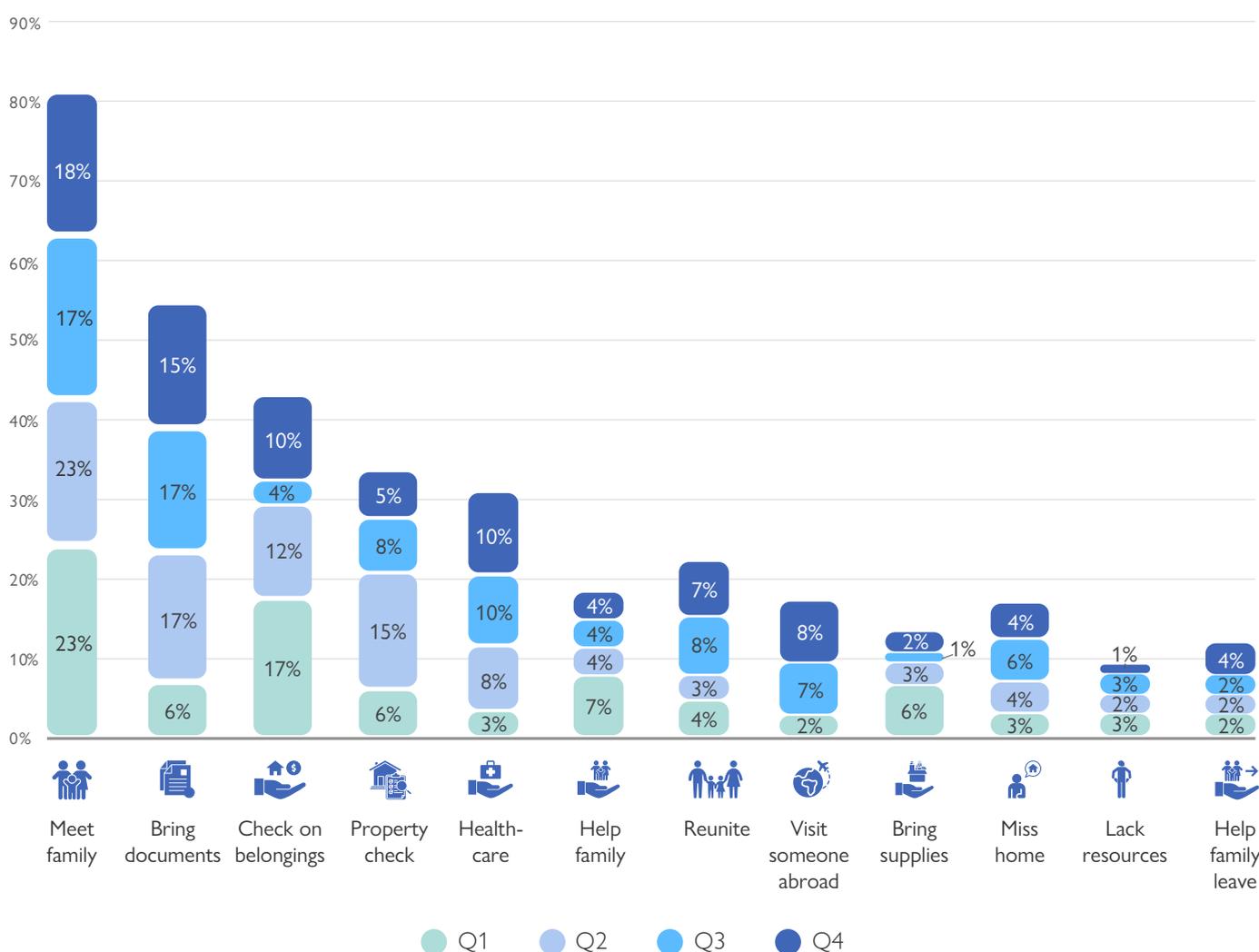
Quarter 1 registered the highest share of Ukrainian nationals crossing back Ukraine to check on belongings (17%), followed by 12 per cent of the Ukrainian citizens that visited Ukraine in Q2 for the same reason. Quarter 3 (July - September

2023) registered the lowest reason to cross back to check on belongings (only 4%).

