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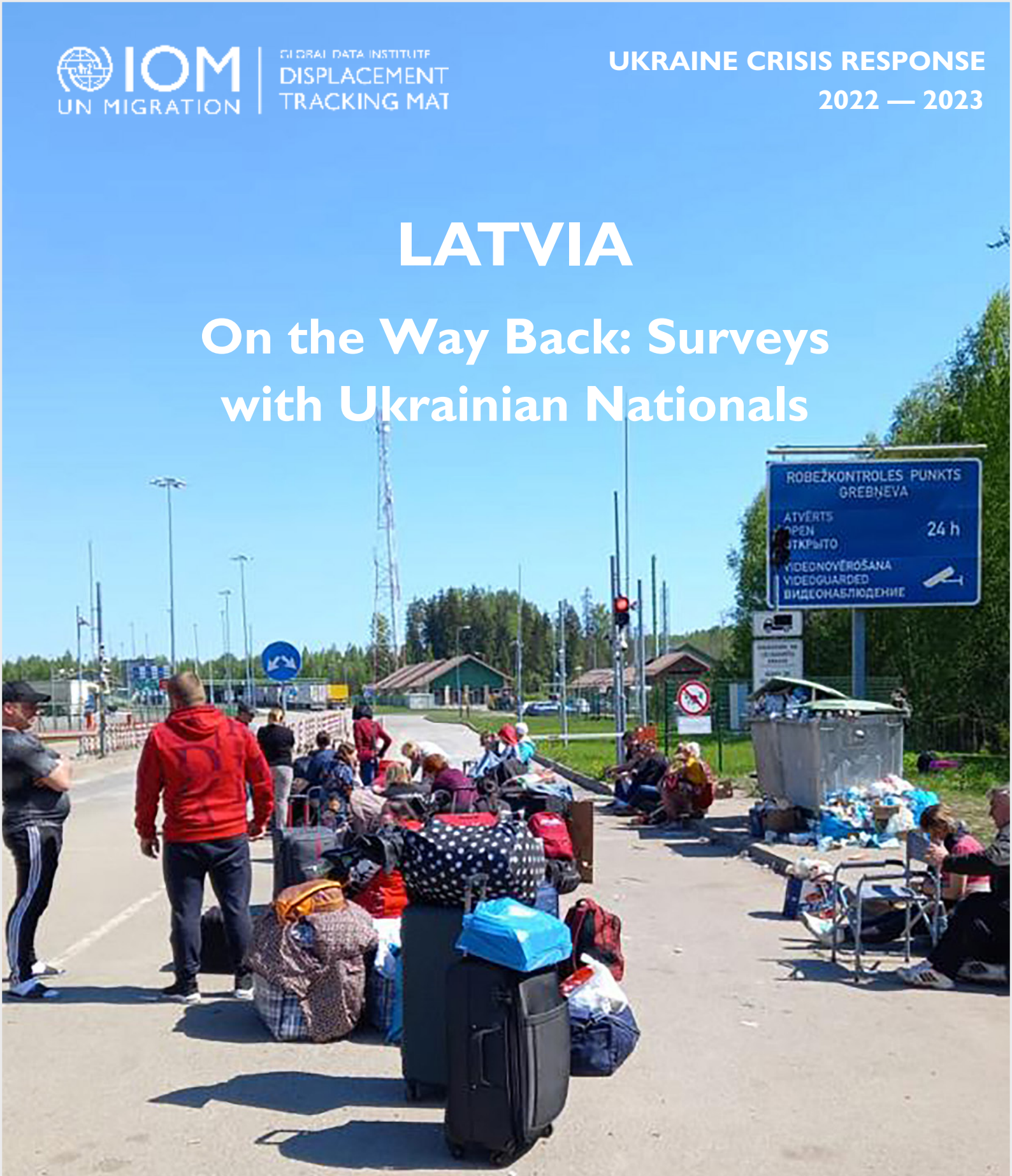
UKRAINE CRISIS RESPONSE
2022 — 2023

LATVIA

On the Way Back: Surveys with Ukrainian Nationals



July – September 2023
Country Report & Data Analysis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Socio-Demographic Profile 6

2. Time Outside of Ukraine 7

3. Oblasts (regions) of Origin and Destination 9

4. Intentions and Reasons to Return to Ukraine 10

5. Needs, Assistance Received, and Challenges 11

6. Group Composition 12

7. Methodology 14

KEY FINDINGS

Top 3 countries of stay:

- Poland (34%)
- Germany (21%)
- Russian Federation (15%)

Top 3 oblasts* of origin:

- Donetska (27%)
- Luhanska (21%)
- Zaporizka (14%)

* Regions in Ukraine

Destinations:

To the oblast of origin **(90%)**

To a different oblast **(8%)**:
Donetska, Luhanska, Autonomous Republic of Crimea

Don't know (**2%**).

