

A photograph of a man in a black cap and high-visibility vest holding a document for a woman in a winter jacket. The man is looking at the woman with a serious expression. The woman is looking to the side with a concerned expression. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a border crossing or a public area.

ROMANIA UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE

JANUARY - MARCH 2024



GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE
DISPLACEMENT
TRACKING MATRIX

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Cover photo: Transit camp for Ukrainian refugees in Romania. © IOM 2022

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KEY FINDINGS

Demographics



1,287
Ukrainian citizens



Male
16%



Female
84%

Intentions



15%
Prospective returnee



63%
Short visit



22%
Unknown

Needs



39%
Health services

Top reasons for crossing back



36%
Official documents

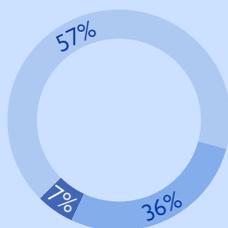


29%
Healthcare



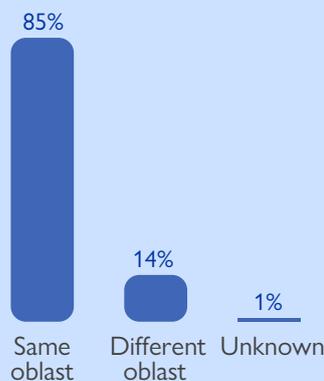
29%
Meet family

Top countries of stay



- Romania
- EU countries
- Third countries

Destination



39%
Financial support

Entries & Exits



84% have crossed back to Ukraine

18% up to two times

66% twice or more

Oblasts of origin

77% come from:

- Odeska
- Chernivetska
- City of Kyiv
- Mykolaivska
- Khersonska

23% other oblasts



31%
None

Assistance

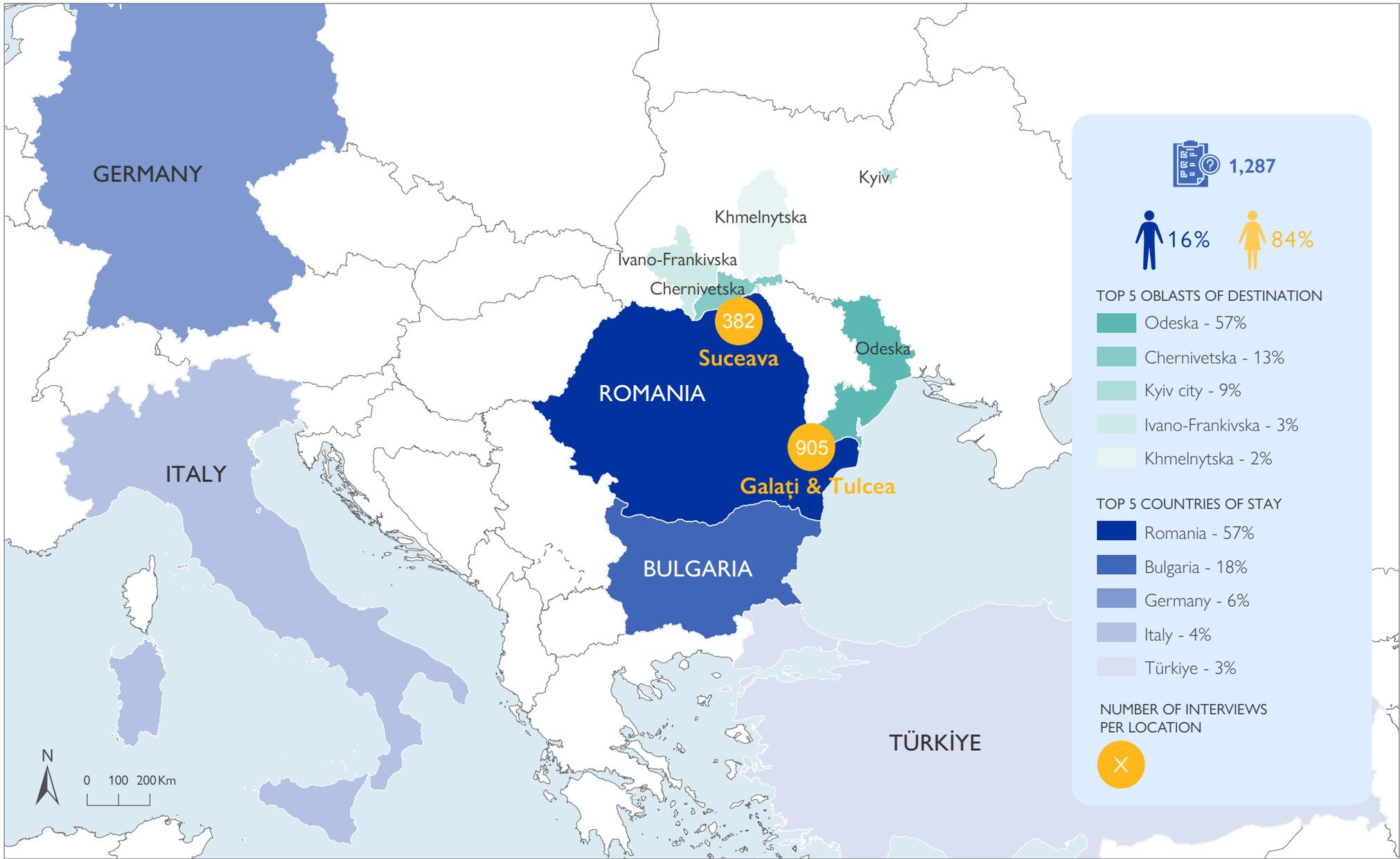
Received by two thirds of the respondents, provided by:



29%
General information

Multiple answers possible

MAP: Top oblasts of intended destination vs. oblast of origin , January to March 2024



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM

OVERVIEW

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) collected data on Ukrainian nationals and TCNs (resided in Ukraine before 24 February 2022) that were crossing back to Ukraine from or through Romania, either temporarily or permanently. The survey focuses on the return intentions, duration of displacement, destinations, assistance, and experiences of discrimination of

respondents. A total of 1,298 surveys were collected between January and March 2024. Among these, less than one per cent (n=11) were completed by TCNs, while the vast majority, comprising over 99 per cent (n=1,287), were completed by Ukrainian nationals. The analysis presented in this report is based on the responses provided by Ukrainian nationals.

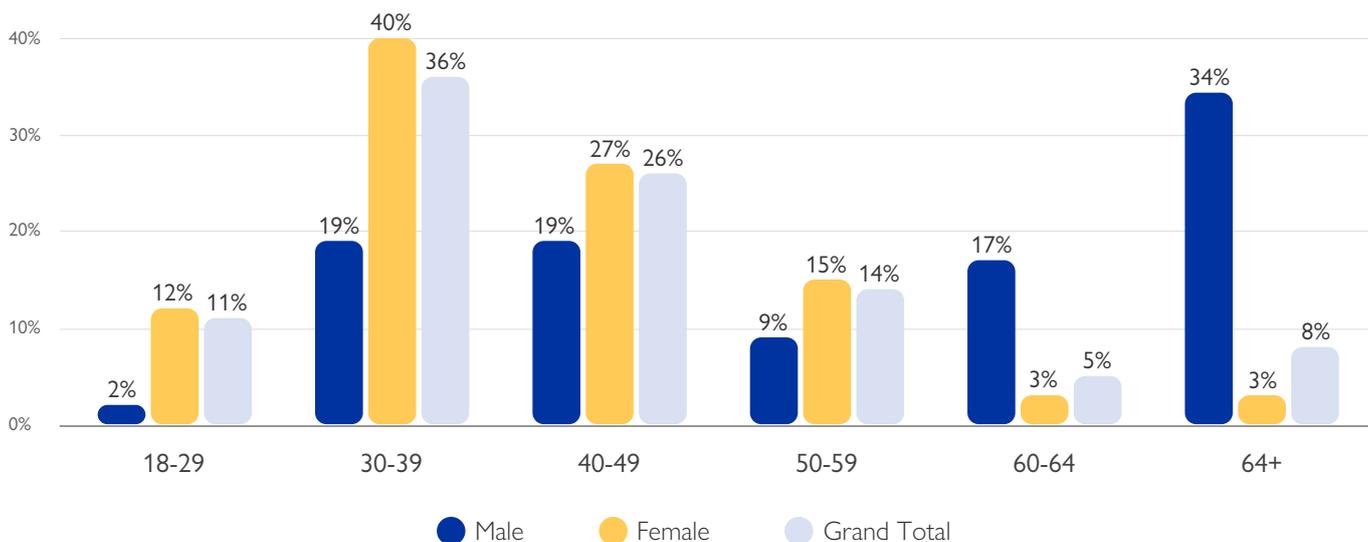
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