Another 14 per cent of the Ukrainian nationals have crossed back to Ukraine to check on their properties, with the highest share of Ukrainian nationals to do so in the second quarter (15%). In comparison, during quarters 1, 3 and 4, the share of Ukrainian civilians to check on their belongings was eight per cent or less. Another still significant share of Ukrainian nationals that have crossed back or returned to Ukraine was to access healthcare services (12%). This translates in the fact that 12 per cent of those crossing back or returning cannot access health care services in Romania. The reason of returning or crossing back to Ukraine to access healthcare services has registered an increase starting quarter 2, from three per cent to eight per cent, reaching 10 per cent in quarters 3 and 4.

Other reasons for returning or visiting Ukraine were to check of property because they have visited someone abroad, or to reunite with family members.

Figure 10: Reasons to cross back (short-term) or to stay (prospective returnees) in Ukraine (%)

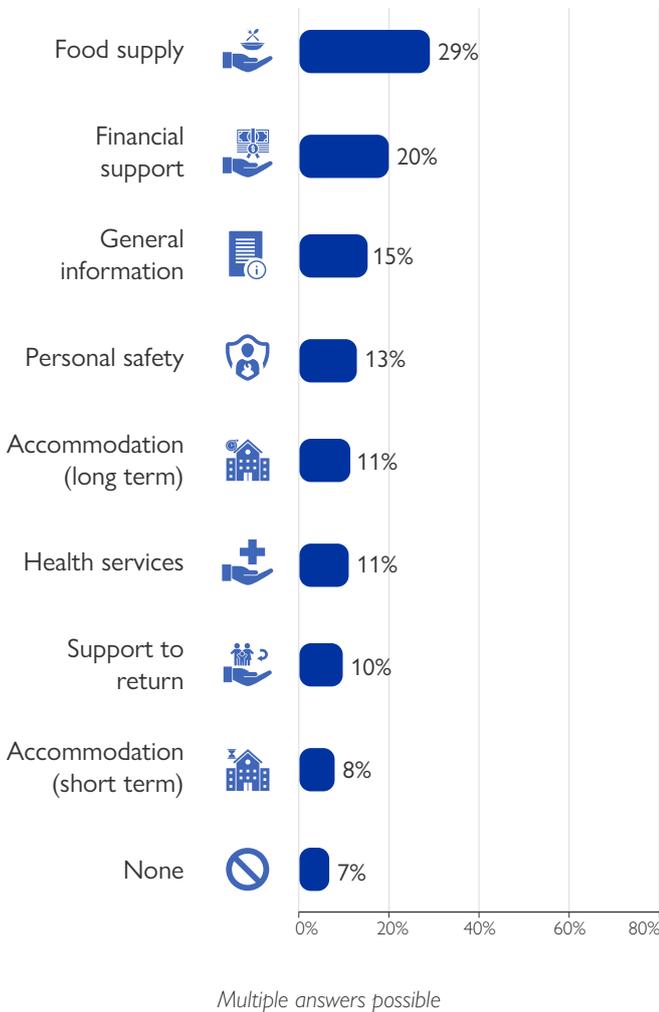


## 5. NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE

### NEEDS

The most common needs cited over the year 2023 were for food supplies, reported by 29 percent of the respondents, followed by the need for financial support (20%) and the need for general information (15%). Other reported needs were the need for personal safety (13%), long term accommodation (11%), health services (11%), support to return (9%) and short term accommodation (8%). Seven per cent reported no needs.

