
УКРАЇНСЬКІ МІГРАНТИ В ЄВРОПІ: ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ ТА ВИМІРИ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ*

UKRAINIAN MIGRANTS IN EUROPE: TRENDS AND FACETS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

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АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті здійснено розгляд тенденцій і засобів соціальної інтеграції переселенців з України, які вимушено або добровільно змінили місце проживання та перебувають в країнах Центрально-Східної і Західної Європи. З урахуванням масштабів сучасної української міграції та соціально-демографічного профілю шукачів захисту наведено дані стосовно намірів українців залишатись у приймаючих державах. Розглянуто такі сфери інтеграції, як: економічна, освітня, мовна, соціальна та психологічна. Зокрема, увагу приділено доступу до ринку праці, освітнім можливостям, перекваліфікації і опануванню мови країни перебування. Вони сприяють працевлаштуванню та закріпленню соціального статусу дорослих, освіти дітей і молоді, а також подоланню психологічних бар'єрів і наданню психологічної допомоги, інтеграції у місцеві спільноти при збереженні зв'язків у межах української діаспори. Враховано роль державної політики країн — членів ЄС по

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відношенню до мігрантів, ставлення приймаючих спільнот. Визначено виклики, з якими стикаються українські мігранти, та які є перешкодами для інтеграції. Це мовний бар'єр, працевлаштування на рівні нижче здобутої кваліфікації, нестача доступного житла, бюрократичні перепони у визнанні документів, психологічний стрес і травми, пов'язані з війною. Запропоновано способи мінімізації цих перешкод і створення сприятливих умов для інтеграції тих українців, які не мають можливості повернутись в Україну. Акцентовано увагу на тому, що довгострокова інтеграція потребує послідовної інституційної підтримки, зокрема через програми щодо надання житла, забезпечення доступу до медичних послуг, підтримки працевлаштування, створення сприятливих умов для ведення бізнесу, а також визнання академічних і професійних кваліфікацій.

Ключові слова: сучасна українська міграція; Європейський Союз; соціальна інтеграція; економічна інтеграція; ринок праці; освіта; приймаюча спільнота; міграційна політика.

ABSTRACT

The article examines trends and means of social integration of migrants from Ukraine who have been forced or voluntarily changed their place of residence and are now living in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Taking into account the scale of contemporary Ukrainian migration and the socio-demographic profile of asylum seekers, data on Ukrainians' intentions to remain in their host countries are presented. The following areas of integration are considered: economic, educational, linguistic, social and psychological. In particular, attention is paid to access to the labour market, educational opportunities, retraining and learning the language of the host country. These factors contribute to the employment and consolidation of the social status of adults, the education of children and young people, as well as the overcoming of psychological barriers and the provision of psychological assistance, integration into local communities while maintaining ties within the Ukrainian diaspora. The role of EU member states' public policy towards migrants and the attitude of host communities are taken into account. The challenges faced by Ukrainian migrants and the obstacles to integration have been identified. These include language barriers, employment below the level of qualifications obtained, lack of affordable housing, bureaucratic obstacles to the recognition of documents, psychological stress and trauma related to the war. Ways to minimise these obstacles and create favourable conditions for the integration of Ukrainians who are unable to return to Ukraine are proposed. Emphasis is placed on the fact that long-term integration requires consistent institutional support, in particular through programmes to provide housing, access to medical services, employment support, the creation of favourable conditions for doing business, and the recognition of academic and professional qualifications.

Key words: contemporary Ukrainian migration; European Union; social integration; economic integration; labour market; education; host community; migration policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, the country experienced one of the largest waves of forced displacement in Europe since the Second World War. Within a short time, millions of Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes in search of safety — both within Ukraine and abroad, primarily in the European Union. The migration

flows encompassed a broad range of social groups, and displaced persons found themselves in varying host contexts — ranging from well-organized government support programs to environments with limited access to social services and employment opportunities. In 2022, the total number of displaced persons reached approximately 14,8 million, with more than 9,2 million returning home by spring 2023. Around 7 million people who were forced to leave their homes but stayed within Ukraine's borders held the status of internally displaced persons.