GENDER AND AGE

Among surveyed Ukrainian nationals, 84 per cent were women, while 16 per cent were men. The average age of surveyed Ukrainian nationals was 43 years old. The average age of surveyed men (55 years old) is significantly higher than

the average age of surveyed women (41 years old). Ninety-two per cent of respondents were of working age, between 18 and 64 years old.

Fig. 1: Gender of respondents by age (%)



MARITAL STATUS

Around eighty-nine per cent of persons interviewed stated that they were married. Another six per cent were single, two per

cent reported being in a partnership, or widowed (2%). One per cent were divorced.

Fig. 2: Marital status (%)



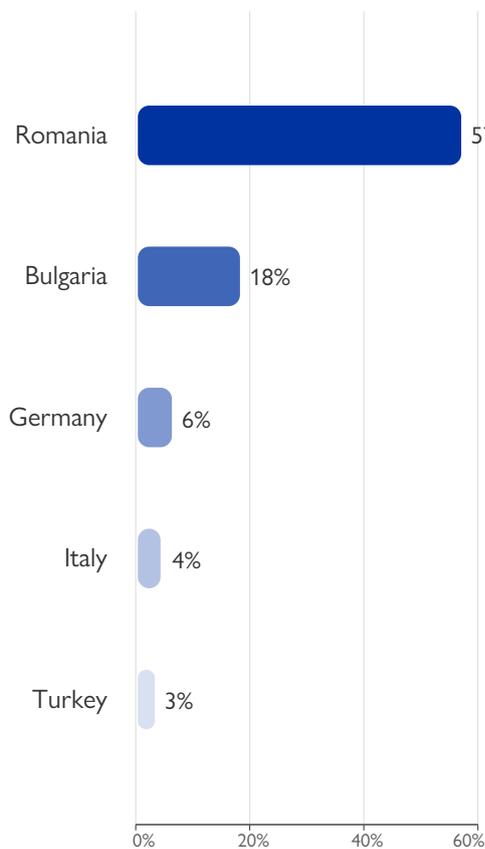
TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE

COUNTRIES OF STAY

Fifty-seven per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian nationals had been staying in Romania. Others lived in Bulgaria (18%), Germany (6%), Italy (4%), Turkey (3%), and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (3%).

A small share of the surveyed persons had stayed in Belgium (2%), Czech Republic (1%), Austria (1%), France (1%) or Spain (1%). The remaining three per cent had been living in 17 various countries before crossing back to Ukraine through Romania.

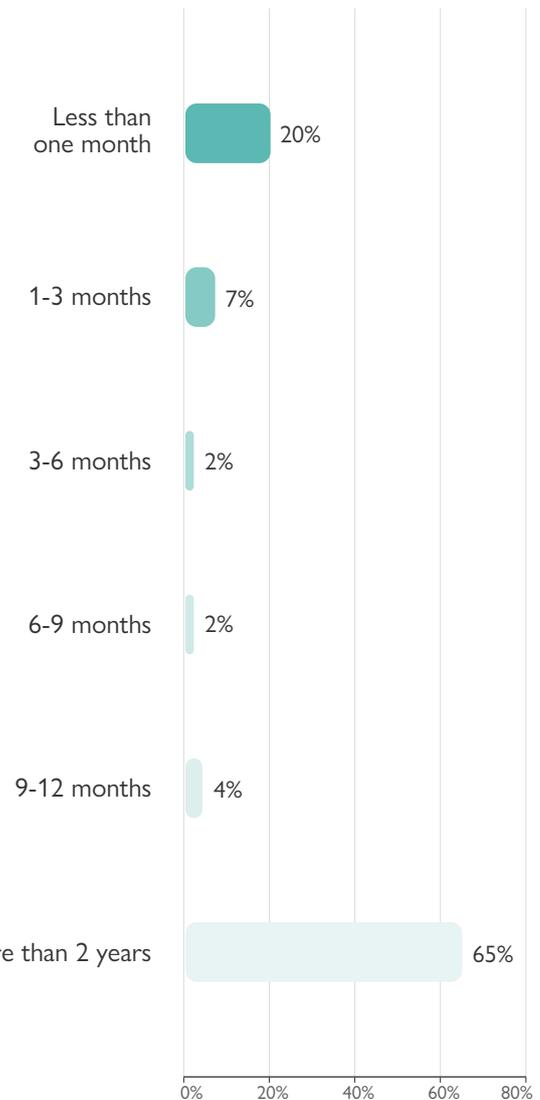
Fig. 3: Top 5 countries of stay before crossing back (%)



