



Ukrainian refugees in Visegrad countries: Societal Attitudes and Challenges of Accommodating People Fleeing the War

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Executive summary

Visegrad countries (V4) now host more than 2.1 million people, representing around a quarter of all Ukrainians who have fled their country following the Russian invasion. The region, therefore, has become a testing ground for different social, economic, political and information-related processes connected to the acceptance and integration of refugees.

It is notable that Ukrainian refugees come from a society that is geographically and culturally similar to the V4 region. The arrivals also primarily include women and children escaping war atrocities. Ukrainian refugees in the V4, consequently, have been met with tremendous empathy from host populations, with many locals personally involved in providing housing, food, clothes and financial support.

Government aid programmes have also been set up ensuring access to limited social services in accordance with national legislative acts supporting the implementation of EU Directive 2011/24/EU. Although the scope and essence of government aid varies from country to country, Ukrainian refugees in all V4 countries can benefit from access to the local labour markets, healthcare, housing, education, and limited financial support.

The mass influx of refugees has caused new problems for host economies, while solving some older ones. The housing crisis, for its part, has been compounded, detrimentally impacting both refugees and host populations alike. V4 countries are also experiencing shortages in healthcare and education professionals able to provide services to refugees. That said, Ukrainian refugees have helped to fill job positions considered unattractive by locals, driving economic growth and, in some cases, generating budget revenues that, in fact, surpass government spending on refugee support.

Nearly 10 months following Russia's invasion and ahead of a forecasted winter energy crisis likely to create another wave of refugees, there is already a certain fatigue felt by societies reflected in the curtailment of government assistance programmes. Yet as a GLOBSEC public opinion poll conducted in V4 countries shows, overall societal attitudes in the region towards Ukrainian refugees remain overwhelmingly positive - both with respect to views on hosting refugees and towards sustaining this support.

While the Polish public vehemently backs the aid provided to refugees, larger societal divisions are

found in Slovakia on numerous refugee-related issues. A majority of Slovaks, for instance, believe refugee support should be slashed and/or discontinued.

Some nuances also emerge with respect to the specific forms of refugee support that populations back. All V4 countries, for example, espouse strong support for providing refugees with access to free language courses, suggesting respondents may expect stronger integration of Ukrainians into host societies. Certain social benefits, like free transportation and subsidized rent, meanwhile, are generally not supported by host populations, with many concerned about their own welfare amid the economic crisis.

Public attitudes towards refugees tend to be affected by the education background and financial situation of respondents (with people from lower income brackets and lower education levels more likely to express negative views) and the sources of information they consume (people that get their news from social media and personal communications are more critical of refugee support). Political affiliation also matters: those who sympathize with political parties advancing an anti-refugee agenda are more likely to hold critical views regarding Ukrainians (this patterns especially holds true in Slovakia).

In light of social and economic developments in the region, the V4 governments can be expected to continue providing support to Ukrainian refugees. Yet this assistance may be cut and its length shortened, considering limited resource availability and aims to encourage Ukrainians to be more active on the labour market. Governments, though, will also need to be more proactive in facilitating the employment of qualified professionals through simplified procedures for recognizing their qualifications and by ensuring broader access to, among other services, relevant language courses, retraining opportunities and daycare facilities.

All told, the region would be prudent to develop a more comprehensive and long-term policy approach. Ukrainians indeed will likely remain a part of V4 societies long after the war is over. Ukrainians, on their part, could do more to contribute to local societies and allow host communities to learn more about Ukrainian culture, values and their struggle for freedom. Cooperation between the V4 governments and Kyiv can forge win-win solutions that benefit Ukraine's postwar recovery and provide a sustained link between their societies and economies even after some refugees return home.

Introduction

When Russia launched its unprovoked full-scale aggression against Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, compelling millions of Ukrainians (mostly women with children) to seek safety abroad, the Visegrad countries (V4) were the first to lend a helping hand and provide temporary refuge and/or safe passage to other EU countries.

As of mid-December 2022, **V4 countries altogether host over 2.1 million Ukrainian citizens** who fled the Russian aggression, which makes this region one of the most Ukrainian-concentrated areas. The region now hosts more than 25% of all Ukrainian war refugees dispersed around the world. Their distribution within V4 countries is uneven: **more than 1.5 million reside in Poland** (equal to 4% of the total population), nearly **467,000 in the Czech Republic** (4.3%), just shy of **103,000 in Slovakia** (1.9%) and almost **33,000 in Hungary** (0.3%).¹

The V4 societies developed a **strong initial solidarity response** to the refugee influx, with ordinary citizens volunteering at border crossings and reception centers, providing spare rooms in their homes and donating money, food and clothes to refugees. This was accompanied by **government aid programmes**, including the provision of shelter, financial assistance, welfare benefits (free transportation, healthcare, etc.), and education and employment opportunities.

Nine months following the outbreak of the war and the ensuing refugee crisis, the **support capacity of most host countries appears to be overstretched**. The welcoming attitudes towards refugees in the V4 societies is also being put to the test as ordinary people are increasingly burdened by the costs of the energy crisis. Russian propaganda, moreover, continues to target populations with false narratives and populist politicians are occasionally playing the anti-refugee card in some V4 countries.

Are there any signs that refugee fatigue is becoming a phenomenon within different societies? To answer the question, GLOBSEC commissioned a **public opinion survey across V4 countries**, the findings to which are laid out in this publication. In addition to the survey data, this report also provides an overview of the refugee support measures in the four countries and conclusions about the current situation, including challenges in accommodating

and integrating Ukrainians fleeing the war. Finally, policy recommendations for various stakeholders are put forward – they are aimed at fostering improved relations between both host societies and Ukrainian refugees.

¹ UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

Methodology

Findings regarding societal attitudes in Visegrad countries towards refugees presented in this report are based on public opinion surveys carried out in the second half of September 2022 in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The surveys were conducted on a sample of 1000 respondents per country (4,000 respondents altogether) using stratified random sampling in the form of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). In all countries, the profiles of the respondents were representative of the respective country according to gender, age, education, region of residence and size of settlement. The surveys were coordinated by the FOCUS agency and conducted by STEM/MARK a.s. (Czech Republic), Publicus Kutató és Tanácsadó Intézet Kft (Hungary), Opinia24 Sp. z o.o. (Poland) and FOCUS s.r.o. (Slovakia).

The opinion poll, inter alia, included a block of questions modelled around the Bogardus social distance scale², with modifications in the methodology of calculation and presentation of results. The standard Bogardus scale was used and each answer got a point if it was “yes”, 2 points for “do not know” and 3 points for “no”. Each answer then was multiplied by the weight (from 1 to 7, where 1 stands for the shortest social distance [e.g. “as a family member”] and 7 the longest distance [e.g. “do not allow in a country at all”]). After that, the sum for each respondent was calculated, followed by the calculation of the mean value. For a better user experience, the social distance is represented here in percent, where 100% stands for the maximum possible distance.

The analysis of the response to hosting refugees, including assistance and labour market aspects, in the V4 countries was carried out based on desk research using publicly available information, encompassing data from international humanitarian agencies, statistics provided by government agencies, analytical reports produced by think tanks and research institutions, etc.

For the purposes of graphical data visualization, poll results were rounded to full numbers. Also in some cases, to simplify the presentation of data, responses in questions with a scale were generalized (e.g. answers to a question with the options definitely

agree/rather agree and rather disagree/definitely disagree were merged to agree / disagree. In those cases where nuances in answers were deemed important, the initial formulations of response options were kept.

² Bogardus, E. S. 1947. *Measurement of Personal-Group Relations*, Sociometry, 10: 4: 306–311



V4 Societal Attitudes Opinion Poll



CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech society remains supportive of Ukrainian refugees and is particularly open to their participation in the labour market

73.1%



of Czechs consider hosting Ukrainian refugees in their country as a positive thing

67.3%



of respondents are willing to accept them as close friends

82.5%



of respondents are willing to accept Ukrainian refugees as neighbours

64.6%



of respondents are open to their children studying together with Ukrainian refugee children

81.4%



of Czechs are for the continued support of Ukrainian refugees, in full or decreased amount

47.5%



of respondents see it as a positive or rather positive thing if more Ukrainian refugees were to settle in their city/town/village

General attitude. A majority of Czechs (73.1%) consider **hosting Ukrainian refugees in their country to be a very or rather positive thing**, with young people (18-24 y.o.) espousing even higher support at 88.1%.

Czechs are also open to including Ukrainian refugees in their surrounding environments: **67.3%** of respondents are willing to accept them as close friends, **82.5%** as neighbours and **86.1%** as colleagues. A majority of **64.6%** of respondents are also open to their children studying together with Ukrainian refugee children. However, most Czechs (69.1%) are reluctant to accept Ukrainian refugees as members of their families – this is the lowest number in the region. The number of those who see it as a positive or rather positive thing if more Ukrainian refugees were to settle in their city/town/village is lower in the Czech Republic (**47.5%**) compared to Poland (67.8%), with **18.2%** undecided.

Assistance. More than half of the population - **54.2%** - have personally helped Ukrainian refugees in some way (donating money, food, clothes, etc.). A majority of Czechs also back continued government aid for refugees: **45.3%**

believe **this support** is still important but **should be reduced** while **36.1%** favour **maintaining the same full support levels**. A total of **16.7%** of respondents think the support should be entirely **discontinued**.

When asked about specific benefits, the situation is more nuanced: **52.6%** of Czechs support providing refugees with free access to healthcare, with **42.1%** against; **79.8%** oppose granting refugees free transportation and **73.5%** are critical of giving them housing rental subsidies; meanwhile, **74.4%** of respondents welcome the idea about providing refugees an opportunity to learn the Czech language for free.