Over time, the majority of Ukrainians have returned home, particularly to relatively safer regions. However, a significant number remain abroad and are likely to stay in host countries in the long term. According to Eurostat data from 2024, approximately 1,3 million Ukrainians reside in Germany, about 952 000 in Poland, and 381 000 in the Czech Republic. Thus, the largest proportions of Ukrainian refugees in Europe are found in Germany (30%) and Poland (22%)¹. As reported by UNHCR as of July 1, 2025, a total of 5 082 800 Ukrainian asylum seekers have been registered across Europe, with an additional 560 560 recorded outside the continent². Beyond the European Union, the countries that have accepted the highest number of Ukrainians since the onset of the full-scale invasion include the United States (280 000), the United Kingdom (253 200), and Canada (210 200)³. According to surveys and estimates conducted in 2024 by the Ukrainian Center for Economic Strategy, between 1,4 and 2,3 million Ukrainians are expected to remain abroad permanently.

It is important to consider the demographic features that make the current wave of Ukrainian migration somewhat unique. A distinctive feature of the demographic composition is that approximately half of Ukrainian nationals who have received temporary protection are women, while about one-third are children. Several notable demographic shifts have been observed over time. As of December 2024, women aged 35 to 44 accounted for 44 % of all Ukrainian refugees abroad — down six percentage points from 50 % at the beginning of the year. Simultaneously, the share of adult

¹ Вишлінський Г. (ред.) (2024). Українські біженці. Майбутнє за кордоном та плани на повернення. Третя хвиля дослідження — Центр економічної стратегії. URL: https://ces.org.ua/ukrainian_refugees_third_wave_research/

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2025). Ukraine Refugee Situation. URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

³ Вишлінський Г. Зазначена праця.

men among refugees rose to 27 %, a nine-point increase from January 2024, when it stood at 18 %¹. This rise may be partially attributed to an increasing number of military-age men attempting to avoid conscription (over 650 000 Ukrainian men aged 18 to 60 are currently residing in EU countries, as well as in Switzerland, Norway, and Liechtenstein. A substantial portion of these men lack legal residency status²). However, evasion of military service is not the sole factor: some male refugees have left the country due to work-related restrictions on cross-border mobility. These demographic transformations are also reflected in the declining proportion of children among the refugee population, which dropped from 32 % at the beginning of 2024 to 29 % by December³.

Whether understood as forced displacement due to war or voluntary adaptation to new socio-economic conditions, integration into the host society becomes a central issue for the majority of those who have chosen to prolong their stay abroad. An individual's ability to integrate — through access to education, the labor market, language acquisition, and the establishment of social ties — combined with institutional support provided by host states, plays an essential role in shaping their inclination either to return to Ukraine or to settle permanently in the host country.

II. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this article is to examine the principal mechanisms and trends in the social integration of contemporary Ukrainian migrants in European host societies, along with the challenges encountered by asylum seekers.

Social integration in this context encompasses access to the labor market, employment opportunities, career advancement, economic autonomy, acquisition of the host society's language, customs, norms, and values, establishment of social contacts, as well as participation in community affairs (including local engagement and electoral participation where applicable), and the development of a sense of belonging to the new society, including processes of identity transformation.

¹ Ibid.

² Basmat D. (2023). Over 650,000 conscription-aged men have left Ukraine for Europe. URL: <https://kyivindependent.com/bbc-650-000-conscription-aged-men-have-left-ukraine-for-europe>

³ Вишлінський Г. Зазначена праця.