AVERAGE TIME SINCE INITIAL DISPLACEMENT

Most respondents were displaced more than two years ago (65%), around the start of the war. Thirty per cent of the UA nationals have been displaced since the beginning of 2024, having spent less than a month in displacement.

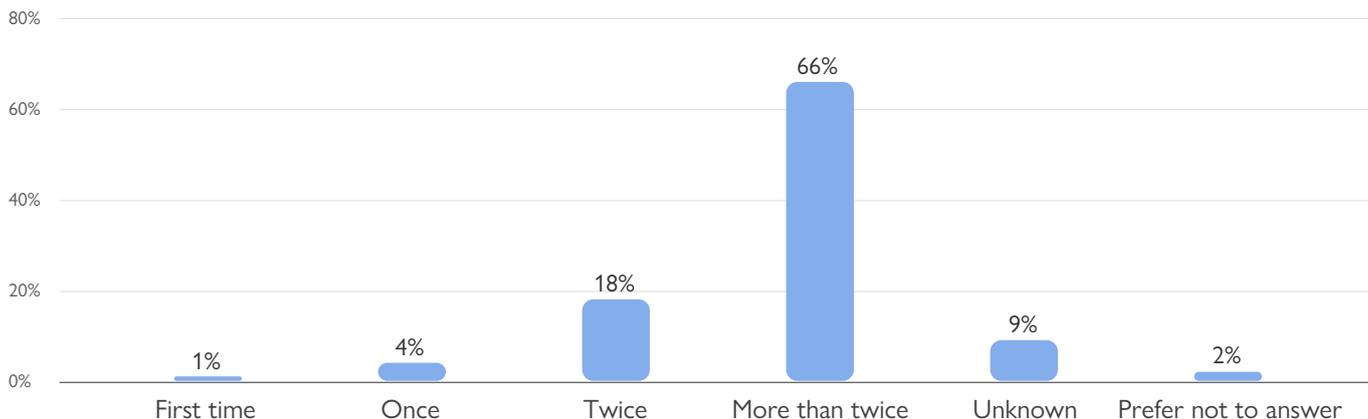
Fig. 4: Time in displacement (%)



EXITS & 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 (18%) or more than twice (66%) since their initial displacement. Only four per cent of respondents had entered/exited Ukraine only once since February 2022, and one per cent reported exiting for the first time at the time of survey. Nine per cent did not know how to answer, and two per cent preferred not to answer this question.

Fig. 5: Number of entries and exits into Ukraine (%)



Out of the 66 per cent that crossed the Ukrainian border more than twice, 16 per cent have crossed it at least ten times, 12 per cent have crossed the border between 3 and 5 times and two per cent crossed the border between 6 and 10 times. Overall, the data indicates that a majority of respondents have made

at least one return trip to Ukraine. This is facilitated by the legal framework and permits that allow Ukrainians to exit and re-enter the Schengen area.¹ Additionally, the EU’s Temporary Protection status provides the highest degree of freedom of movement, followed by the visa-free program.²