Employment. Czechs, compared to other V4 societies, **are the most supportive of the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees into the local workforce**: only **15.8%** think Ukrainians compete for jobs with locals and reduce the employment prospects for the latter. A resounding **62.9%** rather believe the economy benefits from refugees taking jobs Czechs do not want and **81.4%** would approve if qualified professional positions are filled by Ukrainian refugees.



HUNGARY

Although Hungarian political leaders have often taken pro-Russian stances, Hungarian society does not show hostility towards Ukrainian refugees, perhaps due to their relatively small presence in the country



General attitude. Almost 82.1% of surveyed Hungarians say **hosting Ukrainian refugees in their country is a positive thing**. Only 28.2% would disapprove if more Ukrainian refugees were to settle in their city/town/village. And 79% are favourably disposed towards having Ukrainian refugees as their neighbours, 74.3% are ready to work together, and 63.7% are open to establishing friendly relations. There is generally a positive attitude towards Ukrainian refugee children studying at Hungarian schools - only 10.9% would consider it to be a negative if their children studied together with Ukrainian ones. Barriers for a Ukrainian refugee entering a Hungarian family are stronger though: only 31.8% can imagine welcoming Ukrainian refugees as family members.

Assistance. Hungarians are almost on par with Poles regarding their backing for continued government assistance to Ukrainian refugees: only 8% say this support should be stopped, while 57.8% approve further support as necessary. An additional 29.2% agree that support is still necessary but that it should be reduced. There is less enthusiasm regarding certain benefits though: most respondents

oppose free public transportation for Ukrainian refugees (59.3% against) and disagree with discounts in payments for housing/taxes (62.2% against). However, 62.8% believe the government should provide Ukrainians with free Hungarian-language courses and 60.7% support refugees gaining free access to healthcare.

A total of 34.4% of Hungarian respondents report that they have helped Ukrainian refugees. While this figure is the lowest in V4, it is a remarkable figure considering the small number of refugees staying in the country and accompanying reduced needs. About half of Hungarians think they should receive more compensation from the government for helping Ukrainian refugees.

Employment. Hungarians generally take a permissive view towards the employment of Ukrainian refugees: **only 14.9% think this job access lessens the prospects of locals finding jobs. Yet they are less likely to perceive benefits in such employment for the Hungarian economy** – only 31.7% agree there is a positive contribution and 18.1% were unsure. But given the **small number of Ukrainian refugees employed in Hungary**, these figures are not surprising.

V4 Societal Attitudes Opinion Poll



POLAND

Accommodating the largest share of Ukrainian refugees (almost three-quarters of those in the V4), Poland remains the most refugee-welcoming country



General attitude. Almost 85% of Polish respondents see **hosting Ukrainian refugees in their country as a positive development.** And 67.8% would accept Ukrainian refugees as members of their family, 76.8% as close friends, 85.3% as colleagues and 88.9% as neighbours. Only 4.8% of respondents would be dissatisfied with their children studying together with Ukrainian refugee children and 67.8% would see it as a positive or rather positive thing if more Ukrainian refugees were to settle in their city/town/village.

Assistance. A majority (67.4%) of Poles have personally helped Ukrainian refugees in some way. Only 7.7% of respondents, meanwhile, believe support provided to Ukrainian refugees should cease, with 56% believing it is important to maintain current assistance levels and 32% in favour of continuing support at reduced amounts. Public attitudes are more critical when it comes to specific 'freebies': 73.7% are against free transportation for Ukrainian refugees and 67.8% do not support the reduction of housing rents for them. However, 68.8% of respondents believe Ukrainians should have free access to healthcare

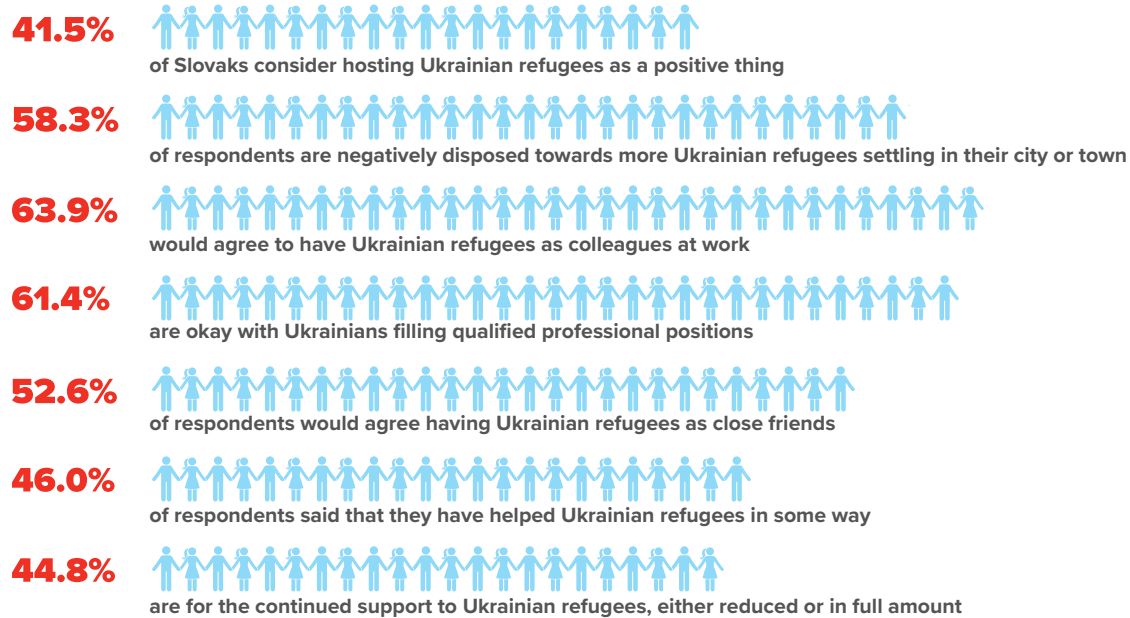
and 74.9% lend their support to providing them with free language courses.

Employment. Poles do not consider the influx of refugees to be a threat to the employment prospects of the local population: only 24.1% of respondents think that it is more difficult to find a job because of Ukrainians. At the same time, 52.4% agree that economic benefits come from attracting refugees to take positions that locals are not interested in and 73.4% give their approval to Ukrainian refugees filling qualified professional positions.



SLOVAKIA

Among V4 societies, Slovaks hold the most wary attitudes toward Ukrainian refugees



General attitude. Among V4 countries, Slovaks are the least likely (41.5%) to favour hosting Ukrainian refugees in their country, with a majority of respondents (52.2%) opposed. Negative sentiment is shared more by men than women (59.4% vs. 45.4%) and by lower income residents (69.5%).

A majority of Slovaks (58.3%) similarly are negatively disposed towards more Ukrainian refugees settling in their city or town. Yet, at the same time, most Slovaks do not mind seeing Ukrainian refugees in their environment: 63.9% are okay with having them as colleagues at work, 61.2% as neighbours and 52.6% as close friends. A further 57% approve of Ukrainian refugee children studying together with their children. But the barrier to accepting a Ukrainian refugee as a family member is somewhat higher: 40.9% are fine with this while 49.5% are against.

Assistance. Slovaks have been somewhat less personally engaged with helping Ukrainian refugees compared to other V4 countries, though the numbers are still high: 46% of respondents confirmed they have donated or volunteered to help. Regarding government refugee assistance, a majority still back continuing this support in either a full or reduced

amount, though more favour ceasing these measures compared to the other three countries: 42.2% say the support should stop altogether blaming it for cuts to Slovak economic and social benefits, 35.1% believe support is still necessary and important but should be reduced and 19.7% back continuing support for refugees as necessary. As for their views on specific benefits, Slovaks particularly dislike the idea of granting Ukrainian refugees free transportation (75% are against) and reductions in rental payments (71.7% are opposed). A majority (54.4%) also believe Ukrainians should not have free access to healthcare. Free language courses represent the only benefit to garner more supporters than opponents (53.3% vs. 42.3%).

Employment. Slovak public opinion is divided regarding the involvement of Ukrainian refugees in the workforce: while 46.8% believe that increased competition (with Ukrainians) will make it more difficult for locals to find employment, 47.1% disagree. And 44.9% think the Slovak economy benefits from Ukrainian refugees taking jobs no one else wants, with 46.8% disagreeing. That said, 61.4% would not object to the hiring of Ukrainian refugees for qualified positions.

