

2022

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

# SPECIAL REPORT

## UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN POLAND



A special report from the sociological study 'Ukrainian refugees in Poland' conducted by the EWL Migration Platform, Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market 'EWL' and the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw.

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### ANDRZEJ KORKUS

EWL Group Chairman of the Board

#### POLAND AND UKRAINE: TOGETHER FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

*On Thursday, 24 February 2022, we woke up in a new, terrifying reality. It was with heartache and disbelief that we received the information about the Russian invasion of Ukraine.*

*Ukrainian citizens have been supporting the Polish economy for many years. They fill staff shortages, contribute to the development of Polish enterprises and build Poland's GDP. Social and economic ties, built over many years through economic migration, as well as the cultural and geographical proximity of our countries mean that for those fleeing the war Poland has become a place where they can count on a safe shelter, help and support.*

*Our study showed that the vast majority of refugees - 63% - want to take advantage of the special solutions introduced by the Polish government and take up employment in Poland in order to provide a decent living for themselves and their families. It is worth mentioning that almost 2/3 of the refugees have higher education and represent professions considered in short supply in Poland - among others they are specialists in fields such as education, medicine, industrial production, construction or IT. There is also no lack of employees of the services and trade sectors.*

*Every third refugee from Ukraine declares they want to stay in Poland for longer. This means that their influx may support the Polish labour market also in the long term. On the one hand, due to reversed gender migration, we are facing a growing shortage of men ready to take up employment, on the other hand, there is a surplus of women who are persistently looking for a job. It is therefore necessary and urgent to develop specific solutions in order to adapt workplaces to the gender structure. In addition to providing a place to live, it is the guarantee of work and independence that is of major importance in the process of recovering a sense of stability and security for women fleeing the war.*

*The war in Ukraine will eventually come to an end. I believe that the Ukrainians will win their struggle for independence and the right to self-determination, and the refugees will return home and rebuild their country. Until then, however, we must support them with the utmost commitment in finding their place in Poland.*

*I invite you to read the study.*



### JAN MALICKI, DR H.C.

Director of the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw

#### HELPING REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE IS POLAND'S RAISON D'ÉTAT

*On 24 February 2022 Russian troops invaded the territory of independent Ukraine. Beyond the Polish eastern border hostilities on an enormous scale are taking place. Many Ukrainian citizens are forced to leave their homes, abandon their lives and seek refuge.*

*They find it in Poland. Since the first days of the war this country, its central and local governments and ordinary citizens have been organizing support for Ukrainians fleeing the war. This assistance is not only an expression of Christian and European values, but also the Polish raison d'état. It is the overriding interest of the Polish State to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia, as it is Ukraine that is currently defending Western values.*

*The Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw has been conducting field research during every struggle of Ukrainians for the right to choose the path of development. It was during the Orange Revolution in 2004, the Euromaidan in 2013-2014, and also now, during Ukraine's war with Russia for independence and the defence of Western civilisation.*

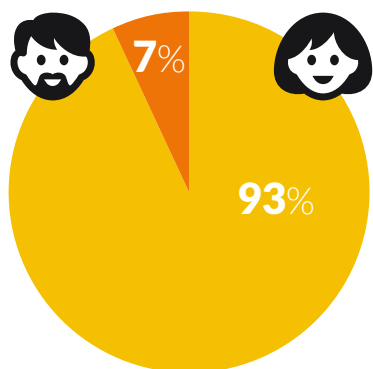
*As the first ones, in cooperation with our partners, the experts of the EWL Group, we have conducted a sociological study among the refugees from Ukraine who entered Poland after 24 February 2022. We present the results to you in this report. I sincerely hope that they will allow for a better understanding of the situation of Ukrainians fleeing the war, but above all they will allow you to draw conclusions which will translate into action and real help that is undoubtedly still needed and will be necessary for a long time to come.*