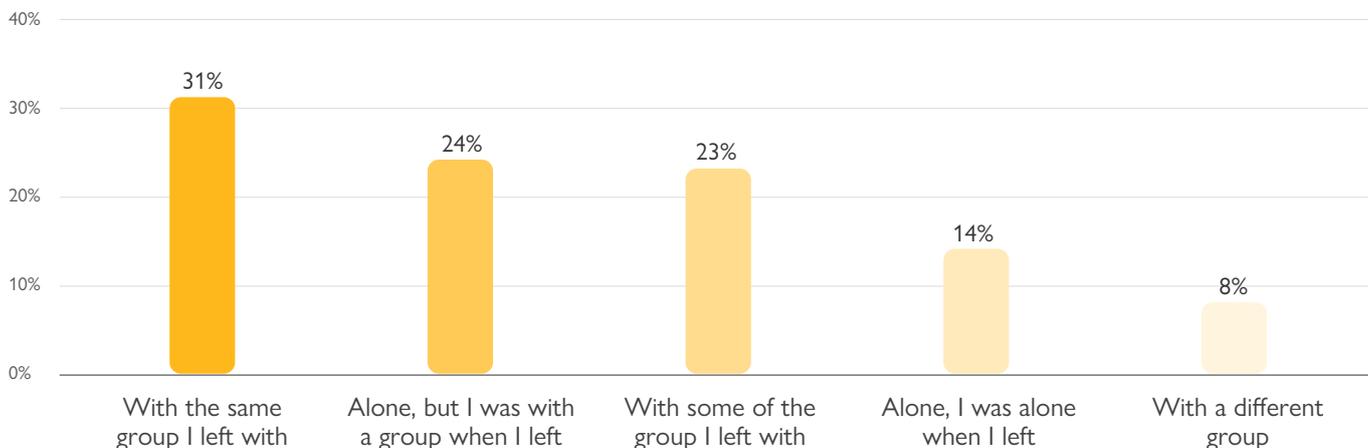
CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE

GROUP COMPOSITION

Sixty-two per cent of respondents travelled back to Ukraine in a group, while 38 per cent were alone. Thirty-one per cent reported crossing back with the same group with which they had originally entered Romania. Another twenty-four per cent said they were travelling back to Ukraine alone, even if they crossed from Ukraine accompanied. Twenty-three per cent

were crossing back to Ukraine with part of the group they initially travelled with, and 14 per cent were crossing back to Ukraine alone, same as they came to Romania. Eight per cent reported travelling back to Ukraine with a different group than the one with which they originally left

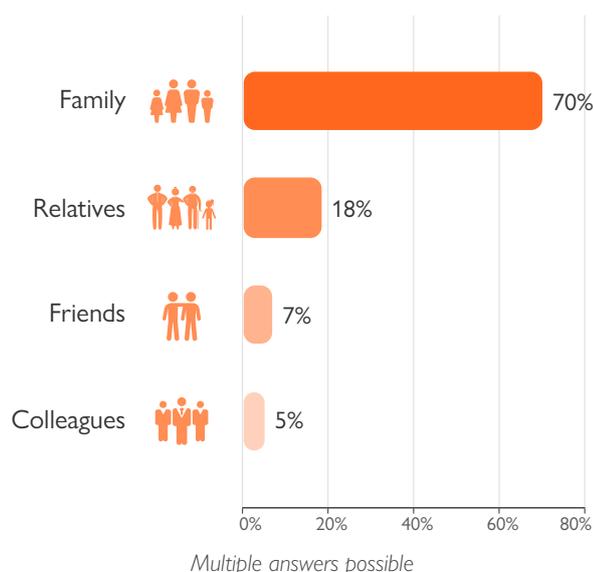
Fig. 6: Group composition upon crossing into Ukraine (%)



1. European Commission, “Temporary protection” < https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection_en > Accessed 17 May 2024.
 2. European Commission, “Schengen Area” < https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/schengen-area_en > Accessed 17 May 2024.

Out of the persons that reported traveling in a group (n=794), 70 per cent were travelling with immediate family members. Respondents also report traveling with other relatives (18%), friends (7%), and work colleagues (5%). Out of those that came accompanied, 18 per cent were accompanied by infants between 0 and 4 years old, 28 per cent were accompanied by children aged between 5 and 17 years old and 16 per cent came accompanied by elders.