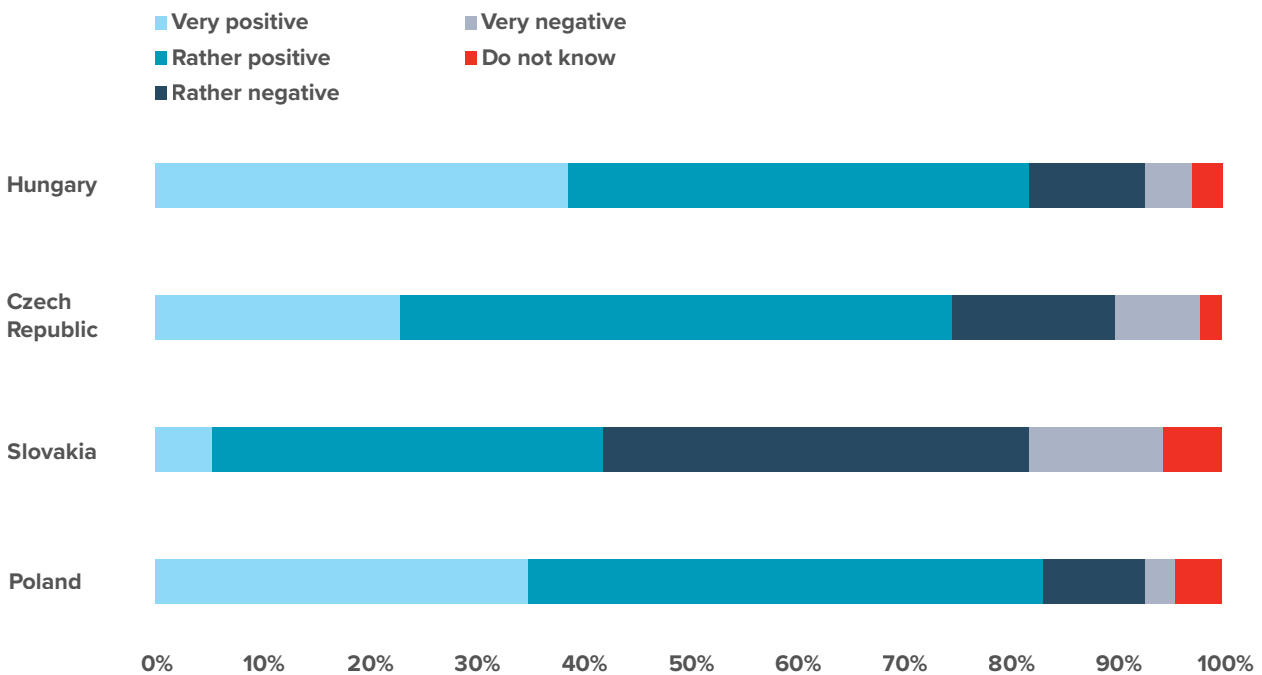




Key takeaways of the survey

Despite the challenges, V4 societies generally remain supportive of Ukrainian refugees, with more negative attitudes apparent in Slovakia

Figure 1. Attitudes of respondents towards hosting Ukrainian refugees in their countries (in percentages)



There is no discernible relationship between the number of refugees the different countries are hosting and public attitude towards these refugees: respondents in Poland and Hungary rather indicate the most favourable views towards Ukrainian refugees, with the former hosting the largest amount and the latter the fewest in the V4.

Slovakia is the only country in the region where negative sentiment prevails – see Fig.1. A sizeable **28.4%** of Slovaks see Ukrainian refugees as a threat to their society. In Poland, only **4.6%** take such a stance (Fig.3). Slovaks were also more likely (**28.5%**) to say they had experienced slight

to large negative changes in their lives due to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees (only **13%** of Poles report such changes) (see Fig.2). This figure, though, is considerably smaller than the share who are negatively disposed to hosting refugees in the country (**52.2%**). This means that such attitudes are not based on personal experience but rather are affected by stereotypes and malign narratives.

A significant number of Slovaks (**15.4%**), however, believe that Ukrainian refugees enrich their society (this number is higher only in the Czech Republic – **16.9%**). This discrepancy is possible only because Slovak society is polarized – some people are very

supportive of Ukrainians and some very hostile.

On a personal level, the different societies appear to be largely unaffected by the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. When asked whether their lives have been somehow affected by Ukrainians seeking shelter in their country, a majority of respondents (**87.6%** in Hungary, **74.6%** in Poland, **72%** in the Czech Republic and **65.2%** in Slovakia) denied noticing any related changes. Here, Slovaks seem to be once again an outlier: **28.5%** say they had experienced negative changes. Only **13.5%** of Poles reported negative changes and almost **10%** said their lives had changed for the better.

Figure 2. Respondents' assessment of changes in their lives following Ukrainian refugee influx (in percentages)

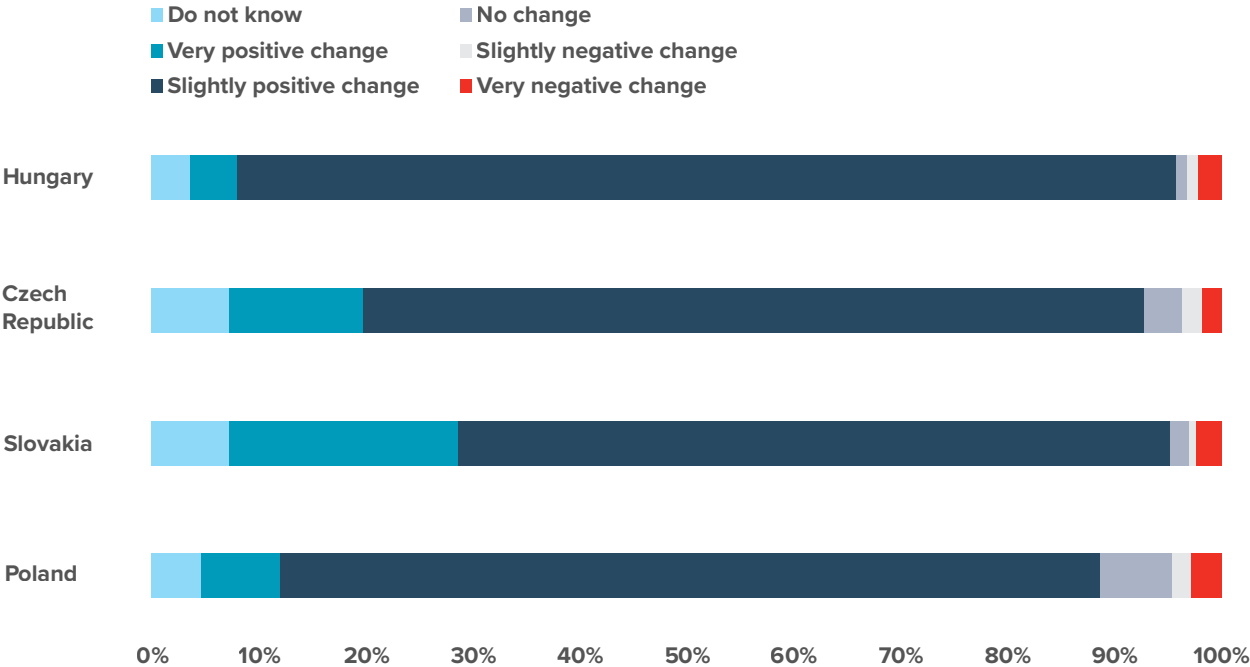
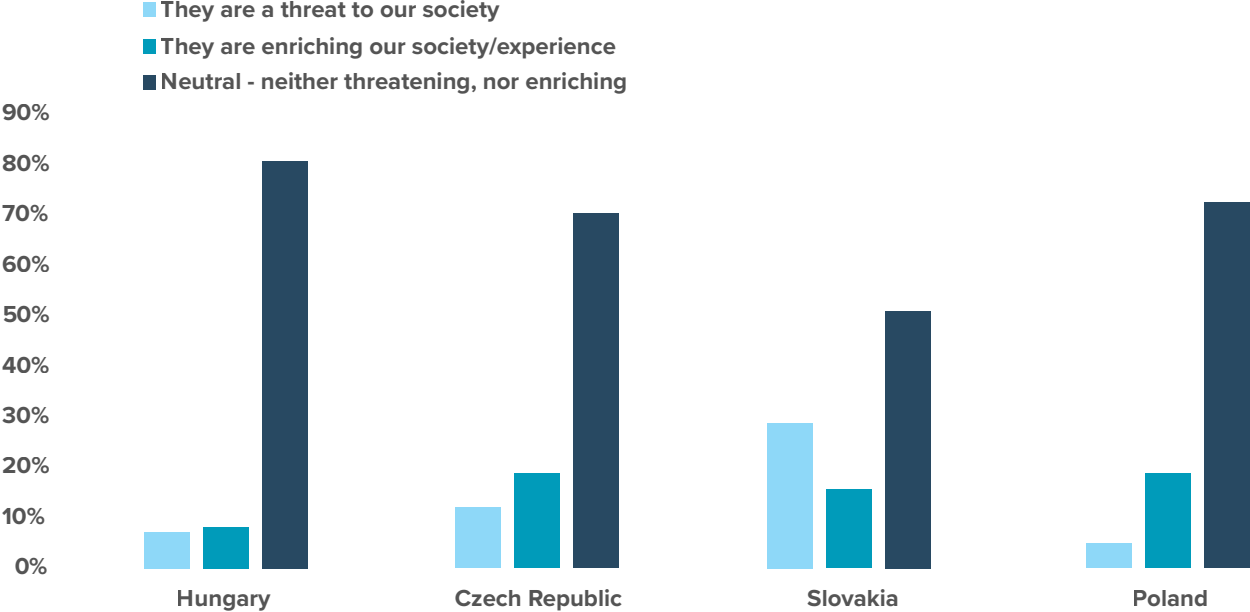


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents considering Ukrainian refugees to be a threat or an enrichment to their society



Meanwhile, **33.2%** of Slovaks believe there has been a spike in the crime rate due the arrival of Ukrainian refugees - only **11%** of Poles share this opinion, with Czechs falling in the middle (**20.3%**). Nevertheless, when asked about their personal experience, **85.5%** of Hungarians, **79.1%** of Poles, **69.6%** of Czechs and **67.8%** of Slovaks said they had never observed any inappropriate behavior of Ukrainian refugees.

In assessing **negative attitudes towards Ukrainians refugees and the specific characteristics of respondents, a pertinent takeaway concerns the finding that poor and less educated people are more likely to espouse anti-refugee beliefs** across all countries included the poll. In Slovakia, people who consider themselves to be poor are far more likely to oppose their country hosting Ukrainian refugees (**69.5%** say it is bad vs. the national average of **52.2%**). In Poland, this number stood at **19.2%** against the national average of **11.1%**.