Needs:

General information (84%)

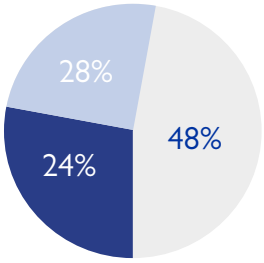
Food supplies (11%)

Short-term accommodation (2%)

Multiple answers possible

Intentions:

- Long term stay
- Short term visit
- Don't know



Assistance:

- Financial support (92%)
- Accommodation (70%)
- Food supplies (59%)

Multiple answers possible

Entries & exits:

12%

went back to Ukraine twice or more prior to the survey.

Displacement:

31%

displaced between January - June 2022.

Travel:

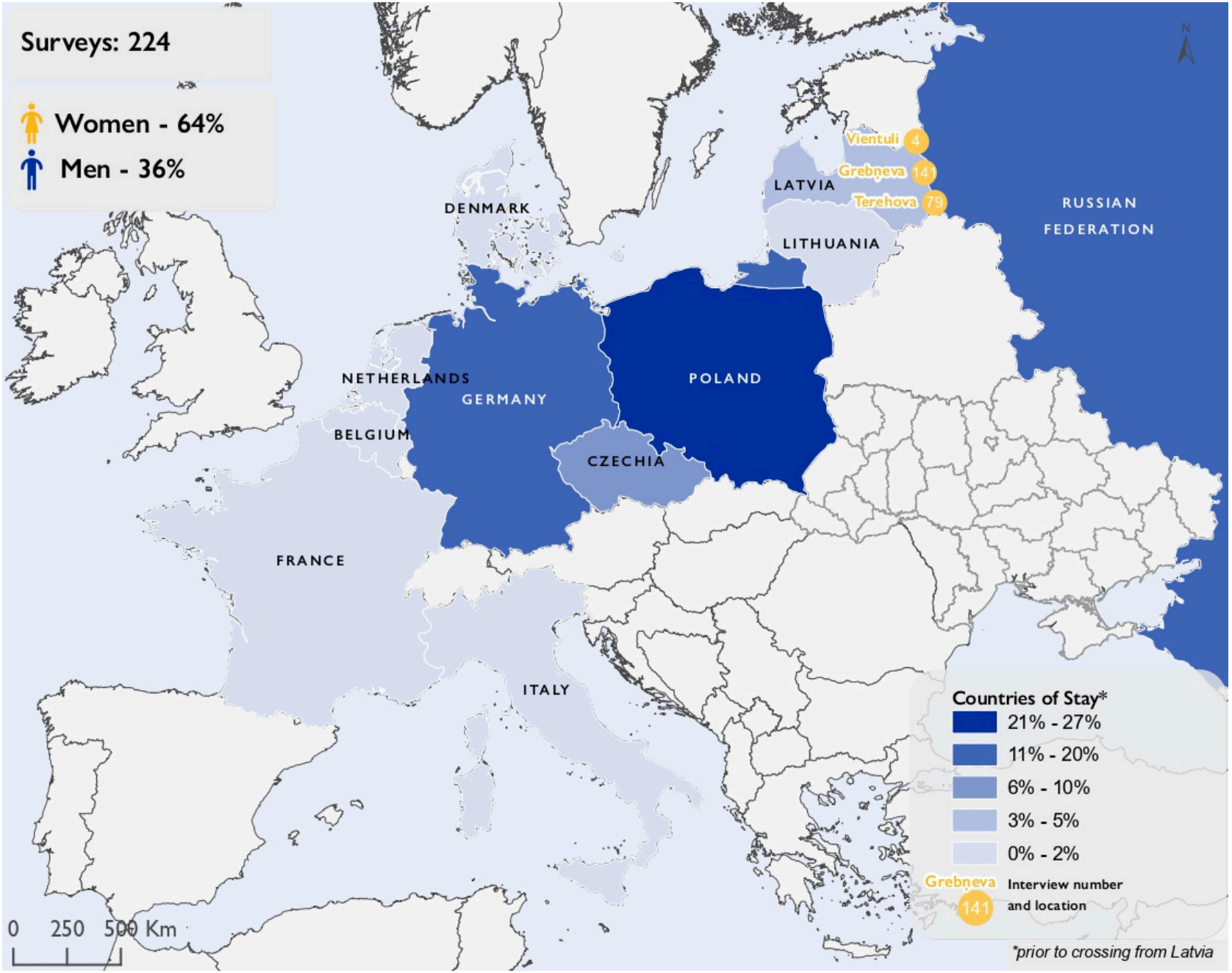
64%

crossing to Ukraine alone.

36%

returning to Ukraine with group.