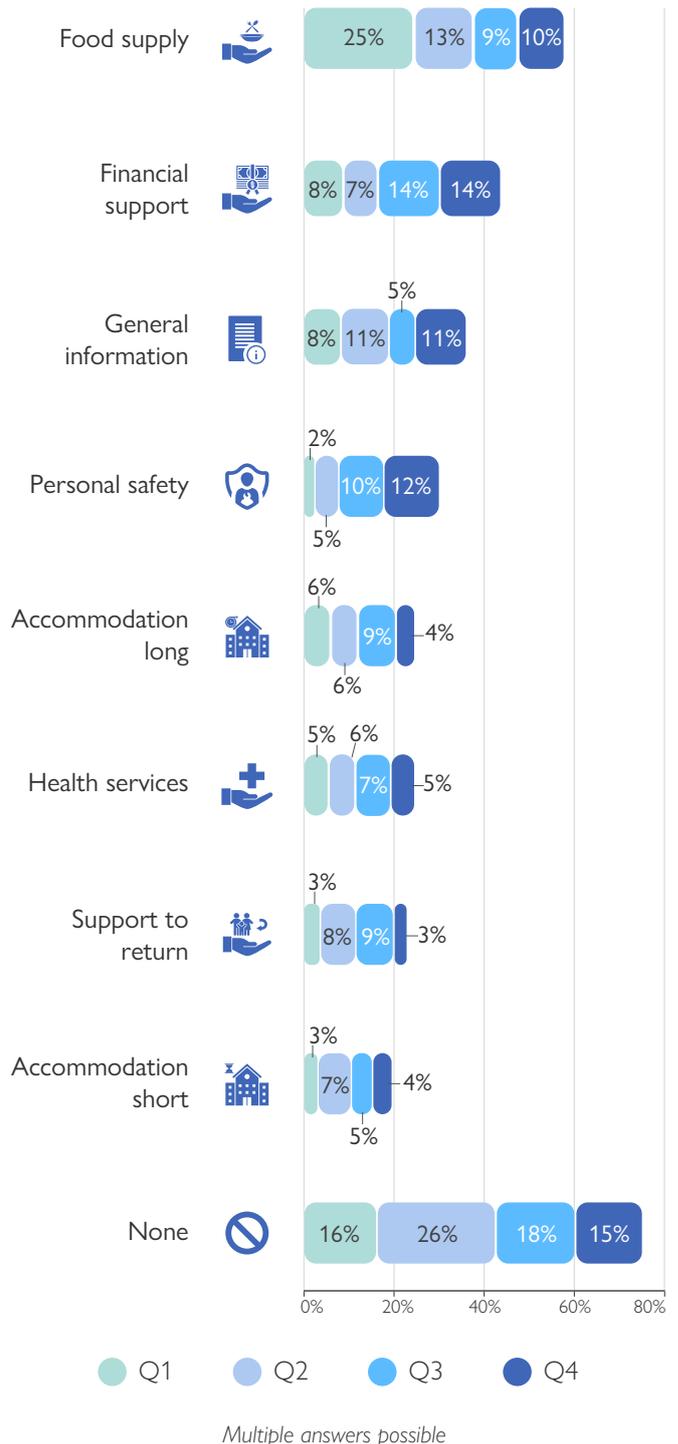
**Figure 11:** Needs among Ukrainian nationals crossing back into Ukraine in 2023 (%)



When split by quarters, the most stringent need was the need for food supplies, reported in quarter 1 (25%), followed by the needs of financial support, reported by 14 per cent of the respondents in quarters 3 and 4. Quarter 4 also registered a slight increase in the needs for personal safety, from 10 per cent in Q3, to 13 per cent in Q4. Quarter 2 registered most

Ukrainian civilians stating that they have no need (26%), eight more percentage points compared to Q3. In contrast, quarters 1 and 4 registered the smallest percentage of respondents reporting no need (15% in Q1 and 15% in Q4).

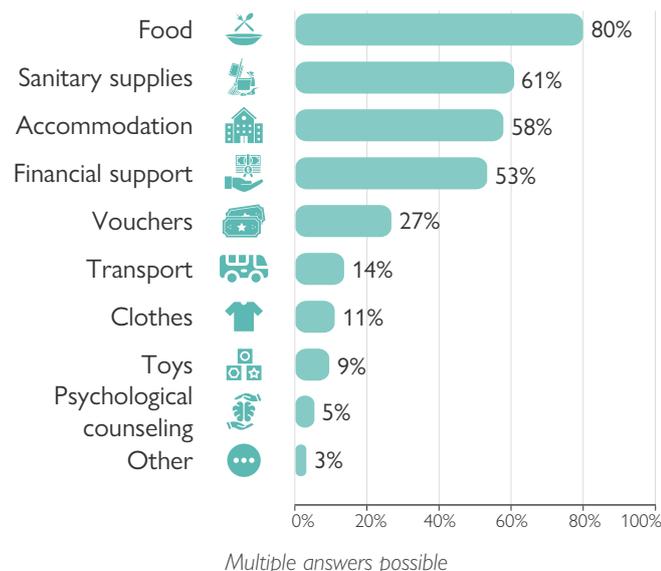
**Figure 12:** Needs among Ukrainian nationals crossing back into Ukraine in 2023, by quarter (%)