Fig. 7: Group members upon traveling to Ukraine (%)



OBLAST (REGION) OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

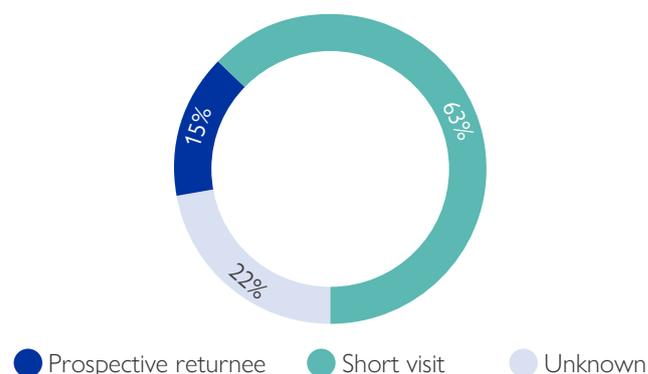
Seventy-seven per cent of the surveyed Ukrainians came from five oblasts in Ukraine: Odeska (47%), Chernivetska (11%), city of Kyiv (8%), Mykolaivska (6%) and Khersonska (5%). The remaining 23 per cent came from other oblasts.

The majority of respondents (85%) intended to reach their oblast of origin. Fourteen per cent intended to cross back to a different oblast. The top intended destinations were: Odeska (58%), Chernivetska, (13%) the city of Kyiv (9%), Ivano-Frankivska (3%) and Khmelnytska (3%).

INTENDED DURATION OF STAY

For analytical purposes, individuals planning to spend 0 to 30 days in Ukraine are categorized as “short-term visitors,” while those intending to stay longer than one month are identified as “prospective returnees.” Sixty-three per cent of the respondents have mentioned crossing back for a short period of time, between 0 and 30 days, while 15 per cent mentioned returning to Ukraine for a long to infinite period of time (prospective returnees). An important share of 22 per cent were unknown.

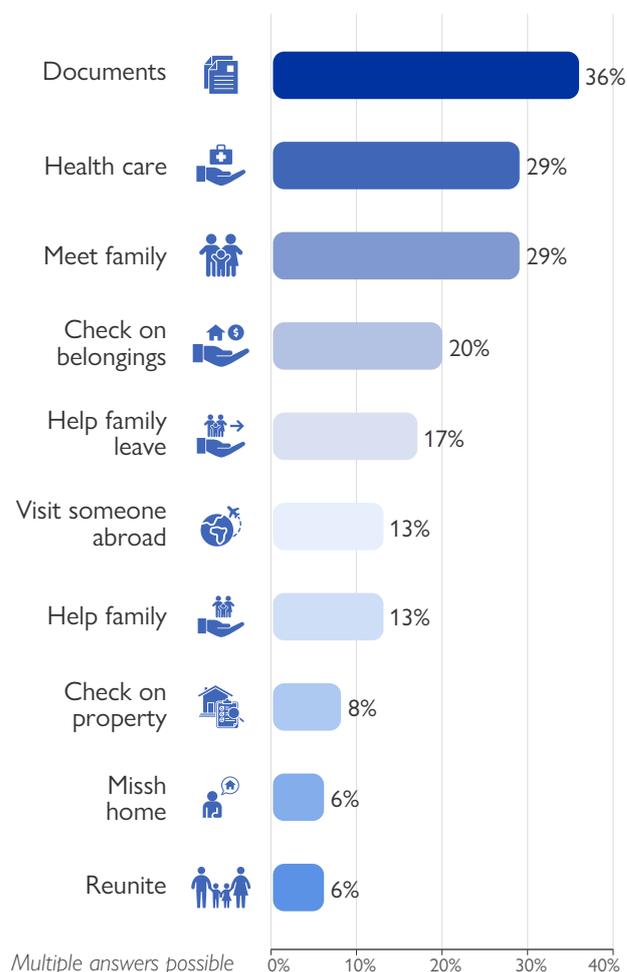
Fig. 8: Travel intentions (%)



REASONS FOR CROSSING BACK

The main reason for crossing back to Ukraine, among both short-term visitors and prospective returnees, was to obtain documents, reported by 36 per cent of the surveyed Ukrainians. The next most cited reason for visiting was healthcare (29%), followed meeting with family, reported by 29 per cent of the respondents. The need to cross back to Ukraine for healthcare reasons translates in the lack of healthcare access of the Ukrainian population in the country of residence.