Map 1: Locations of surveys deployed in Latvia, and countries of stay outside of Ukraine



The map is for illustration purposes. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

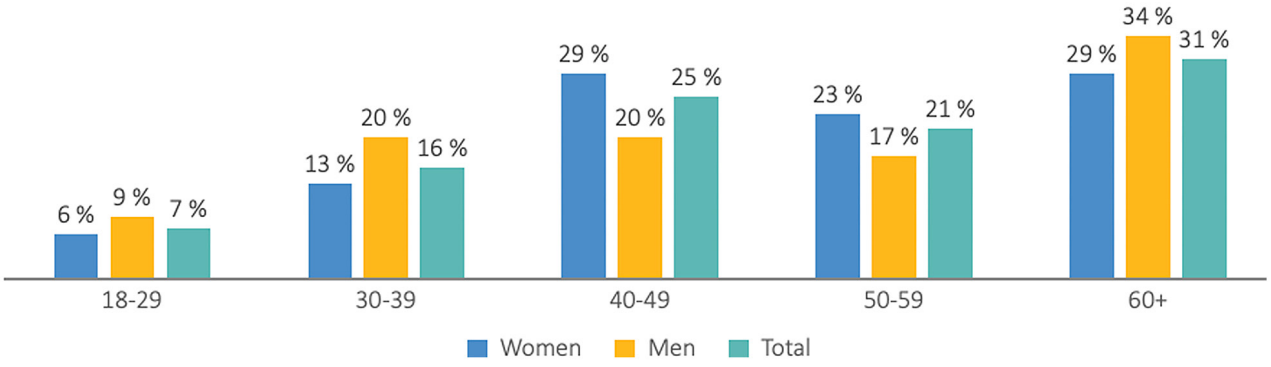
1. Socio-Demographic Profile

Gender and age

This survey presents findings on assistance, length of stay and destinations of refugees from Ukraine who travelled through the Russian Federation to reach non-governmental controlled areas in Ukraine. The respondents were interviewed at crossing or transit points while they were leaving Latvia.

Out of them, 64 per cent were women, and 36 per cent were men. The average age for both women and men was 50 years. The majority of respondents were aged 60 years or older (31%), followed by those aged between 40 and 49 (25%) and between 50 and 59 years (21%). The largest age group among women was 60 years and above (29%), followed by those aged between 40 and 49 (29%). Among men, the predominant age group was 60 years and above (34%), followed by those aged between 40 and 49 years (20%).

Figure 1: Age, by gender and total (%), (N=224)

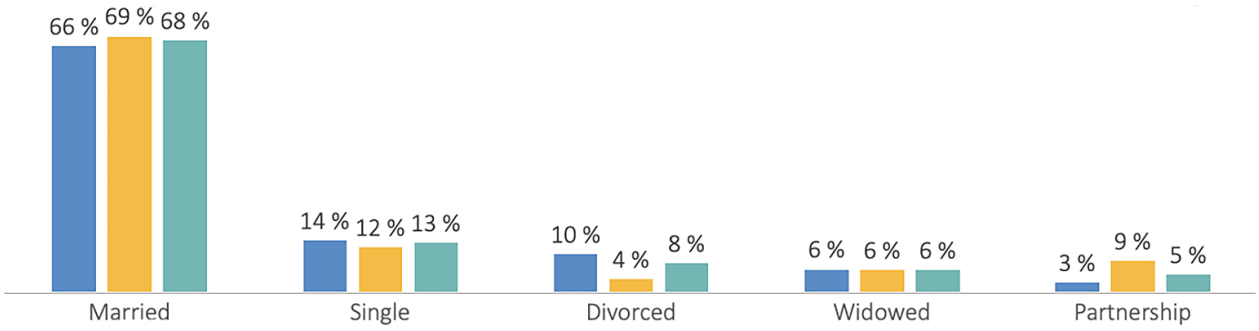


Marital status

Over half of the respondents were married (68%), while another thirteen per cent were single. Fourteen per cent were divorced and widowed (8% and 6% respectively). The remaining five per cent were in a partnership.

The share of single persons was higher among women than among men (14% versus 12%), while men were more likely to be in a partnership in the sample (9% versus 3%). Women were more than twice as likely than men to be divorced (10% versus 4%).