## ASSISTANCE IN ROMANIA (N= 3,160)

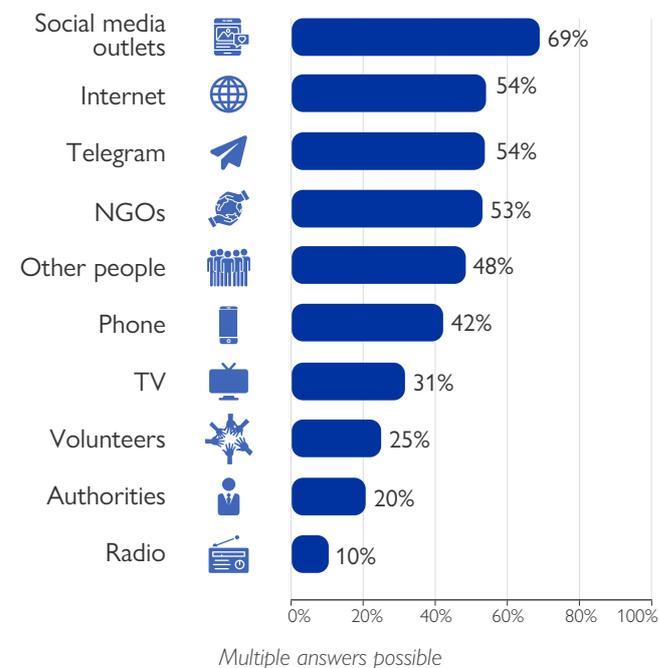
Seventy per cent of the surveyed civilians report having received some form of assistance. Out of those that have received assistance, 80 per cent reported receiving food supplies, followed by 61 per cent that have received sanitary supplies. Fifty-eight per cent have received accommodation and 53 per cent reported receiving financial support. Other forms of support given were vouchers (27%), transportation support (14%) and clothes (11%).

Figure 13: Assistance received



others). Other cited sources of information included other people (48%), messages and calls via mobile phone (42%), 31 per cent reported using the TV, 25 per cent relied on volunteers deployed by humanitarian organizations or public authorities, while 20 per cent of respondents relied on local authorities and municipal officials for information.

Figure 14: Sources of information (%)