While the topic has been predominantly covered in reports from international organizations and national think tanks, academic research remains limited. A relatively comprehensive examination of the integration of Ukrainian migrants in the EU is presented in a report by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. This report explores the challenges faced by EU countries and Norway in receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees, taking into account labor market integration, access to housing, healthcare, education, and social assistance, while emphasizing the need for a systemic approach to addressing these issues¹. A certain study devoted to the development of language skills among Ukrainian refugees and their social integration for successful incorporation into host societies². The role of civil society involvement in the integration process, as well as the impact of private hosting on the integration of Ukrainian refugees — which often proves to be a decisive factor for those residing in host communities — is presented in Working Paper of Immigration Policy Lab³. Recently, a study was also presented that examines how migrants' participation in local community activities influences their social integration in urban areas⁴. Psychological aspects of integration, on one hand, draw significant attention, yet on the other hand, they are challenging to study due to the complexity associated both with the difficulties of adapting to host countries and war-related trauma. One key area of focus is enhancing community resilience to promote the integration and well-being of Ukrainian refugees, as well as preventing the onset of mental health disorders⁵. Another study shows that more

¹ Riso S. (2024). Social impact of migration: Addressing the challenges of receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees. *Living conditions and quality of life. The Ukraine crisis: The mental health toll of the war*. URL: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-03/wppef24033.pdf>

² Benediktsson A. I., Tavares V. (2024). The social and linguistic integration experiences of Ukrainian refugees through community and urban education courses in Iceland. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*. Vol. 10, No. 101210. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101210>

³ Herpell M., Marbach M., Harder N. et al. (2024). The impact of private hosting on the integration of Ukrainian refugees. *IPL Working Paper Series*. No. 24-02. URL: <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/zkpb7>

⁴ Zhang Y., You C. W., Pundir P., Meijering L. (2023). Migrants' community participation and social integration in urban areas: A scoping review. *Cities*. Vol. 141, No. 104447. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104447>

⁵ Migliorini L., Olcese M., Cardinali P., Prestia D. (2023). Community resilience among Ukrainian refugees: What is the role of the host community in recovery from forced migration? *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. Vol. 14, No. 1206304. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2023.1206304>

resilient immigrants exhibit higher levels of life satisfaction, a stronger sense of community, and greater social participation, all of which contribute positively to their social integration¹.

As academic inquiry into the integration of contemporary Ukrainian migrants remains underdeveloped owing to the recency of the phenomenon, this article supplements the available scholarly literature with statistical data, international and national reports, and relevant findings.

The methodology applies an interdisciplinary approach that combines general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization), as well as institutional, systemic, and comparative approaches. Integration is analyzed across several dimensions, such as: legal, economic, educational, social, and psychological. This approach also informs the study's engagement with the theory of multidimensional integration developed by Heckmann², as well as the theory of social integration proposed by Ager and Strang³. According to Heckmann, integration should be considered across four main dimensions: structural (access to education, the labor market, housing, and social welfare); cultural (language acquisition and alignment with core societal values); social (interpersonal relationships and networks); and identificational (a sense of belonging to the host community). Ager and Strang, meanwhile, identify core domains of integration including means (employment, housing, education, healthcare), social connections (bonds within and across communities), facilitators (such as language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and safety), and rights and citizenship (including legal status and protection from discrimination). Given that some of the clusters identified by theorists are more appropriately examined in the long term when applied to contemporary Ukrainian migration, this article primarily focuses on the dimensions of labour market access, education, housing, and social care, as outlined in the theory of multidimensional integration. Partial attention is also given to social ties between migrants

¹ Estrada-Moreno I. S., Palma-Garcia M. O., Gomez Jacinto L., Hombrados-Mendieta M. I. (2025). Resilience in immigrants: A facilitating resource for their social integration. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2024.2447274>

² Heckmann F., Bosswick W. (2006). Integration of migrants: Contribution of local and regional authorities. Dublin : European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. URL: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/system/files/2016-06/ef0622en.pdf>