Figure 2: Marital status, by gender and total (%), (N=224)

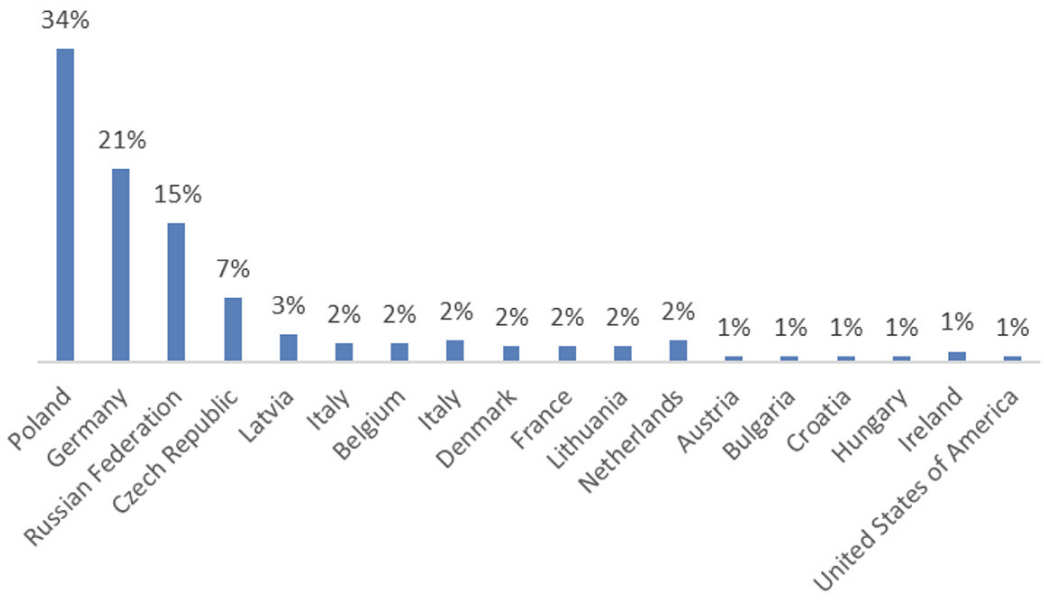


2. Time Outside of Ukraine

Countries of stay

Only three per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian nationals spent most of their time outside Ukraine in Latvia. The majority of them (97%) spent their time outside Ukraine in other countries. Poland accounted for 34 per cent, Germany for 21 per cent, and the Russian Federation for 15 per cent. A smaller portion of respondents stayed in Czechia (7%), Italy (2%), as well as Lithuania, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy and the Netherlands (2% each). The remaining six per cent of respondents lived in 6 different countries before returning to Ukraine through Latvia.

Figure 3: Countries of stay (%), (N=175)



Average time since initial displacement

The approximate duration of time spent outside Ukraine can be assessed by looking at the difference between respondents' initial date of displacement from Ukraine, and the date of interview. Out of the total sample, 16 per cent of respondents were displaced between April and June 2022. Another eleven per cent of refugee from Ukraine were displaced between July and September 2022. Therefore, by the time the interviews were conducted (July - September 2023), they had spent about 12-14 months outside Ukraine. The few months between July 2023 and September 2023, displacement fluctuated between 2 per cent to 7 per cent. It indicates that the respondents spent a duration of approximately two months or less in displacement during this period.

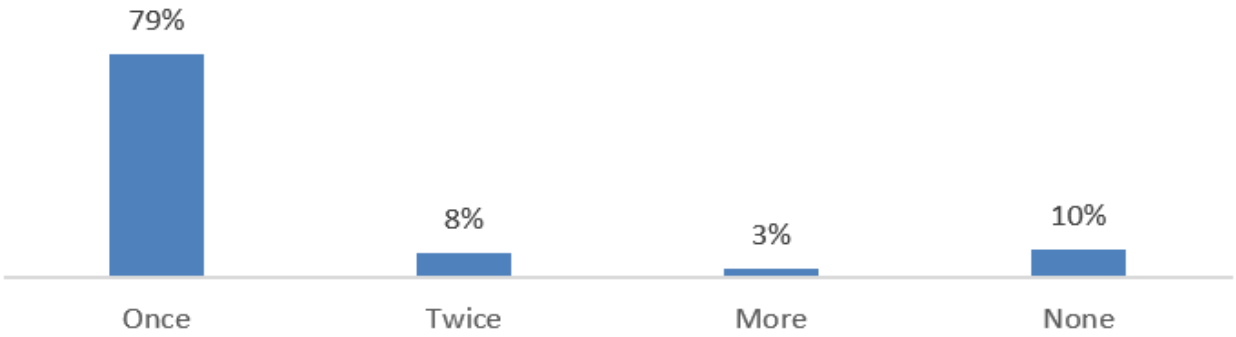
Table 1: Approximate time in displacement until the date of interview (%), (N=224)

Date of initial displacement	Length of displacement	% of respondents
Before 2022	2 years or more	10%
Jan-Mar 2022	18-20 months	15%
Apr-Jun 2022	15-17 months	16%
Jul-Sept 2022	12-14 months	11%
Oct-Dec 2022	9-11 months	13%
Jan-Mar 2023	6-8 months	7%
Apr-Jun 2023	3-5 months	13%
Jul-Sept 2023	<1-2 months	15%

Number of exits/entries to and from Ukraine

Most respondents (79%) have entered or exited Ukraine only once since February 2022. Eight per cent of respondents have entered or exited the country twice during that time period, while three per cent have done so more than two times. The remaining ten per cent have never returned to Ukraine since the time of their displacement.