The sources of information where people get their news also matter: those respondents who obtain news from personal communications and social media are more likely to harbour negative views about Ukrainian refugees and disapprove of their governments lending further support to refugee. People who acquire news from online media sources, meanwhile, are more likely to hold favourable attitudes.

The political affiliation of individuals also appears to affect their attitudes towards refugees: people who back political parties promulgating anti-refugee rhetoric tend to toe the party line and espouse more negative views towards the newcomers. This is particular pertinent in Slovakia where such narratives are more common compared to the other V4 countries.

Social distance towards Ukrainians versus other refugees

The opinion poll probed the views of respondents on a set of questions following the Bogardus social distance scale, which has long been used to measure varying degrees of closeness in people towards members of other social, ethnic or racial groups³. The poll-based assessments of social distance toward Ukrainian and other refugees can be viewed in Figure 4.⁴

The shortest social distance towards Ukrainian refugees among V4 countries is in Poland (**41%**) and the longest in Slovakia (**57%**). Czechs and Hungarians show approximately equal social distance (**44%**), slightly exceeding Poland. These results indicate that although most Poles, Czechs and Hungarians are open to Ukrainian refugees, they are not quite ready for their full integration. Slovak society, meanwhile, remains rather

closed and less enthusiastic about the integration of Ukrainian refugees. Slovaks also showed greater polarization on this set of questions: many respondents were ready to have Ukrainians fully integrated into Slovak society, while a larger number reject the idea of any Ukrainian role in society.

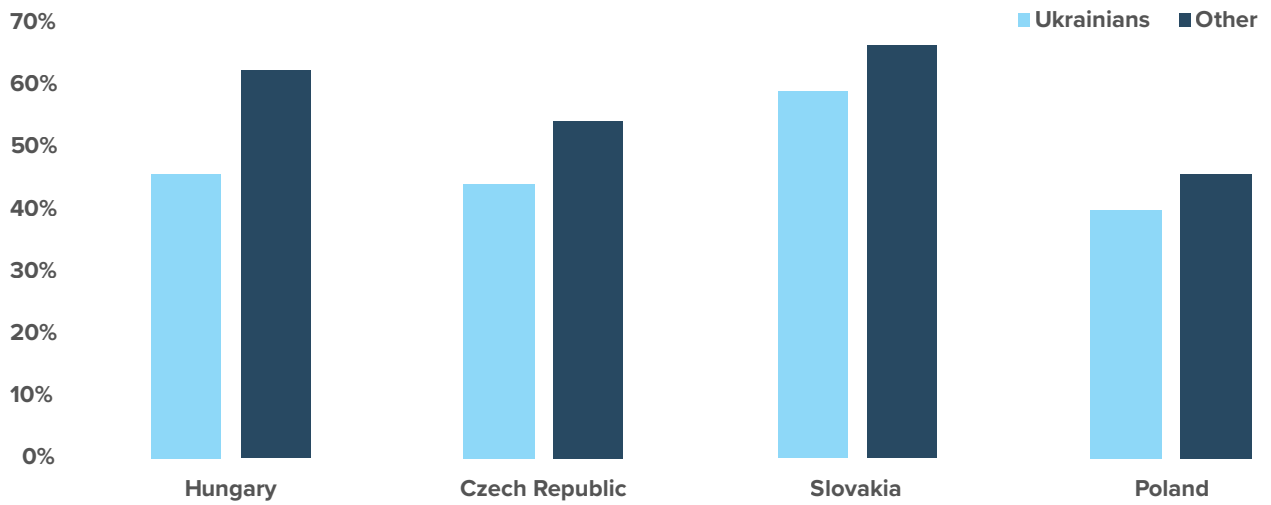
In all V4 countries, the social distance towards Ukrainian refugees is shorter than the social distance towards refugees from other countries, with the largest gap in Hungary followed by the Czech Republic. When asked about their opinion about openness towards the lowest level of social acceptance – i.e. admitting refugees into the country – **90.4%** of Hungarians responded in the affirmative concerning Ukrainians but only **64.2%** said the same regarding refugees in general, a 26 percentage point gulf. By point of comparison, only a 10 percentage point discrepancy was measured in Poland.

Interestingly, the smallest difference in attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees and refugees more generally concerns beliefs towards the highest level of social acceptance – i.e. admitting a refugee as a family member. Only **3.1%** of Poles differentiate between Ukrainians and refugees altogether (**67.8%** are ready to have Ukrainians in their family and **64.7%** would accept any refugee). Meanwhile, family integration is a no-go area for Czechs: only **15%**

³ <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1933-03965-001>

⁴ The social distance is shown here as percentage of the maximum possible distance: 100% would mean that the local population completely rejects the possibility of acceptance of a specific group of "others", while 0% would mean that society treats the "others" as themselves.

Figure 4. Social distance towards Ukrainian and other refugees (in percentages).



would welcome any refugee as a family member, though a slightly higher **25%** are ready to consider Ukrainian refugees in this role. Hungarians are somewhat less reserved in this regard: **31.8%** would be open to Ukrainian refugees as family members and **21.8%** to refugees in general.

Other public opinion surveys conducted by GLOBSEC indicate that Central European societies have recently started to see refugees/migrants more positively. The most drastic change is apparent in the Czech Republic, where **72%** considered migrants to be a threat to their values and identity in 2020 compared to only **32%** in 2022⁵. It can be assumed that the arrival of Ukrainian refugees have played a role in this shift by warming up host societies more towards accepting “others” in their country. The similarity of Ukrainians to host populations regarding their history and values, the generally proactive attitudes of Ukrainians

towards finding employment, the public empathy expressed by host societies to Ukrainians and personal experiences between residents from host countries and Ukrainians have compelled more and more Central Europeans to reconsider the notion of refugees as fellow humans who are suffering and need assistance rather than as malevolent actors that pose a threat.

⁵ GLOBSEC Global Trends 2022: CEE Amid the War in Ukraine. - P.85





V4 countries' support to Ukrainian refugees

General background

Ukrainian citizens in V4 countries enjoy restricted access to social services provided to citizens of EU Member States as granted by Directive 2011/24/EU. Yet this Directive cannot be formally implemented in the legal systems in these countries as Ukraine is not a Member State. However, it was implemented de facto through, for example, the law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens (Poland) and a complex package of laws, including the Act on asylum and the Act on the residence of foreigners, known as “*Lex Ukrajina*” (Slovakia).

According to Eurostat, **Poland is home to among the smallest shares of foreign citizens** living in the country after Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. That said, Poland has hosted the most Ukrainian refugees since the full-scale Russian invasion started on February 24th, 2022. The influx of Ukrainian refugees and their impact on Polish society and the economy has since become a key topic of public debate.

The total number of refugees from Ukraine in Poland granted temporary protection amounts to more than **1.5 million people**⁶, the highest in absolute numbers

anywhere. This movement to the country has been facilitated by Poland's size, its favourable migration policies, language similarities and geographical proximity. According to 2021 data, after Ukraine, the largest numbers of refugees in Poland came from Belarus, Afghanistan, Iraq and Russia.⁷

The **Czech Republic** now hosts **the third highest absolute number of refugees in the EU** after Poland and Germany and **the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe**.

As of December 15th, over **466,000 Ukrainian refugees** had received temporary protection and are considered long-term residents of the Czech Republic. However, normally a decision on temporary protection can be issued only within 60 days from the date of application.

Slovakia remains one of the EU Member States **with the lowest number of foreign citizens**. As of December 15th, more than 1 million border crossings from Ukraine to Slovakia had occurred and 102,675 refugees from Ukraine had been recorded as remaining in Slovakia.

As of December 15th, **1.9 million people had entered Hungary** from Ukraine, though the majority

of this group only transited through the country. Just 32,628 Ukrainian refugees have applied for temporary protection and all of them have been granted this status. The next largest migrant groups hosted by Hungary today come from Iran, Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

All told, the V4 countries host more than 25% of all refugees from Ukraine registered in the world.

Though there are social benefits for Ukrainian refugees, they face barriers in accessing respective services independently in Hungary, in particular, with unclear registration procedures and a lack of information putting up hurdles. Refugees often succeed only with the assistance of NGOs and volunteers. The latter are seeking to fill gaps where the government fails to provide necessary services.

International organizations, meanwhile, are minimally involved in addressing the problems of migrants in Hungary as the government, which has turned its ‘anti-migrant’ rhetoric into an ideological stance, has refrained from requesting help from these organizations for political reasons.

⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

⁷ <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/poland/statistics/>

The Czech government is already denying refugee assistance to those with dual Hungarian-Ukrainian citizenship, most of whom are Roma.

Though Ukrainian refugees can apply for humanitarian aid in the Czech Republic (six grants of CZK 82,000 (~€3300) or a humanitarian allowance of CZK 5 000 (~€200) for the purchase of basic necessities, the government has started to reduce support to Ukrainian refugees (with respect to, for example, healthcare and allowances). Moreover, people who have been provided with free accommodation, food and basic hygiene products will not receive the humanitarian allowance.