³ Ager A., Strang A. (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. Vol. 21, Issue 2. pp. 166–191. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016>

and members of host societies, as well as to cultural integration. Such dimensions as adaptation to prevailing norms and values, identity-related integration, and political participation are viewed as issues warranting further investigation. This study employs an institutional approach to underscore the role of state policy in shaping the integration trajectories of Ukrainian migrants. Within this framework, particular emphasis is placed on the extent to which integration outcomes depend on host states' provision of fundamental rights and access to core social services. Accordingly, the analysis draws on selected clusters from Ager and Strang's theory of social integration — specifically, the legal framework (e.g., migrants' legal status) and the foundational domains of employment, housing, education, and healthcare. These dimensions are viewed as essential for capturing the early and medium-term phases of integration. Other clusters — such as social connections and facilitators, with particular attention to intergroup bridging and cultural understanding — are acknowledged but considered more appropriate for examination from a long-term perspective, after migrants have established more sustained residence in the host society. This approach is consistent with the comprehensive integration framework proposed by Heckmann, which highlights the gradual and multidimensional nature of social and cultural integration. By examining integration trends through these theoretical lenses, the study seeks to identify institutional mechanisms that either facilitate or impede the integration of Ukrainian migrants into contemporary European host societies.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

First of all, it should be noted that the socio-demographic profile of contemporary Ukrainian migrants — as well as the reasons for the displacement — differs significantly from that of migrants from other countries. One of the most notable differences is that many of the newly arrived are women with children, individuals with higher education, IT specialists, cultural professionals, and researchers. It is worth emphasizing that this wave of migrants is, by and large, highly educated: nearly half hold university degrees. Unlike earlier waves of labor migrants (from the early 2000s), the primary motivation is now safety, rather than economic gain. Closely related to this is the fact that today's migrants often benefit from temporary protection status, which facilitates the creation of conditions that were largely unavailable to earlier migration waves.

In this context, it is relevant to examine the institutional and legal mechanisms that facilitate integration. These include legal status and access to residence/work permits; anti-discrimination laws; access to social welfare and public services. These opportunities have been made possible through the EU's Temporary Protection Directive, a mechanism that was previously unused despite the foundational 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Temporary protection as an additional or intermediate form of asylum had been applied sporadically during major migration crises. However, only with the adoption of Council Directive 2001/55/EC on 20 July 2001¹ was a clear EU legal framework established for mass influxes of displaced persons and the provision of balanced assistance across Member States. On 4 March 2022, Council Decision 2022/382² activated this Directive for the first time in EU history, applying it to displaced persons from Ukraine³. The mechanism has since been extended until March 2026, offering legal stability and expanded access to healthcare, housing, education, and employment across the EU.

Having presented the general integration trends, this section of the article examines the mechanisms and limitations of Ukrainian migrants' integration into host societies.

Accordingly, opportunities within the realm of state policies include the extension of the EU Temporary Protection scheme until March 2026. However, there are several challenges. National systems are experiencing significant strain on healthcare, housing, and education sectors; infrastructure in major cities is becoming overloaded; funding mechanisms remain uneven across regions, resulting in disparities and gaps in regional support. Additionally, public discourse raises questions regarding the long-term permanence of Ukrainian migration.

¹ Council Directive No. 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32001L0055>

² Council Implementing Decision (EU) No. 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive No 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32022D0382>

³ Баннікова К. В. (2023). Феномен соціальної адаптації вимушених українських мігрантів у країнах Східної Європи: деякі моделі, механізми регулювання. *Migration & Law*. Vol. 3 (issues 1-2). pp. 28–41. URL: <https://doi.org/10.32752/2786-5185-2023-3-1-2-28-41>

Next, in systematizing the facets of integration, the analysis distinguishes the following dimensions: economic, educational, social, and psychological.

Economic integration include access to the labor market; vocational training and reskilling programs; support for entrepreneurship and self-employment. As noted earlier, a major advantage of the current migration wave is immediate access to the labor market in many countries due to temporary protection mechanisms, including in continental Europe, the UK, and Canada.

In the Czech Republic, approximately 72 % of Ukrainian refugees aged 18–65 are economically active as of mid-2025¹. In absolute terms, 155 000 Ukrainians hold employment contracts, with 95 % of these contracts being permanent — an increase from 40 % at the onset of the migration wave². Other data indicate that as of May 1, 2025, there are approximately 160 000 officially employed Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic³. About 69 % of Ukrainian refugees in the UK were employed or self-employed as of April 2024 and around 70 % as of mid-2025. For comparison, according to IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada), over 70 % of Ukrainian refugees who arrived in Canada after February 2022 were employed by the end of 2023⁴.