Fig. 9: Top 10 reasons for crossing back to Ukraine

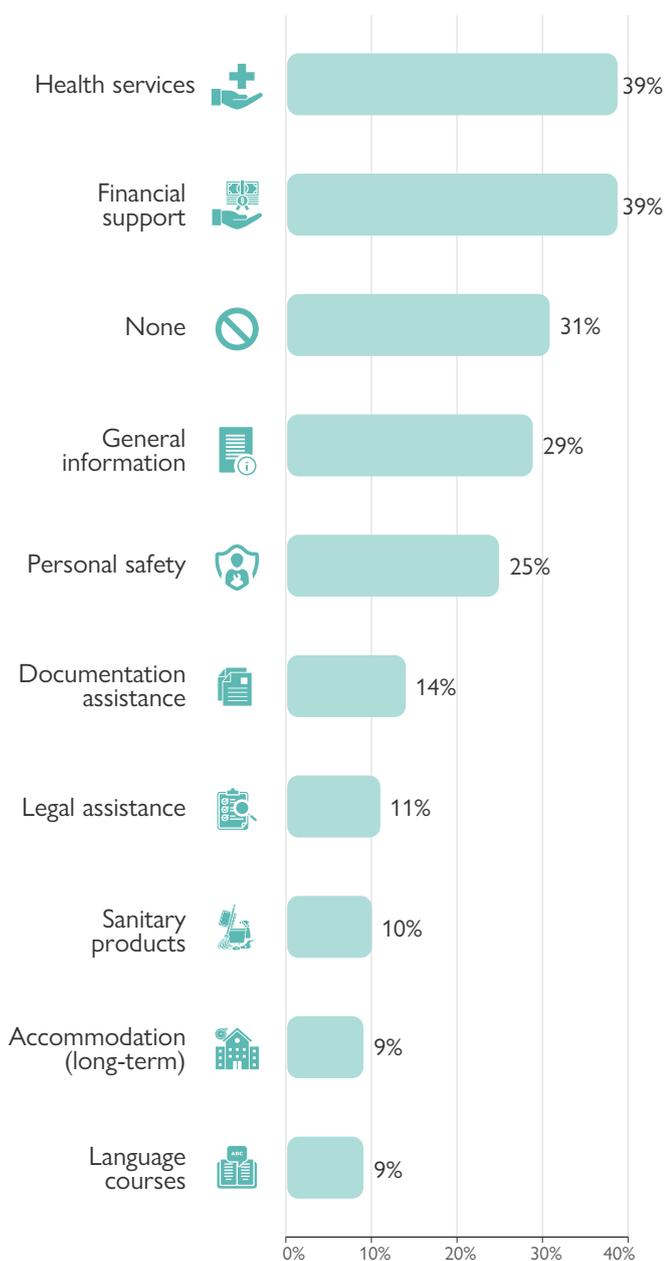


NEEDS, ASSISTANCE, AND CHALLENGES

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

The most common needs cited were the need for healthcare services and financial support, both reported by 39 percent of the respondents, followed by the need for general information (29%). Other reported needs were the need for personal safety (25%), documentation assistance (14%), legal assistance (11%) or sanitary products (10%). Thirty-one per cent reported no needs.

Fig. 10: Top 10 needs upon arrival at destination (%):



When asked about their perceived ease of access of basic services upon their arrival, 64 per cent of the surveyed respondents (n=612) considered it easy or very easy to access.³ When asked about the ease of accessing food, 69 per cent of the surveyed respondents (n=611) perceived it as easy or very easy to access. Sixty-three per cent of the surveyed respondents (n=612), found it easy or very easy to cover their basic expenses upon arrival at their intended destination. For the respondents in need of official documents (n=611), 75 per cent found the task to be easy or very easy. For those engaged in community issues or public affairs (n=604), only 42 per cent found the resolving these issues as easy or very easy, while 26 per cent found resolving these issues as difficult or very difficult. Two thirds of those that needed to find accommodation (n=608) found this task easy or very (66%).