*Enjoy your read.*

# RESPONDENT PROFILE: GENDER, AGE AND REGION OF RESIDENCE IN UKRAINE

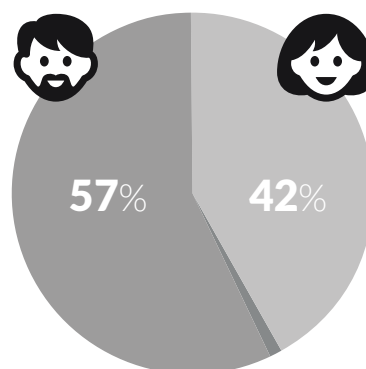
## Gender

2022  
N=400



0% I don't want to answer

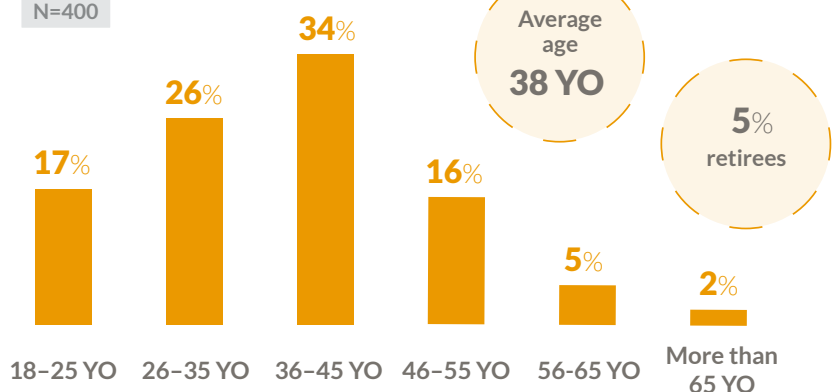
2021  
N=600



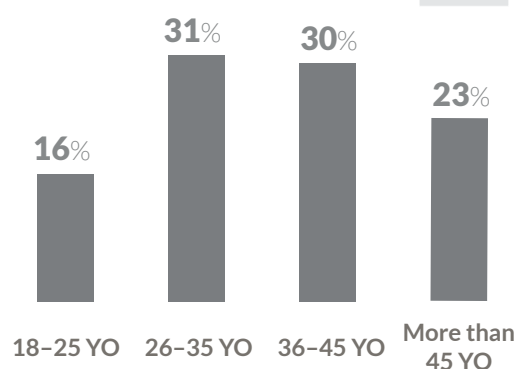
1% I don't want to answer

## Age

2022  
N=400

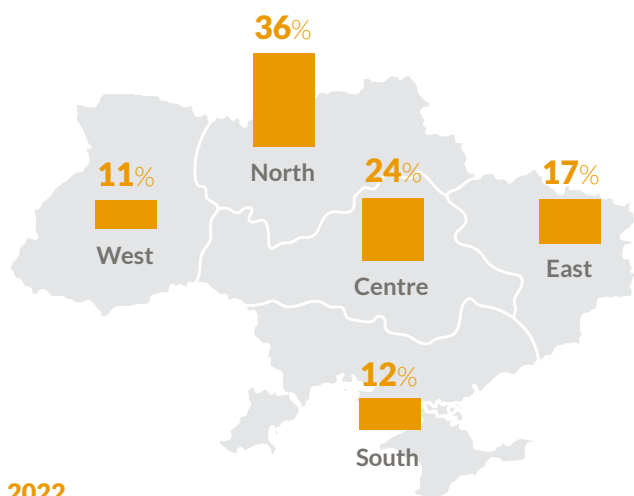


2021  
N=600

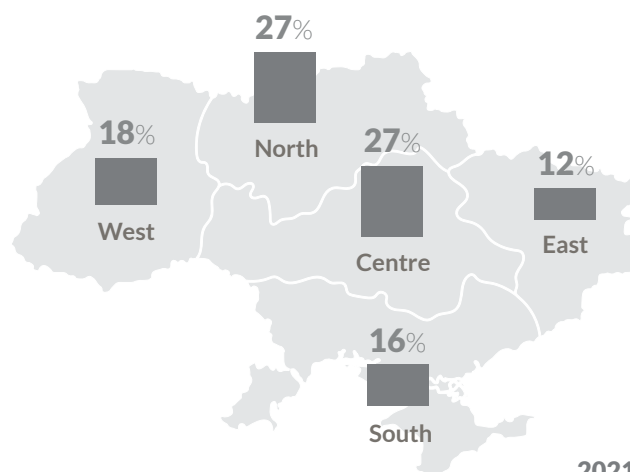