There have been some anti-refugee demonstrations in Czechia, organized by far-left and far-right groups; the leaders of the events, who have united under the banner “Czech Republic First,” called for early elections, negotiations for Russian gas, military neutrality and an “end

to the planned dilution of the nation” by Ukrainian refugees. The explicit goal of these groups, according to their website, is to undermine the prospects for Ukrainian refugees to obtain permanent residence in the Czech Republic.⁸

Labour market

As of early August, about half of the working-age population that fled Ukraine for **Poland** is employed. There are three main reasons why Ukrainian refugees have quickly taken up jobs in the Polish labour market: they have **high professional qualifications and want to work**; Polish authorities quickly **removed most labour market restrictions**; and the **Ukrainian diaspora** facilitated the adjustment and labour engagement of their newly arrived compatriots fleeing the war.

According to one estimate, the successful integration of

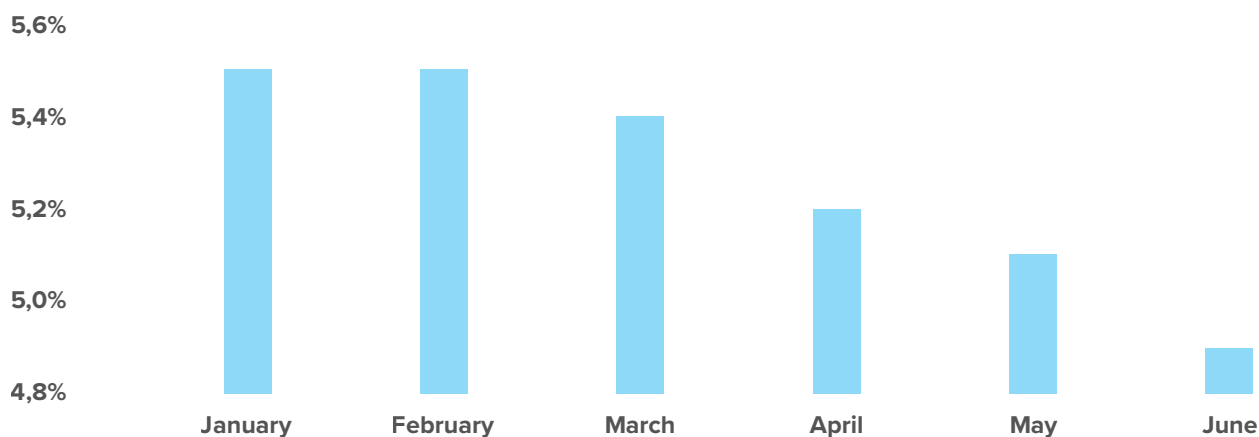
displaced people into the labour market will contribute 1.5% growth to the economy over the medium-term.⁹

Meanwhile, Ukrainians already have had a positive impact on the labour market, with the unemployment rate decreasing since late February (figure 5).

At the same time, Poland has already issued nearly 76,000¹⁰ work permits for the first half of the year to Ukrainian citizens. This represents the largest share (36.1%) among formally employed foreigners, though most of the permits were issued before the war (January-February).

The number of Ukrainian refugees working in **Slovakia** has been significantly increasing too, with a 15% rise from September 2021 to September 2022. According to official statistics (Figure 6), the vast majority of Ukrainians (~63%) are short-term employed (up to 6 months).

Figure 5. The unemployment rate in Poland in 2022.



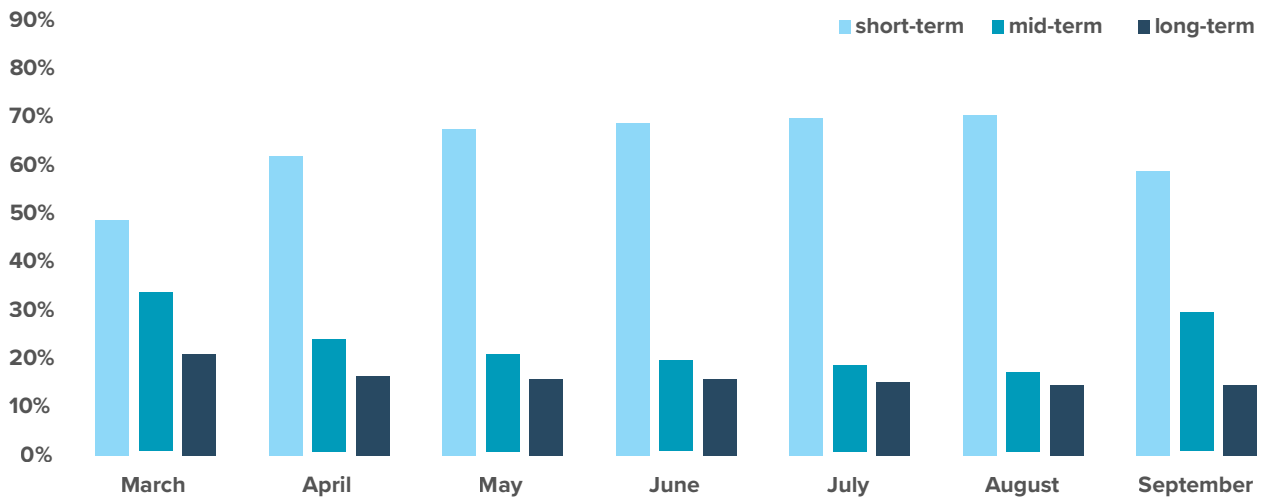
⁸ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/12/ukraine-refugees-europe-housing-sanctions-humanitarian-populism/>

⁹ <https://www.voanews.com/a/how-displaced-ukrainians-in-poland-find-work-while-benefiting-its-economy/6771810.html>

¹⁰ <https://psz.praca.gov.pl/rynek-pracy/statystyki-i-analizy/zatrudnianie-cudzoziemcow-w-polsce>

Figure 6. Percentage of employed Ukrainians by term of contract in Slovakia.

Source: Central Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family.¹¹



Many Ukrainians are currently **looking for easily accessible jobs** which do not necessarily match their qualifications. They, therefore, are postponing their final decisions on appropriate qualification-matching jobs until later and those jobs may not necessarily be in Slovakia.

Most positions (almost three-fourths) filled by Ukrainians can be categorized as unqualified work (**33.1%**), machinery operation (**26.3%**) or trade and services related (**12.8%**) (Figure 7).

Meanwhile, Ukrainians are most interested in the positions of kitchen assistant, administrative worker, social worker, unspecified production operator, cleaner/maid and teacher (providing assistance to Ukrainian children).¹²

The number of low-paid job positions filled by Ukrainians continues to decline, and

Slovakia might not benefit much from boosting the economy by decreasing unemployment in such a way. This has led to the lowering of some restrictions on the labour market (effective **only from January 1st, 2023**):

- cancellation of the requirement that third-country nationals be employed only in districts with an unemployment rate below 5%;
- cancellation of the labour market test requirement for those renewing a residence permit for the purpose of employment (for the same job and the same employer). Now, an employer must report the vacancy to the Office of Labour on the day when the foreigner's application for renewal of temporary residence is submitted (rather than 20 days before as was previously required);

- allowing foreigners to continue working while the renewal of their permit is reviewed.

Unlike other V4 countries, the **simplified employment procedure in Hungary does not exempt refugees from obtaining permits but rather just makes them free of charge.**

Vacancies for refugees in Hungary are available only for those professions for which there is a shortage of labour.

Furthermore, refugees can only get a job for 20+ hours a week and for one year with the possible extension of an additional year on request.

Employers who want to recruit a Ukrainian worker face one additional major requirement: refugees must be provided with accommodation at the expense of the employer, with

¹¹ https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/statistiky/zamestnanie-cudzincov-statistiky/zamestnanie-cudzincov-na-uzemi-slovenskej-republiky-za-rok-2022.html?page_id=1156941

¹² <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/slovakia-integrating-ukrainian-refugees-vet-and-labour-market>

Figure 7. Percentage of Ukrainians employed in Slovakia by profession.