In Poland, one of the countries hosting the largest number of refugees, the employment rate among working Ukrainian refugees increased from 61 % to 69 % in 2024⁵. A report published by the National Bank of Poland in November 2024 indicates that 78 % of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland are either employed or actively seeking employment⁶. A study released by the Polish Economic Institute in March 2024 noted that this employment rate

¹ European Commission (2025). Migrant Integration Hub. URL: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub_en

² Skoryk Yu. (2025). Czech Republic: Refugees from Ukraine bring more income than expenses. URL: <https://finway.com.ua/en/czech-republic-refugees-from-ukraine>

³ Zakharov O. (2025). 160 thousand Ukrainian refugees have already been employed in the Czech Republic. URL: <https://hnh.news/en/12024/160-thousand-ukrainian-refugees-have-already-been-employed-in-the-czech-republic>

⁴ Tokariuk O. (2025). Ukraine's fight for its people: Strategies for refugee and diaspora engagement. London : Royal Institute of International Affairs. URL: <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784136413>

⁵ UNHCR. (2025). Poland: Analysis of the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the economy of Poland — 2nd ed. URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116621>

⁶ Stur B. (2024). Immigrants from Ukraine and Belarus are well integrated in Poland, National Bank of Poland data reveal. URL: <https://www.europeaninterest.eu/immigrants-from-ukraine-and-belarus-are-well-integrated-in-poland-national-bank-of-poland-data-reveal/>

is among the highest within OECD countries¹. Furthermore, a joint report by UNHCR and Deloitte from June 2025 revealed that 69 % of working-age Ukrainian refugees in Poland are employed, slightly below the 75 % employment rate of Polish citizens².

Compared to other host countries, this employment rate among Ukrainians in Germany is relatively moderate. It increased from 16 %³ at the end of 2022 to 25 % by September 2023⁴, reaching approximately 30 % in 2024⁵. According to data from the Asylum Information Database for the period of December 2024 to March 2025, 265 800 Ukrainians were officially employed in Germany, constituting roughly 30 % of the employed Ukrainian population⁶. As of mid-2025, about 35 % of Ukrainian refugees are employed or self-employed⁷, indicating a gradual upward trend.

At the same time, despite relatively high employment rates in some host countries, a significant share of Ukrainian refugees are employed below their qualifications, reflecting a gap between the accessibility of employment and the underutilisation of human capital. In the United Kingdom, many Ukrainians work in low-skilled sectors, particularly in hospitality, as well as retail, and care services. Only about 33 % are employed in their previous professions, while approximately 20 % work in the hotel and restaurant industry⁸. A similar pattern is observed across most other host countries. Overall, the primary barriers to employment and professional integration include low recognition of qualifications, underemployment and

¹ Zyzik R., Baszczak Ł., Rozbicka I., Wielechowski M. (2023). Refugees from Ukraine in the Polish labour market: opportunities and obstacles. Warsaw : Polish Economic Institute. URL: <https://pie.net.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Uchodzcy-z-Ukrainy-eng.pdf>

² UNHCR. (2025). Poland: Analysis of the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the economy of Poland — 2nd ed. URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116621>

³ Riemer L., Rau L., Schalast R. (2024). Overview of the main changes since the previous report update. URL: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/overview-main-changes-previous-report-update>

⁴ OECD (2024). International Migration Outlook 2024. 48th edition. Paris : OECD Publishing. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1787/50b0353e-en>

⁵ Riemer L., Rau L., Schalast R. (2024). Overview of the main changes since the previous report update. URL: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/overview-main-changes-previous-report-update>

⁶ Ibit.

⁷ Tokariuk O. (2025). Ukraine's fight for its people: Strategies for refugee and diaspora engagement. London : Royal Institute of International Affairs. URL: <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784136413>

⁸ Ibit.

job mismatch, limited language proficiency, and the lack of institutional support for retraining and upskilling mechanisms.