Figure 4: Number of entries/exits between 24 February 2022 and 30 September 2023 (%), (N=224)



Transport

Over one-third of respondents (36%) travelled to Latvia using public transport, particularly minibuses. The second most common mode of transportation was on foot, accounting for 30 per cent of respondents. Approximately 29 per cent of respondents entered Latvia by car, while five per cent arrived by bus.

Figure 5: Main modes of transportation, (%)

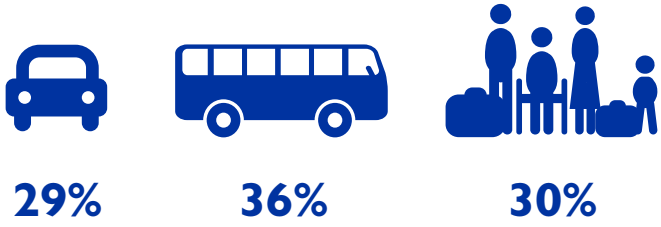
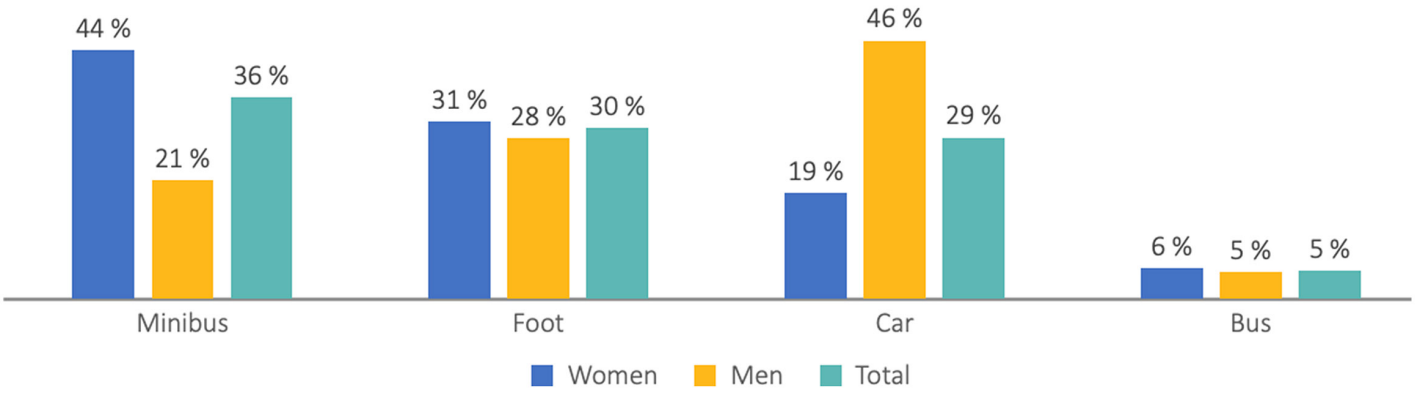


Figure 6: Main modes of transportation (%), (N=224)