Source: Slovak Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

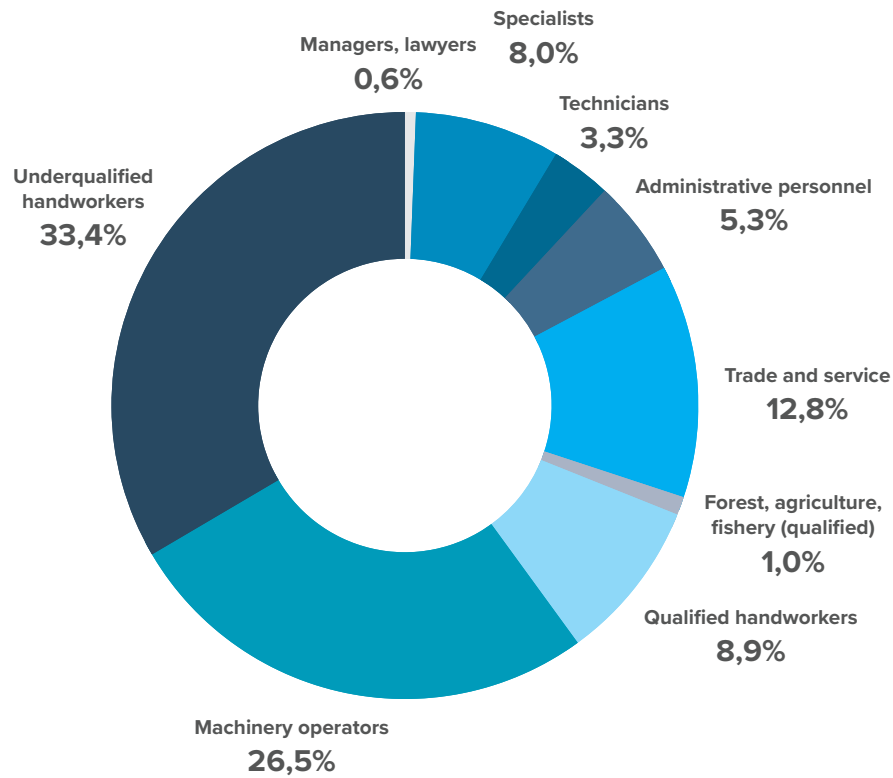
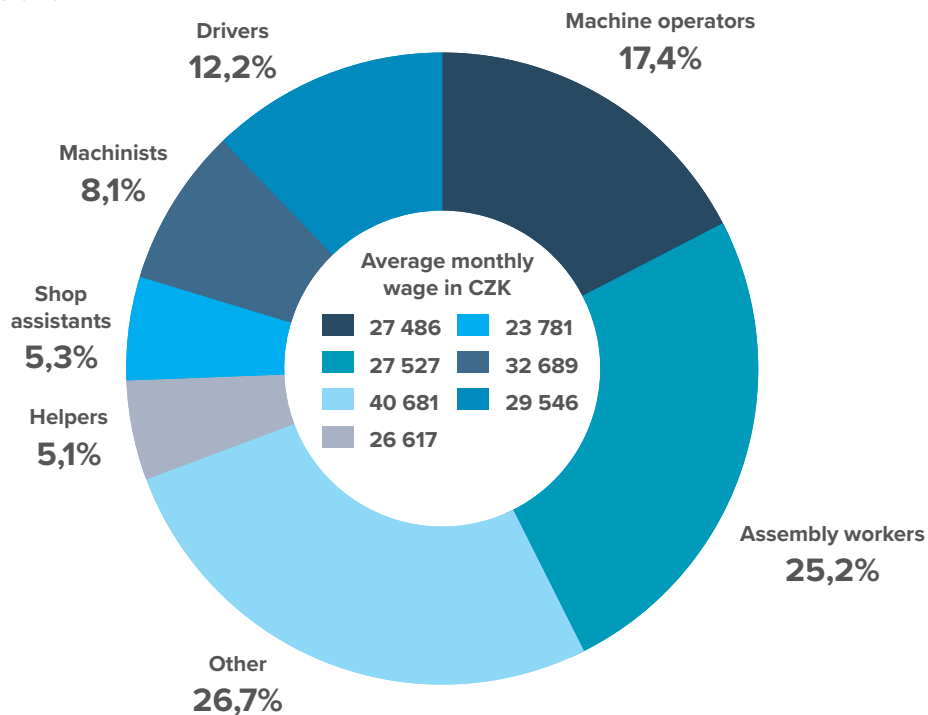


Figure 8. The professions Ukrainians take in the Czech labour market.

Source: Czech National Bank¹³



the government reimbursing 50%

¹³ <https://www.cnb.cz/en/monetary-policy/monetary-policy-reports/boxes-and-articles/Ukrainian-nationals-on-the-Czech-labour-market/>

of these expenses but not more than 60,000 HUF (~150 €). The employer and the worker share any additional accommodation costs half each.

Meanwhile, NGOs helping refugees are regularly contacted by companies asking if they can help them with finding workers.¹⁴

Unemployed Ukrainians are entitled to a subsistence allowance of 22,800 HUF (~€57) per month. Children receive an additional 13,700 HUF (~€34). This amount is insufficient for covering basic living needs.

More than 95,000 refugees have found work in the **Czech Republic**, almost 80% of them in positions that do not require any special qualifications or training (Figure 8).

The Czech government further provides Ukrainian refugees an opportunity to participate in retraining or engage in self-employment.

The employment of Ukrainian refugees has contributed a net positive impact to economic growth in the EU (0.5% or 1.2 million workers by the end of 2022). The largest labour force increases have occurred in the Czech Republic (2.2%) and Poland (2.1%). Hungary and the Slovak Republic, for their part, have seen estimated increases at between 1% and 1.5%.

hosting families to independently rented houses and/or apartments. Around 3%¹⁵ of **Polish** households have hosted Ukraine refugees in their homes, covering only 10% of refugees (Figure 9).

Poland still has about 80,000 refugees accommodated in collective housing estates including indoor markets, fire stations and guesthouses. Meanwhile, almost 60% of Ukrainians pay housing rent on their own. The steep rent prices, however, have compelled many families to share housing and the respective expenses.

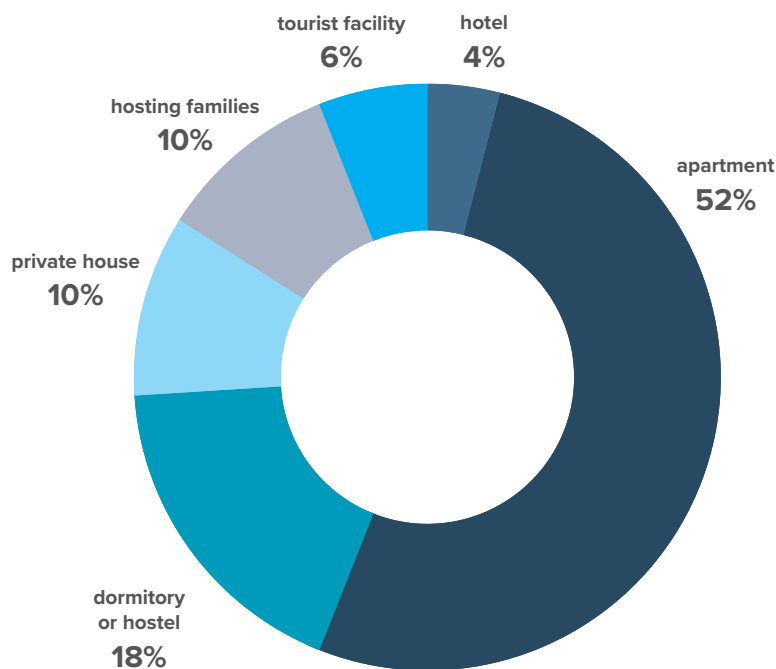
Only about a fifth of refugees in **Slovakia**, meanwhile, are temporary shelter seekers. The vast majority of Ukrainians (72%) live at collective facilities and with host families¹⁷.

Housing

Ukrainians have settled in a range of different accommodation arrangements - from collective refugee facilities

Figure 9. Types of accommodation arrangements for Ukraine refugees.

Source: Gremi Personal¹⁶



¹⁴ <https://vsquare.org/ukrainian-refugees-in-hungary-volunteers-are-doing-the-governments-work/>

¹⁵ <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/living-conditions/living-conditions/support-granted-by-households-to-the-inhabitants-of-ukraine-in-the-first-half-of-2022-on-the-basis-of-results-of-the-household-budget-survey,15,1.html>

¹⁶ <https://gremi-personal.com.ua/ua/z-bizhenciv-znimajut-pilgi-za-prozhivannya-u-polshhi-v-yakih-vidah-zhitta-zaraz-zhivut-ukrainci-ta-hto-za-kogo-platit/>

¹⁷ <https://www.iom.sk/en/news-events/1515-assistance-to-people-fleeing-war-in-ukraine-iom-slovakia-en.html#data-collection>

Although **Hungary** has the highest housing allowance (~4,000 HUF or €10 per night) for refugees among V4 countries, this is only available to accommodation providers who host at least 20 refugees and have an agreement with the central or local government.

Refugees from Ukraine are provided with accommodation by the Hungarian state but, to apply for it, they first must travel from the border to the BOK stadium in Budapest. Here, refugees are sorted into two categories: those who plan to stay for a longer period are taken care of by the Disaster Relief Agency and mostly sent to refugee camps all across the country. Others – those who plan to travel onwards – are taken care of by volunteers and NGOs.

Many refugees stay in rented tourist accommodations, but the latter could be rendered inoperative when the heating season begins. These facilities indeed are not suitable for winter season accommodation.

Over 40% of refugees residing in **the Czech Republic** live in households that have decided to host Ukrainians. If applicants for temporary protection do not arrange their housing with the regional assistance centre, they must now prove that they have secured accommodation. A solidarity household allowance has also been introduced: it can be obtained by any Czech individual who has provided accommodation free of charge

to a foreigner with temporary protection.

The influx of Ukrainian refugees has compounded the deficit of housing in V4 countries – any additional migration waves could worsen the situation further.

This is an underlying factor spurring V4 governments to reduce their support for Ukrainian refugees. From January 2023, those who have been living in collective facilities for over 120 days in Poland will need to cover 50% of their costs. Slovakia, for its part, is cutting accommodation allowances (€5 a night for a person younger than 15 years old and €10 a night for those older) – these subsidies will be paid out only until the end of February 2023. The Czech Republic, finally, is introducing its own new restrictions: starting January 1st, new terms for the residence of Ukrainians in temporary shelters will come into force – up to 30 days in gyms and 150 days in hotel rooms.

Healthcare

Every citizen of Ukraine legally residing in a V4 country is guaranteed access to the public healthcare system on the same basis as the citizens of Member States, excluding some special programs like health resort treatment and rehabilitation, as well as the administration of medicines issued to beneficiaries under special health policy programs in **Poland**. Unlike other V4 countries, healthcare expenses in **the Czech Republic**

are **covered by the state only for a maximum of 150 days** (except for children and the elderly).

Thereafter, refugees must pay for health insurance themselves, be employed or be registered with the labour office as a job seeker. Within 8 days after the expiration of the state insurance period, Ukrainians must notify the former insurance company who will cover their health insurance in the future.

Still, real access to healthcare is limited due to the internal mechanisms of providing these services (relatively long waiting time to consult a doctor) and a lack of medical personnel able to serve Ukrainian refugees. For example, only approximately 20%-25% of Ukrainian refugees have reported accessing healthcare services since arriving to **Slovakia**.