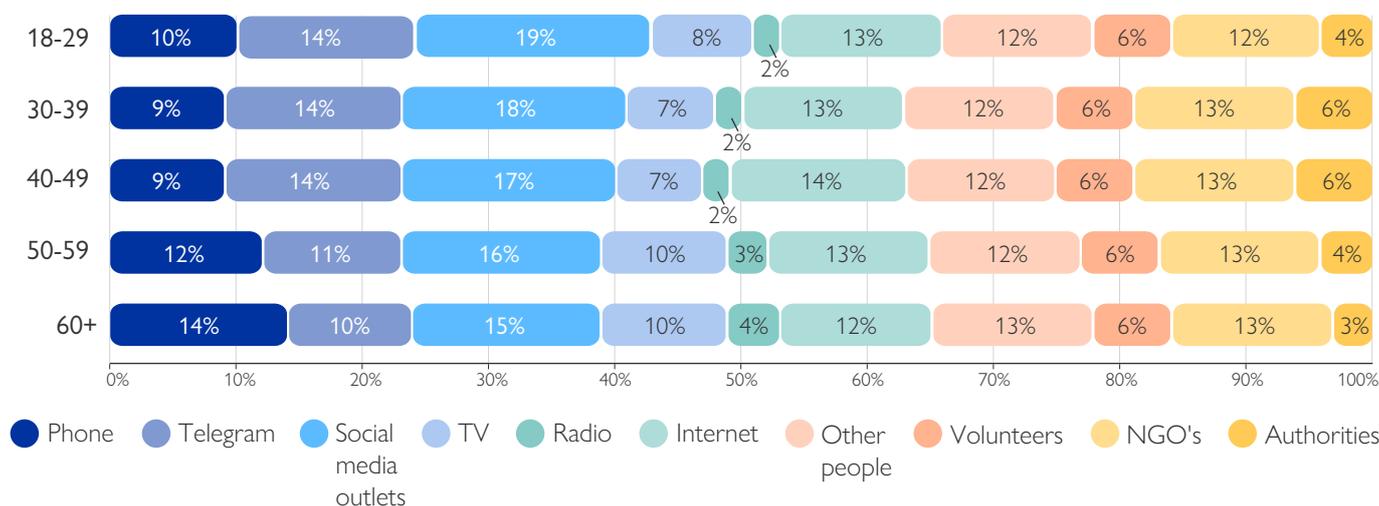


## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The majority of surveyed Ukrainian citizens reported that social media outlets (69%), and in particular Telegram (54%) were their main source of information to learn about available support and services for displaced Ukrainians. Another 54 per cent reported using other internet-based media outlets. Fifty-three per cent of respondents reported that they were relying on NGOs, grassroots or community organizations, or other humanitarian organizations (such as IOM or Red Cross, among

When it comes to the types of source of information used according to a respondents' age, those aged between 18 and 29 years old mostly use social media outlets (19%), mainly Telegram (14%). The next two age groups (30-39 and 40-49), reported using the same sources of information, social media (17%), Telegram and Internet (14%). The next age group (50-59) mainly uses social media outlets as a principal source of information (16%), followed by NGO's (13%). The respondents aged 60 or above mainly use social media outlets (15%), followed by phone calls (14%).

Figure 15: Main sources of information by age group (%)

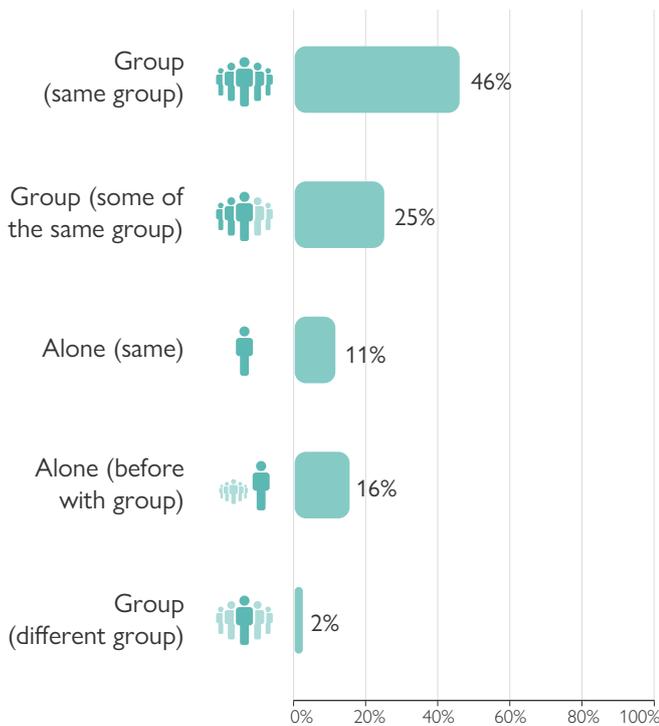


## 6. GROUP COMPOSITION

### WHEN TRAVELLING

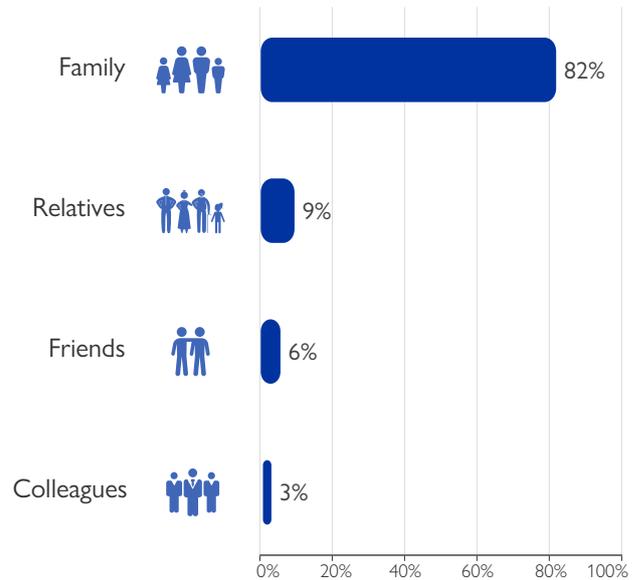
Seventy-three per cent of the persons surveyed stated that they were traveling back to Ukraine in a group, while 27 per cent were alone. Forty-six per cent reported crossing back with the same group with which they had originally entered Romania. Another twenty-five per cent said they were travelling back to Ukraine with part of their original travel group. Sixteen per cent mentioned that they were crossing back to Ukraine alone, even though they entered Romania with a group, and 11 per cent were crossing back to Ukraine alone, same as they came to Romania. Two per cent reported travelling back to Ukraine with a different group than the one with which they originally left.