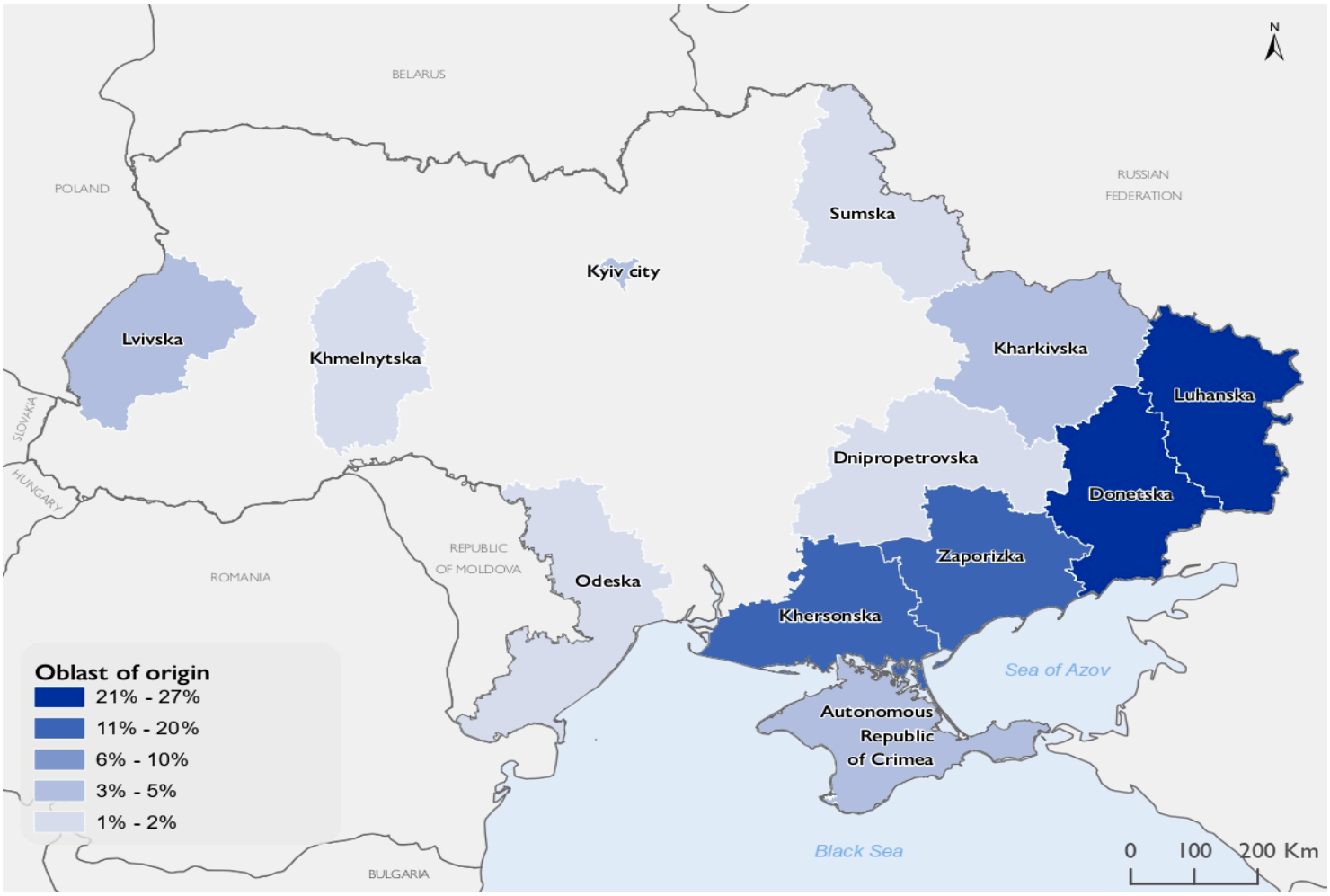


3. Oblasts (regions) of Origin and Destination

Origin or habitual residence

The majority of respondents (75%) came from five oblasts in Ukraine: Donetska (27%), Luhanska (21%), Zaporizka (14%), Khersonska (13%) – which are the most eastern regions of the country with big parts of the territory currently not under governmental control. The remaining 25 per cent of respondents came from 10 other oblasts in Ukraine.

Map 2: Oblast of origin before leaving Ukraine



The map is for illustration purposes. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Intended destinations

Ninety per cent of respondents stated that they intended to return to the same oblast they were displaced from. A smaller portion of respondents (9%) planned to go to a different oblast. The remaining one per cent were uncertain about returning to the same oblast of origin. Among those returning to a different oblast (N=21), 11 respondents intended to go to Donetska, 4 intended to go to Luhanska, and the remaining to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kyiv city, or Zaporizka. Others who intended to return to the same oblast they were displaced from (N=203) planned to go to Khersonska, Luhanska, Donetska, Zaporizka, Kharkivska, Khmelnytska.

4. Intentions and Reasons to Return to Ukraine

Long-term (prospective returnees)

Forty-nine per cent of respondents expressed their intention to return to Ukraine. Out of this group (N=110), 42 per cent stated that their primary motivation for returning was to reunite with their families.

This was followed by 40 per cent of respondents who wanted to return because they missed their home, and 32 per cent wished to visit their family or friends. For 19 per cent of respondents, checking on their property in Ukraine was the reason for their return. Eleven per cent wanted to help other family members or friends, while another eleven per cent mentioned a lack of resources as the reason for their return.

To a lesser extent, other mentioned reasons included meeting with family (6%), bringing supplies to people in Ukraine (5%), collecting personal belongings left in Ukraine (4%), and obtaining/ renewing documents left in Ukraine (2%). Finally, one percent wanted to help family members or friends get to the border.

Table 2. Main reasons for coming back to Ukraine total (%), (N=110) (Multiple answers possible)

Listed reasons	% total
Reunite with family	42%
Miss home	40%
Visit family	32%
Check on property	19%
Help family	11%
Lack of resources	11%
Meet family	6%
Bring supplies	5%
Collect personal belongings	4%
Documents	2%
Help family leave	1%

Short-term stay

On the other hand, 24 per cent of respondents were planning a short-term visit to Ukraine only.

The main reasons cited for their visit were to check on property left in Ukraine (42%), and to meet with family (38%). Additionally, 32 per cent of respondents were travelling to assist their families, while 21 per cent wished to reunite with family members who had stayed back.