At the same time, Ukrainian refugees have made a substantial contribution to the economies of EU member states. Regarding economic input, in 2024, Ukrainian refugees contributed 2,7 % to Poland's GDP growth, amounting to approximately 98,7 billion PLN (about 25 billion USD)¹. Tax revenues also reflect this impact: in 2024, Ukrainians residing in Poland paid over 1,65 billion PLN (approximately 414 million USD) in taxes, representing a 27,7 % increase compared to the previous year². Additionally, Ukrainian refugees actively engage in entrepreneurial activities, further stimulating consumer demand and contributing to increased labour productivity in Poland. In the Czech Republic, the economic contribution of Ukrainians has been similarly significant. By the third quarter of 2023, state budget revenues linked to Ukrainian refugees had already exceeded the expenditures allocated to their support³. Ukrainians are employed in sectors such as construction, agriculture, healthcare, and gastronomy, playing a significant role in filling labour shortages in occupations that are difficult to staff with local workers.

In this context, the interest of host countries in integrating Ukrainian refugees through education appears both evident and strategic. The educational dimension of integration includes enrollment in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions; participation in language courses and cultural orientation programs; and the recognition of prior education and qualifications. Most host countries have granted Ukrainian children full access to public education. For example, as of late November 2023, a total of 286 534 Ukrainian children were enrolled in Polish preschool and school-level educational institutions⁴. So, among the key educational achievements, approximately 90 % of Ukrainian refugee children are enrolled in Polish schools. However, 36 % of them face challenges related to limited

¹ UNHCR. (2025). Poland: Analysis of the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the economy of Poland — 2nd ed. URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116621>

² IntelliNews (2025). Ukrainian refugees living in Poland boost taxes by \$400mn and GDP growth — survey. URL: <https://www.intellinews.com/ukrainian-refugees-living-in-poland-boost-taxes-by-400mn-and-gdp-growth-survey-380151>

³ Skoryk Yu. (2025). Czech Republic: Refugees from Ukraine bring more income than expenses. URL: <https://finway.com.ua/en/czech-republic-refugees-from-ukraine>

⁴ Zawistowski R. (2023). More than 286,000 Ukrainian children study in Poland. URL: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/3792200-more-than-286000-ukrainian-children-study-in-poland.html>

proficiency in the Polish language¹, which hinders their full participation in the learning process. In Germany, where over 1 million Ukrainians have received protection since February 2022, there are an estimated 357 000 Ukrainian minors². According to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, as of March 2025, approximately 223 830 Ukrainian children were enrolled in German schools³. Educational engagement among adults is also notable. In the United Kingdom, 31 % of adult Ukrainians are engaged in education or training, with one-third of them studying at the undergraduate level or higher⁴. In comparison, many Ukrainians in Canada participate in retraining programs and language courses aimed at improving their employability.

Overall, opportunities in the field of education include the provision of free access to public education systems for children, as well as the implementation of language support programs and integration classes for adults. Nonetheless, several challenges remain. These include a shortage of Ukrainian-speaking staff and educational mediators, infrastructure overload (particularly in urban centres) and uneven access to educational services in rural areas. Additionally, there is insufficient pedagogical support for the long-term integration of refugee minors. These gaps directly impact the linguistic adaptation and socio-cultural integration of minors. Thus, the educational landscape for Ukrainian refugees reflects a combination of institutional openness and structural constraints.

The next factor of social integration is logically linked to opportunities in the area of language acquisition. These include the widespread availability of free language courses, supported by various online tools and NGO-led training programs. Such initiatives aim to facilitate both linguistic adaptation and broader social participation among Ukrainian refugees. Polish language skills have improved among both pre-war immigrants

¹ Dudek B., Panuciak A., Strzelecki P. (2024). The living and economic situation of migrants from Ukraine in Poland in 2024: Survey report. Warsaw : Narodowy Bank Polski. URL: <https://nbp.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Sytuacja-uchodzcow-z-Ukrainy-2024-ANG-DS.pdf>

² Gambaro L., Spieß C. K., Daelen A., Ette A. (2025): Refugee children and young people from Ukraine. *BiB.Aktuell*. No. 2/2025. URL: www.bib.bund.de/Publikation/2025/BiB-Aktuell-2025-2