Regardless of the possession or lack of documents legalizing their stay in a V4 country, Ukrainian citizens finding themselves in a health emergency are provided free healthcare services.

There are also separate special programs like electronic codes for the purchase of medical drugs in all pharmacies in Poland (Health4Ukraine program). With each code, it is possible to buy 500 zlotys (or around €107) worth of goods across all pharmacies in the country. The codes can be used in 2022 to reach people who have not previously participated in the programme.

Access to education

Early estimates that one third of displaced Ukrainians were school-age children suggested that **Polish schools** would need to accommodate as many as 650,000 Ukrainian students. Yet a lack of sufficient space, staff and skills to accommodate foreign students make it difficult to accomplish the task. Poland ultimately provided 300,000 slots for the current school year but the placement proved problematic, especially in larger cities.

The actual number of Ukrainian refugee children enrolled at schools for the new academic year stands at around 185,000. While Poland has Ukrainian Sunday and primary schools, local school is mandatory for refugee children and distance learning in Ukrainian schools is not sufficient to meet the requirement that children attend local educational institutions. This has caused an enormous load on refugee children who also want to stay on track on their Ukrainian education programmes. Nevertheless, the vast majority of refugee children do not visit Polish schools for a variety of reasons. They instead continue their education online at Ukrainian schools or do not attend school at all, with the hope to catch up on the study programme later.

Attending school in **Slovakia** is obligatory for children under the age of 16. However, only 37% of Ukrainian children actually go to school.¹⁸ A total of 55% of children in Ukrainian refugee households continued their schooling online through services provided by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. Some are currently enrolled in both systems. The primary obstacle preventing Ukrainian children from enrolling in schools concerns the language barrier. Higher enrolment, that said, has been seen in kindergartens and elementary schools compared to upper secondary schools.

It has proven infeasible to provide Ukrainian language education at scale due to the absence of schools with qualified teachers. Volunteers, therefore, have come to play an important role in education including an NGO initiative to set up a school and kindergarten tailored for children from Ukraine.

Even before the start of the war, the largest group of foreign school children in Slovakia were Ukrainians.

Around 57% of Ukrainian refugee children, finally, were attending **Czech** primary schools in June, with only around 25% attending kindergartens and secondary schools. Around an eighth of children of primary school age and a fifth of children of

secondary school age failed to attend any classes.¹⁹

Since the spring of 2022, Prague districts have run adaptation groups for children from Ukraine. Children are provided not only with language training but also a basic introduction to the Czech Republic.

Support expenditures

It is estimated that the total cost of Poland's refugee support to Ukrainians will constitute €8.4 billion²⁰ by the end of 2022. The biggest share of this sum pertains to living costs, including accommodation and financial subsidies (€6.21 billion), education and healthcare. The EU Commission allocated €3.5 billion from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for helping refugees from Ukraine but only €144.6 million²¹ of that amount will go to Poland.

Bank Pekao analysts estimated that the cost of hosting 2 million refugees from Ukraine may require government expenditure of PLN 24 billion (€5.04 billion) throughout 2022 and 2023²². An OECD calculation of the cost for processing and accommodating asylum seekers, meanwhile, put these figures at around €10.000²³ per application for the first year, bringing the total sum up to €14 billion.

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/slovakia-challenges-education-refugee-children-ukraine_en

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/voices-ukrainians-experiences-and-needs-children-and-parents-czech-education_en

²⁰ <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/10/14/poland-to-spend-e8-4bn-supporting-ukraine-refugees-in-2022-highest-in-oecd/>

²¹ https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/poland-to-receive-most-eu-funds-for-helping-ukrainian-refugees/

²² <https://globalizationandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12992-022-00880-y>

²³ <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/migration-policy-debates-13.pdf>

According to some estimates, helping Ukrainians might cost **Slovakia** €2 billion. Slovakia was granted just €15.8 million from the EU - €6.5 million within the framework of emergency aid from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and €9.3 million within the Instrument for Financial Management and Border and Visa Policy²⁴.

According to some estimates, current financial aid in **Hungary** amounts to up to HUF 400 million²⁵ (€1 million) per month, while housing assistance costs up to 1.5 times that amount. To this, some additional costs should be added, including the construction and operation of the BOK stadium and reduced transport fares. The total cost of normal operations is expected to be under HUF 1 billion (~ €2.5 million) per month. Meanwhile, the European Commission has allocated €21 million to Hungary for supporting Ukrainian.

By the end of June, the cost of support provided to Ukrainian refugees in **the Czech Republic** is estimated at CZK 168 billion (€6.9 billion), with the European Commission allocating €27 million as a contribution.

Further prospects

Expectations are that a new wave of arrivals will emerge by the end of 2022. Several different approaches have already been deployed to address such a scenario: seemingly not preparing at all for this possibility (Hungary), efforts to create standards for the equal allocation of Ukraine refugees between different regions (Czech Republic, Prague authorities) and a declaration of openness towards accepting new flows of refugees (Poland).

According to the Slovak Interior Ministry's worst-case scenario, approximately 700,000 Ukrainians could flee to Slovakia during the winter. This path would spur additional expenses to respond to the emergency, with the expected costs of the

plan put at €31.7 million. The largest share of the sum, namely €14 million, would be allocated to emergency accommodation.

Meanwhile, the capacity of the V4 countries to absorb more refugee flows is rather limited. For example, Poland hosted 1.3 and 1.5 million refugees during the 2007 and 2013 crises respectively²⁶ - Poland's capabilities should consequently be seen in that light. Hungary has declared that it has almost exceeded its capacity for the protection and assistance of persons with specific needs, including children, victims of trafficking and exploitation and individuals with severe mental health disorders. And the Czech Republic already hosts the largest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita in Europe.

Though Ukraine shares a common history with Poland and similar cultural values and languages, there are still some barriers preventing the quick integration of Ukrainians into Polish society, with the language barrier as a chief concern. A second obstacle pertains to the still unmet need in resolving everyday routine matters, including childcare. Nearly half of those who have arrived from Ukraine since February 24th and remained in Poland (600,000) are children. There are also some difficulties in accessing the qualified labour market - though there is a lack of qualified professionals in Poland, some employers are not interested in hiring Ukrainians.

²⁴ <https://www.trend.sk/spravny/trendy-fridays-helping-ukrainians-might-cost-slovakia-2bn-euros-says-matovic>

²⁵ <https://vsquare.org/ukrainian-refugees-in-hungary-volunteers-are-doing-the-governments-work/>

²⁶ <https://www.worlddata.info/europe/poland/asylum.php>

Main conclusions

- 1.** The V4 countries, taken together, constitute one of the regions hosting the largest number of Ukrainian refugees in the world (more than 25% of the total number). This makes the region an effective testing ground for experimenting with different social measures related to refugee acceptance and integration for Europe.
- 2.** Ukrainians who fled the Russian aggression after February 24th, 2022, and in the ensuing months have been met with heartfelt welcomes by V4 societies, with people committing their utmost towards helping refugees with food, clothes, accommodation and other support needed. This outburst of empathy towards Ukrainians has changed the V4 societies, making them generally more open to all refugees compared to their earlier more sceptical attitudes.
- 3.** Civil society has proven to be critically important in supplementing government support to refugees (in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia) or even substituting government efforts where the government has not been proactive (in Hungary).
- 4.** The government response to the refugee influx followed the initial support efforts of individuals and communities. Ukrainian refugees in all V4 countries have been able to benefit from the common framework approach that permits access to labour markets, healthcare, education, other social services and support, including housing. The range of benefits and the amount of financial assistance provided, nevertheless, varies by country.
- 5.** The European Commission has provided considerably less funding to V4 countries for refugee support than the governments of the latter have expended for these purposes, apart from Hungary. Refugee assistance spending has placed a severe strain on the budgets of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Yet, according to some assessments, those Ukrainians who have already gained employment will contribute back the money invested in refugee support through their tax payments.
- 6.** Although the V4 countries are showing signs of fatigue from accepting refugees and bearing related social and financial costs, hosting Ukrainians brings benefits to the V4 economies and could slow down the current economic decline of the region. In particular, the arrival of Ukrainian refugees has had a positive effect on labour markets, with Ukrainians filling unqualified positions considered unattractive by local populations.
- 7.** Some countries, however, have established very specific requirements for employers and employees in making legal job contracts, hindering the countries from fully benefiting from the

additional workforce potential that Ukrainians provide. Another barrier, especially relevant for enlisting potential female employees, concerns a lack of kindergartens and childcare facilities for younger children.