Nineteen per cent travelled for a short visit specifically to bring supplies to people in Ukraine, and 17 per cent each wanted to collect personal belongings or to help their family members leave. Six per cent expressed a desire to return for a short visit because they missed their home in Ukraine, and two per cent needed to renew or obtain their documents.

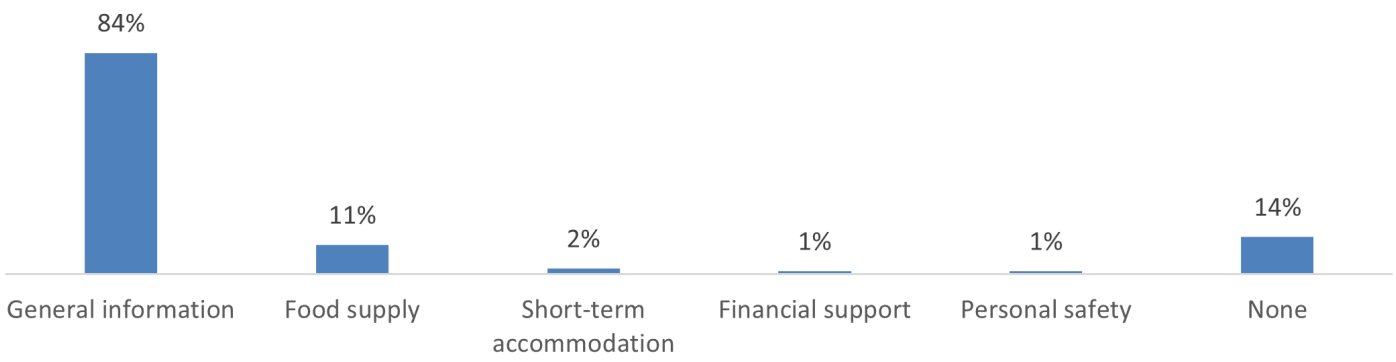
Table 3. Main reasons for staying in Ukraine for a short-term period (%), (N=53) (Multiple answers possible)

Listed reasons	% total
Check on property	42%
Visit family	38%
Help family	32%
Reunite with family	21%
Bring supplies	19%
Collect personal belongings	17%
Help family leave	17%
Miss home	6%
Documents	2%

5. Needs, Assistance Received, and Challenges

The majority of respondents (84%) indicated that their most immediate need at the time of the interview was for general information. Following that, 11 per cent of the respondents reported a need for food supplies. Other less frequently mentioned needs included short-term accommodation (2%), financial support, and personal safety (less than 1% each). Fourteen per cent of the respondents stated that they had no immediate needs at the time of the survey.

Figure 7: Needs upon crossing back (%), (N=224) (multiple answers possible)



Assistance in Latvia

The majority of respondents (92%) reported receiving financial support. Additionally, 70 per cent of respondents received accommodation assistance, while 59 per cent received food supplies. Transportation support was received by 22 per cent of respondents, while 20 per cent received personal hygiene and sanitary supplies. Other areas of assistance included vouchers (10%), toys (4%), and psychological counselling (4%).

Table 4. Main areas of assistance received (%), (N=121) (multiple answers possible)

Type of assistance received	Total (%)
Financial support	92%
Accommodation	70%
Food supplies	59%
Transport	22%
Personal hygiene and sanitary supplies	20%
Vouchers	10%
Toys	4%
Psychological counseling	4%

Unequal Treatment

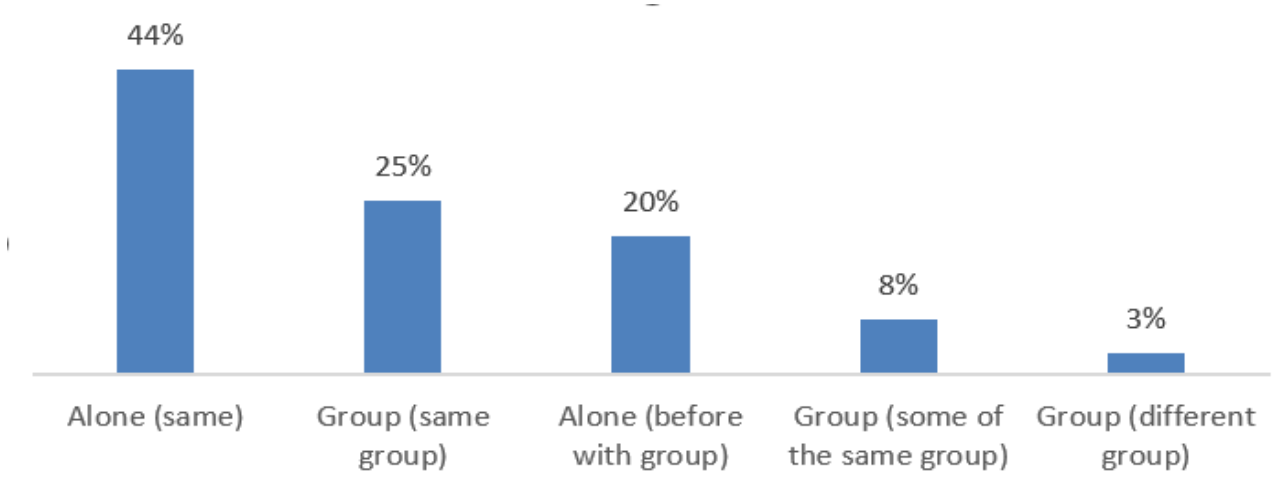
Ninety-eight per cent of respondents reported not having encountered any form of discrimination in the country of displacement. The remaining two per cent reported having experienced some form of discrimination.