Figure 16: Travel with group or alone (%)



Out of the persons that reported traveling in a group (N=4,212), 82 per cent were travelling with immediate family members. Respondents also report traveling with other relatives (9%), friends (6%), and work colleagues (3%).

Figure 17: Group composition



### CONCLUSION

Most Ukrainian nationals intend to cross to Ukraine only for a short visit to see family members, check on property and belongings, or help those who remained in Ukraine. Twenty-nine per cent of the surveyed persons indicate that they will need food assistance upon arriving in Ukraine, followed by the need for financial support (20%) or general information (15%). As for the evolution of needs across quarters, the need for financial support registered the biggest increase (doubled) from quarter 2 (7%) to quarter 3 (14%) and 4 (14%). This increase may be related to changes in benefits allocated under Temporary Protection Status in Romania due to recent policy changes<sup>2</sup>. This is also translated through the decrease of respondents reporting no need from 26% in Q2, to 18% in Q3 and 15% in Q4. Most Ukrainian persons surveyed (99%) indicated that they did not encounter any form of discrimination in Romania.

2. The replacement of the 50/20 aid program on the 1st of May 2023 with a new one - <https://dopomoha.ro/ro/programul-5020>

## METHODOLOGY

Since 24 February 2022, Ukrainian and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) have been fleeing to neighbouring countries due to the war in Ukraine. More than 25 million crossings were registered from Ukraine to other countries (Statista), while over 3.5 million have been reported at the borders of neighbouring countries since February 2022. Almost six million people from Ukraine were recorded across Europe as of October 2023 (UNHCR).

Since mid-April 2022, IOM has deployed its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tools to conduct surveys with persons crossing into Ukraine from neighbouring countries. The surveys aim to understand of the main profiles, displacement patterns, intentions and needs of those crossing back into Ukraine.

This report is based on surveys carried out in Romania in 2023, representing a cumulation of all the data collected during 2023.

### Aim

IOM designed the survey to capture the main displacement patterns of Ukrainian civilians crossing back into Ukraine following the initial outbreak of war. The survey collects information on the demographic profiles, intentions, and current needs of Ukrainian nationals.

### Target population

Ukrainians who are crossing back to Ukraine from neighbouring countries.

### Execution

In Romania, IOM DTM enumerators conducted surveys in Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, and English. Trained enumerators carried out face-to-face surveys and registered survey data on a mobile application. All surveys were anonymous. Enumerators

provided a brief introduction and obtained full consent. The survey only included adults (18+ years-old).

### Location

Surveys were conducted in various locations, including Siret, Isaccea, Iasi county and Galati county. Enumerators surveyed respondents at transit points (such as train and bus stations), the Info and Community Centre (run by IOM and UNHCR), collective accommodations, and an aid distribution event.

### Limitations

The sampling framework could not be based on verified figures of Ukrainian nationals from Ukraine exiting towards Ukraine through all land border points where the survey took place.

The survey was carried out in diverse settings in order to maximize the number of respondents and obtain diverse profiles of respondents. Enumerators selected respondents randomly at border crossing and transit points. However, enumerators hand-selected respondents in other settings, such as collective accommodation centres. The survey data and analysis are therefore not representative of populations moving from Romania into Ukraine.

Other limitations in the data collection process include time constraints at the transit centres, as well as the limited number of enumerators deployed at certain sites, with the number of enumerators fluctuating throughout the year.

Whilst the overall sample cannot be deemed as representative, the consistency of data collection in each country and at the regional level suggests that the current sampling framework produces findings of practical value.



GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE  
DISPLACEMENT  
TRACKING MATRIX

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### 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 destinations and prospects of permanence abroad or return; 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.