³ Riemer L., Rau L., Schalast R. (2024). Overview of the main changes since the previous report update. URL: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/overview-main-changes-previous-report-update>

⁴ Tokariuk O. (2025). Ukraine's fight for its people: Strategies for refugee and diaspora engagement. London : Royal Institute of International Affairs. URL: <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784136413>

and refugees, which reflects both social and economic integration. The percentage of immigrants declaring that they were fluent in Polish has increased significantly (68 % of pre-war migrants and 28 % of refugees). In turn, only 9 % of refugees and less than 3 % of pre-war migrants reported that they did not know the Polish language¹. At the same time, language barriers remain a significant obstacle in many host countries. According to a survey conducted by PAQ Research and the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in November 2023, the increasing rate of Czech language proficiency among Ukrainian refugees has slowed. Currently, 47 % of adult refugees report being able to speak Czech. But relocators face several challenges in acquiring the language of the host country — limited time and financial constraints are the most commonly cited barriers to participation in available language courses”². In addition, a general shortage of language instructors (especially in rural areas) has led to a growing demand for hybrid and online learning formats. But it is important to note that language integration is a significant precondition for broader social integration. In this regard, language acquisition enables full participation in the economic, educational, and civic life of the host society.

Opportunities for social integration are largely facilitated by Ukrainian cultural centers and diaspora networks, which actively organize community events, volunteering initiatives, and church-based support activities. Ukrainians have demonstrated a notably high level of civic mobilisation. For example, in Germany, over 50 Ukrainian civil society organizations are officially registered, focusing on cultural programming, language instruction, and volunteering³. Similar patterns are observed in other host countries, where activities are primarily led by cultural centres, volunteer groups, and diaspora churches. However, social contacts remain predominantly intra-community. Limited interaction with members of the host society hinders long-term social inclusion. Furthermore, temporary housing arrangements reinforce a sense of precarity and contribute to social isolation. These

¹ Dudek B., Panuciak A., Strzelecki P. (2024). The living and economic situation of migrants from Ukraine in Poland in 2024: Survey report. Warsaw : Narodowy Bank Polski. URL: <https://nbp.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Sytuacja-uchodzcow-z-Ukrainy-2024-ANG-DS.pdf>

² European Commission (2025). Migrant Integration Hub. URL: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub_en

³ Operation Ukraine (2024). Germany and Ukraine. URL: <https://uamission.com/international-assistance/european-community/germany-and-ukraine/>

challenges are thus mainly linked to unstable housing conditions and restricted social engagement with the local population.

It is also important to consider the role of host communities' attitudes toward migrants. Positive public perception and openness significantly facilitate integration, while negative stereotypes, discrimination, or social distancing can hinder migrants' access to employment, education, and social networks. The level of societal acceptance often shapes not only the opportunities available to migrants but also their willingness to integrate and invest in long-term settlement.

It is also important to emphasize that mental health constitutes a significant dimension of integration, particularly in the context of forced migration and prolonged displacement. According to a survey of 801 adult Ukrainians, 53 % exhibited symptoms of psychological distress, 54 % reported anxiety, and 47 % showed signs of depression¹. Additionally, in the sample of Ukrainian internally displaced persons, moderate and high levels of stress were observed in 64.4 % and 21.6 %, respectively. Moderate and high levels of anxiety were observed in 23–25 % of IDPs².

At the same time the challenges in the field of mental health are manifold. These include a shortage of Ukrainian-speaking therapists and limited access to free or culturally sensitive psychological support. Nevertheless, some positive developments can be observed. For instance, school-based psychosocial interventions have been introduced in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany, aiming to address the mental health needs of displaced children and adolescents within educational settings.