Out of the share of respondents that mentioned reuniting with their family members (n=621), 63 per cent mentioned that they will not have been reunited, while 36 per cent mentioned that they will reunite with their family members. One per cent did not want to give an answer.



Ukrainian refugees in a train station in Romania. © 2022

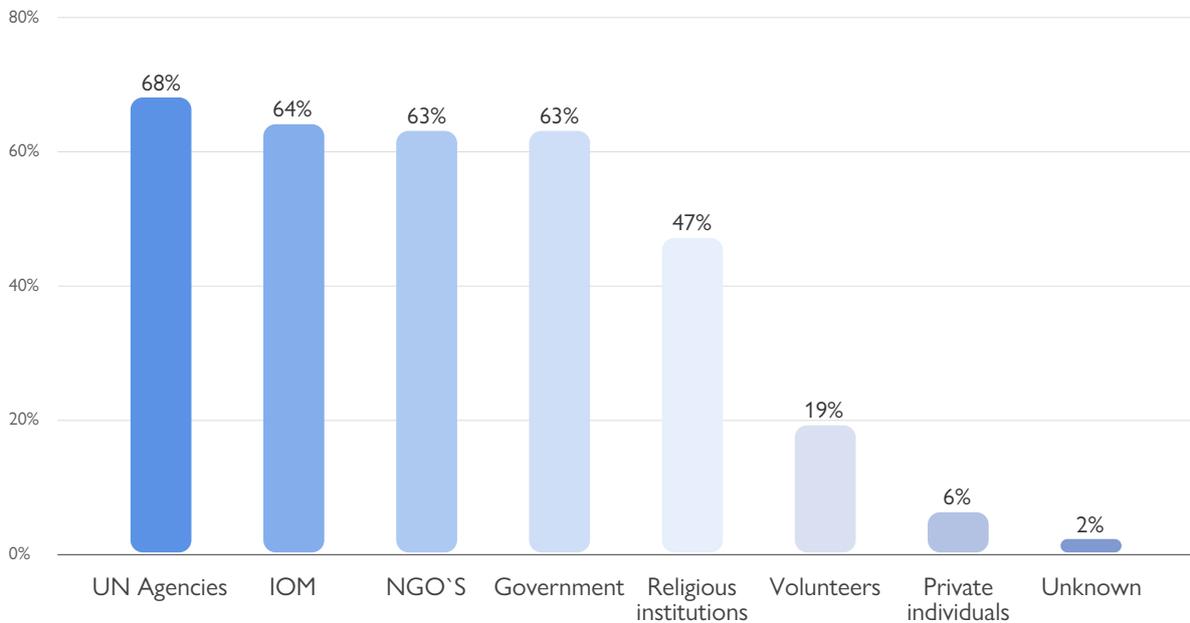
3. It should be noted, the scale ranged from 0 to 10, where 0 = not easy at all, and 10 = very easy.

ASSISTANCE RECEIVED

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents had received some form of assistance (n=886). The organizations that provided assistance were UN agencies, reported by 68 per cent of the respondents, IOM (64%), NGO's (63%), local governments (63%) or religious

organizations (47%). Other, less mentioned, assistance providers were volunteers (19%) or private individuals (6%). Two per cent did not know to mention the source of assistance.

Fig. 11: Main sources of assistance (%)



Multiple answers possible

REMARKS

Most Ukrainian nationals intend to cross to Ukraine for short visits, primarily to bring necessary documents, seek healthcare services, or meet family members. Among the surveyed individuals, they indicated a need for healthcare services upon

arriving in Ukraine, followed by financial support or general information. A majority of Ukrainians have received assistance in Romania, including from the UN and the government.



Authorities and emergency services on standby, ready to provide immediate assistance to all those crossing the Republic of Moldova's Sculeni border crossing point with Romania. © IOM 2023

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 Ukrainians have crossed outside of Ukraine to other countries (Statista), while over 4 million have been reported at the borders of neighbouring countries since February 2022. Around eight million people from Ukraine were recorded across Europe as of February 2023 (MIGRATIONPORTAL). 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 between January and March of 2024, representing a cumulation of all the data collected during this time span.



ABOUT THE SURVEY

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, 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.

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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 of 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 in the country of displacement; 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 refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult:

<https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>