6. Group Composition

Travel mode

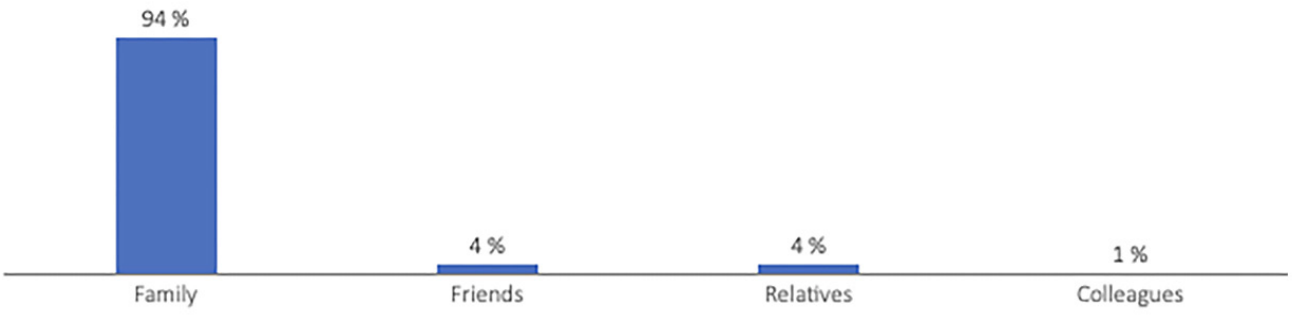
Out of the 224 respondents, 44 per cent indicated that they are returning to Ukraine alone, while 25 per cent stated that they are returning with the same group they entered the country of displacement with. Twenty per cent of the respondents are returning to Ukraine alone despite originally leaving with a group. A small proportion (8%) mentioned returning to Ukraine with some of their original travel members. Finally, three per cent mentioned returning to Ukraine with a different group than the one they initially exited the country with.

Figure 8: Travel mode (%), (N=224)



Among those travelling in a group (N=81), the majority (94%) were travelling with their family members. Additionally, four per cent of the respondents mentioned travelling with friends. Another four per cent of the group were accompanied by relatives, while one per cent travelled with colleagues.

Figure 8: Group composition (%), (N=81) (multiple answers possible)



7. Methodology

Background

This report is based on a survey of displacement patterns, needs and intentions conducted by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in the countries included in the Regional Response Plan for Ukraine in 2023: 6 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia – and other 5 countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine since the start of the war in February 2022 – Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

This report is based on data collected between July and September 2023. Trained enumerators conducted in-person surveys with adult refugees from Ukraine and other TCNs (18 years of age and above). Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained on DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM's approach to migrant protection and assistance, data collection ethics and information and referral mechanisms.

Respondents were selected randomly by enumerators at selected entry, exit, transit points and accommodation centers. Respondents included persons traveling by car, bus, foot, and train. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Surveys were administered only if consent from the respondent was given. The respondent could stop the survey at any time. All enumerators reviewed the data for systematic issues with responses and did not identify any errors. This report only considered fully complete surveys in the analysis.

Country-level implementation and limitations

DTM has been active in Latvia since July 2022. The data for this report was collected between 2 July and 29 September 2023. Overall, 224 valid surveys were collected by a team of 2 enumerators (1 female and 1 male), covering 3 transit/crossing points. Sixty-three per cent of surveys were collected in Grebneva, 35 per cent in Terehova, and the remaining two per cent in Vientuli crossing points.

Surveys were conducted in Russian and Ukrainian. The survey respondents were chosen at random from locations within three transit and reception locations that receive high volumes of individuals entering Latvia, with either public or private transport.

While enumerators tried to ensure that respondents represented diverse profiles, the operational reality of fieldwork posed various challenges. Not all survey locations are equally accessible to enumerators. Depending on the survey site, individuals may not be able to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire. While the results are not representative, the data shows strong internal consistency with each country and at the regional level. 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 the Republic of Moldova.

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
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