It is important to note that refugees' willingness to integrate into host communities, as well as their decisions regarding return or resettlement, are significantly influenced by the extent to which their needs are satisfactorily met. Due to the data of April 2024, 28 % were completely satisfied with the

¹ Riso S. (2024). Social impact of migration: Addressing the challenges of receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees. *Living conditions and quality of life. The Ukraine crisis: The mental health toll of the war*. URL: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-03/wpef24033.pdf>

² Lushchak O., Velykodna M., Bolman S. et al. (2023). Prevalence of stress, anxiety, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder among Ukrainians after the first year of Russian invasion: A nationwide cross-sectional study. *The Lancet Regional Health — Europe*. Vol. 36, No. 100773. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2023.100773>

conditions, 38 % were rather satisfied¹. In general, covering the needs of asylum seekers involves providing access to a safe environment, fundamental rights and services, social protection, healthcare, as well as employment opportunities and access to housing.

Therefore, long-term integration requires sustained institutional support, particularly in the following areas: the recognition of academic and professional qualifications; access to integration courses; and protection against exploitation in the labor market. So, if host communities aim to support the effective integration of Ukrainian migrants, it is essential to ensure improved access to the labor market and to offer language courses at a professional level. Simplifying the recognition of skills and qualifications, creating opportunities for professional development, and providing clear information and access to social services (particularly for adults with dependents) are equally important. Additional factors such as favorable conditions for entrepreneurship, access to grants, and project funding also contribute positively to the relocation and integration process. At the same time, the broader public, social, and sociocultural implications for host communities remain complex and multifaceted. While there is generally a benevolent attitude toward displaced persons, differences in language, culture, expectations, and perceived needs can affect local perceptions and the overall dynamics of integration.

Taking into account the aspects outlined above and synthesizing methodologies developed by international organizations, the main factors influencing integration can be summarized as follows: the security situation in Ukraine; personal motivations; financial circumstances; learning capacity; respect for the social values and norms of host communities; legal conditions; and the openness of local and professional communities.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Currently, more than five million Ukrainians have sought asylum across Europe, with an estimated 30 to 50 percent likely to remain in host countries over the long term. This situation underscores the pressing need for effective integration into host societies. Integration is inherently a bidirectional

¹ Грушецький А. (2024). Опитування українських біженців у Німеччині, Польщі та Чехії: задоволеність життям закордоном, повернення в Україну, інтерес до ситуації в Україні. URL: https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1408&page=1#_ftnref1

process: it requires the active engagement and commitment of migrants themselves, while also being shaped by broader institutional, legal, and policy frameworks within receiving states. At present, the main channels through which integration is taking place include employment, access to education at all levels, and the development of social and community ties, while these processes are supported both by national governments and by the European Union. In response to recent migration flows, most host countries have adjusted their migration policies to facilitate the rapid integration of Ukrainians. These efforts have included the implementation of housing programs, access to healthcare services, and employment support initiatives. Nevertheless, general integration challenges are language barriers, employment below qualification level, housing shortages and high rent, bureaucratic obstacles in document recognition, psychological stress and war-related trauma.

So, if host communities are interested in the integration of Ukrainian migrants, it is essential to offer better access to the labor market and language courses at a professional level, simplify the recognition of skills and diplomas, create opportunities for professional development, provide information and access to social care (taking into account the needs of adults with dependents). Such factors as creating advantageous conditions for business development, grants and financing projects are also favorable for relocation. At the same time, the consequences for the public, social, socio-cultural situation in the host communities are not unambiguous. In general, there is a benevolent attitude towards the relocators because of linguistic and cultural differences, the attitudes towards expectations and meeting the needs. The discussion of social integration may also include sociocultural mechanisms, which involve intercultural dialogue and mutual adaptation, integration through schools and children's institutions, local integration events, and the openness of the host society. Additionally, community and civic engagement mechanisms — such as participation in local civic initiatives and volunteering, support from NGOs, religious and ethnic communities, and municipal integration programs — play an important role.

Further consideration of integration into host societies may include dimensions such as political integration — understood as participation in political life through voting rights, membership in political parties, or involvement in civil society organizations — and identificational integration,

defined as the extent to which migrants begin to identify themselves as part of the host society. The exploration of these aspects is more feasible in the long-term perspective, as they tend to evolve gradually over time.

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