- 8.** The housing shortage in V4 countries also remains one of the greatest challenges to hosting refugees – the crisis has been exacerbated by the high demand for housing from refugees. This not only means poor living conditions for many Ukrainians but may also contribute to social tensions and lower tolerance towards refugees in general.
- 9.** Even though the initial enthusiastic welcome of refugees by the different societies by now has subsided, societal support for the reception/ accommodation of Ukrainians in V4 countries generally remains strong. The majority of the region's population, apart from Slovaks, considers hosting Ukrainians fleeing the war to be the right move and believes it is necessary to continue supporting the refugees either in a full or reduced amount.
- 10.** The greater openness towards Ukrainians compared to other refugees can be explained by empathy towards women and children coming from a geographically and culturally similar society and the fact they have fled a war that has garnered substantial media coverage. In contrast, during earlier refugee waves to V4 countries, arrivals were predominantly young men coming from more distant cultures and fleeing conflicts far from the V4 region leading to reduced emotional attachments.
- 11.** Differences in attitudes towards Ukrainians in V4 countries are shaped by various factors, such as historically strong pro-Russian sentiment in Slovakia. This variable explains why Slovaks are far less likely to label Russia as the aggressor and Ukrainians as victims than any other V4 nation. Prior experiences of integrating Ukrainian migrants in Poland and the Czech Republic and links between Hungarians and the Hungarian minority within Ukraine, conversely, have made those populations more positively disposed to new flows.
- 12.** In all V4 countries, majorities support providing refugees with free access to local language courses, a signal that they perhaps expect Ukrainians to integrate more into their societies. Free access to healthcare for refugees generally also finds popular support. Rent subsidies and free transportation for refugees, however, are generally seen as excessive benefits.
- 13.** Slovakia, with its polarized society, is an outlier with regard to the otherwise unambiguous solidarity from the region: for most questions regarding different aspects of refugee support, negative attitudes are, at least slightly, more prevalent. More than half of Slovaks do not agree with hosting Ukrainian refugees and disapprove with maintaining this support. However,

Slovaks also hold more unfavourable attitudes towards refugees in general compared to other V4 societies.

14. Negative attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees in all four countries are more commonly shared by people from lower income brackets and those with less formal education. People who receive information via personal communications or from television also hold more unfavourable views - this underscores the importance of promoting media literacy and disinformation awareness to foster societal cohesion and understanding.
15. The governments of the V4 countries have been gradually reducing support for Ukrainian refugees. This is not unexpected given the large number of new arrivals and the limited resources of these countries. Should there be a new wave of mass migration from Ukraine because of an anticipated harsh energy crisis in the winter, new refugees will likely find themselves in considerably worse conditions compared to those who came earlier.
16. While the number of Ukrainians returning home increased over the summer and numerous surveys indicate that a majority of refugees are declaring their intention to eventually go back to Ukraine, it is difficult to forecast outflows in the coming months considering the uncertainty regarding the scope of the destruction of Ukraine's energy and civilian infrastructure by Russian missiles and the country's capacity to repair the damage.
17. Given the already sizable numbers of Ukrainian refugees in the region (apart from Hungary) and the limited capacity of the host countries to sustain new arrivals, it may be more prudent for governments to invest in bolstering the repair of Ukraine's critical infrastructure and further strengthening Ukraine's capacity to defend itself rather than reacting after a new exodus has begun.
18. The governments of V4 countries appear to lack medium- and long-run strategies vis-à-vis Ukrainian refugees. The Ukrainian government has not yet elaborated a policy regarding Ukrainian citizens who have fled abroad. The message to compatriots, as of yet, has been to stay in place given the unpredictability of further war developments. Yet the time will come when it will be essential for Kyiv, together with V4 governments, to develop and elaborate on their joint approaches towards the Ukrainian refugee community in the region and their return home or integration into host societies.
19. Better coordination of different stakeholders in the V4 on providing refugee support to Ukrainians is necessary to identify the best solutions that meet the needs of both refugees and the local populations.

Recommendations

Multi-Stakeholder

- Establish a coordinating mechanism for Ukrainian refugee issues involving relevant officials at different levels, representatives of local and international humanitarian NGOs and Ukrainian refugee communities/ Ukrainian diaspora, and other interested persons. Such mechanisms could function both at the national and regional (V4) levels.

EU institutions

- It would be prudent for the European Union to encourage continued solidarity among its Member States towards Ukraine by providing sufficient funding to countries bearing the largest hosting burdens, especially when the respective governments are forced to discontinue support or drastically reduce it due to their inability to withstand the financial strain placed on their capacities to provide assistance at the necessary level.
- The European Commission should examine the capacity of EU Member States to host Ukrainian refugees and, where justified, establish schemes encouraging voluntary refugee relocation from those countries where the hosting capacity has been exhausted to those where there is some room left and bigger labour demand.
- It is recommended that the European Union carry out a public information

campaign within Member States hosting Ukrainian refugees. The messaging could be targeted towards a) sustaining solidarity sentiment towards refugees and b) promoting awareness about the EU contribution to refugee assistance funding.

National and local governments of V4 countries

- Seek opportunities to continue financial assistance, healthcare and housing programmes covering the most vulnerable categories of Ukrainian refugees (elderly people, people with disabilities, unemployed women with multiple children, etc.).
- Provide opportunities to any Ukrainian refugee interested in learning the local language and culture to do so free of charge to facilitate better integration of refugees and enhance their employment prospects. To achieve this, the local language course offering should be considerably expanded, with a focus on organizing intensive courses that provide participants with sufficient knowledge to gain employment.
- Promote the employment of Ukrainian refugees through targeted online job resources, dedicated employment fairs and programmes encouraging employers to hire refugees.
- Establish a monitoring system for local-level refugee-related challenges, such as the placement of refugees in

areas where there are no additional workforce needs or regarding the unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles refugees face during their registration process. The timely detection and removal of such challenges will ensure both that the host economies can effectively harness the refugee labour potential and Ukrainians can benefit from adequate social protections.

- Provide opportunities for the broader engagement of Ukrainian refugees in activities aimed at satisfying the needs of other Ukrainian refugees, including through support roles in kindergartens and through working with Ukrainian refugee children, psychological counselling, etc.
- Provide more information to citizens of V4 countries on how and why the governments are supporting Ukrainians and explain the benefits of their involvement for the workforce, economy and other areas for host societies. This outreach should be directed, in particular, to older people, less educated audiences, people in rural areas, and other communities that may be typically less media literate and prone to consuming unverified information uncritically.
- Monitor and combat Russian disinformation regarding Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees.

Ukrainian authorities

- Develop and conduct creative public information campaigns (cultural events, publications in the media, posters in public areas, collaboration

with opinion makers, etc.). These should focus on: a) explaining the hardships experienced by Ukrainians due to the war and showcasing their courage, resilience, activism and unity to the populations of V4 countries; b) demonstrating the gratitude of Ukrainians to V4 countries for their support; c) sharing the stories of Ukrainian refugees – both successes and struggles.

- Maintain connections with refugees and raise the specter of their eventual return to Ukraine following the end of the war. A new IT platform could be developed to communicate with Ukrainian refugees (proposed title – E-Migratsiya). The platform should be user-friendly and provide all necessary resources on the stay in host countries and return (legal information and information on humanitarian aid, training and employment opportunities collected in cooperation with host governments, aid agencies and other actors).
- Update the employment policy supporting and promoting remote work for those Ukrainians who fled abroad yet remain employed in Ukrainian institutions to maintain ties between refugees and Ukraine. The Ukrainian economy will benefit from this as well.
- Discuss cooperation opportunities with V4 governments regarding the return of refugees from the region and their involvement in the post-war economic revival.

Ukrainian civil society organizations including diaspora and NGOs in V4

- Develop, in partnership with donor institutions and V4 NGOs, programmes and projects encouraging a proactive role for Ukrainian refugees (training in civic activism, social entrepreneurship, networking among activists, and the provision of seed money for small initiatives aimed at improving the lives of refugees and their integration into local communities).
- Develop and implement public campaigns, potentially in cooperation with Ukraine's government institutions (MFA, Ukrainian Institute and other relevant institutions), within V4 countries that spotlight the gratitude of Ukrainians to host societies for their support. These campaigns should also showcase stories of Ukrainian refugees providing value-added to host countries through, among other activities, interesting civic initiatives, work contributions, and socially responsible entrepreneurship.

Donor organizations

- Continue allocating resources to humanitarian assistance for vulnerable groups of Ukrainian refugees through international and local humanitarian organizations, NGOs, etc. in coordination with host country governments.
- Develop programmes and projects providing support to Ukrainian refugees in V4 countries in

establishing small businesses and encouraging social entrepreneurship and supporting local businesses in hiring Ukrainian refugees for qualified jobs.

- Establish programmes to increase activism among Ukrainian refugees and encourage them to take responsibility for developing solutions to problems that they experience, build cooperation with host communities and other similar activities.
- Develop programmes, in partnership with host governments, directed at providing select groups of Ukrainian refugees with opportunities to learn about innovative business skills and community development practices from their host countries. This expertise would ideally be applied upon their return to Ukraine through training and internships with innovative businesses, national and local governments.

Annex

V4 Countries Basic Facts

Population (millions)

Country	Population (millions)
Slovakia	5.5
Poland	37.8
Hungary	9.7
Czech Republic	10.7

GDP per capita (EUR thousands)

Country	GDP per capita (EUR thousands)
Slovakia	19.8
Poland	16.7
Hungary	17.6
Czech Republic	24.8

Gini Index

Country	Gini Index
Slovakia	20.9
Poland	26.8
Hungary	27.7
Czech Republic	24.8

Human Development Index

Country	Human Development Index
Slovakia	0.848
Poland	0.876
Hungary	0.846
Czech Republic	0.889

Number of Ukrainian refugees (thousands)

Country	Number of Ukrainian refugees (thousands)
Slovakia	102,6
Poland	1529
Hungary	32.6
Czech Republic	466.9

Ukrainian refugees employed in the local labour market

Country	Ukrainian refugees employed in the local labour market
Slovakia	63 %
Poland	50 %
Hungary	-
Czech Republic	21 %

Prior unemployment (on 1 January 2022)

Country	Prior unemployment (on 1 January 2022)
Slovakia	6.5%
Poland	2.9%
Hungary	3.7%
Czech Republic	2.2%

Amount spent on Ukrainian refugees (EUR billions)

Country	Amount spent on Ukrainian refugees (EUR billions)
Slovakia	2
Poland	8.4
Hungary	0.02
Czech Republic	6.9





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