## Region of residence in Ukraine

2022  
N=400



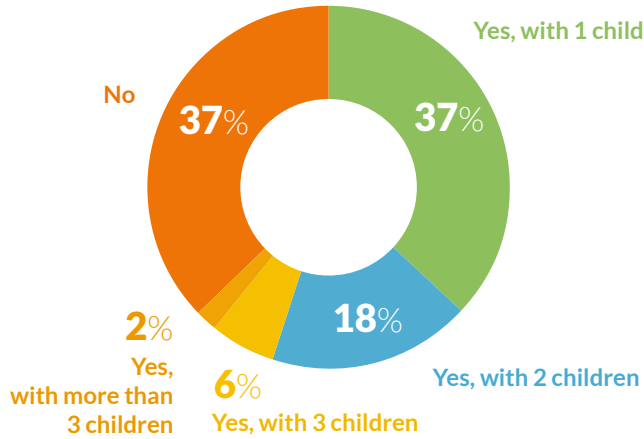
2021  
N=600



Did you come to Poland with children under 18 years of age?

2022

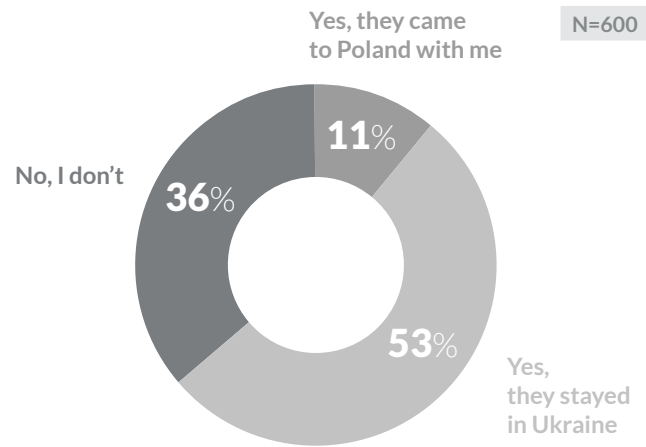
N=400



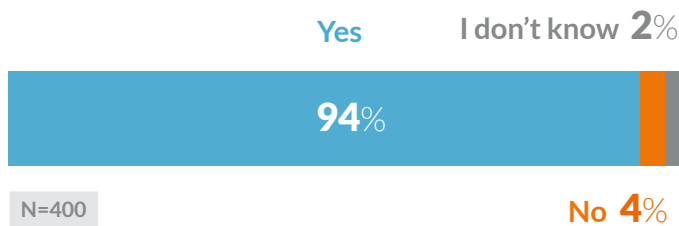
Do you have children?

2021

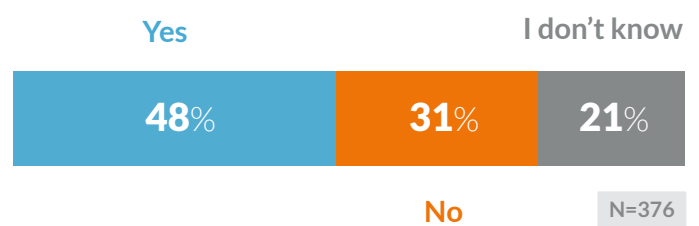
N=600



Has anyone from your immediate family stayed in Ukraine?



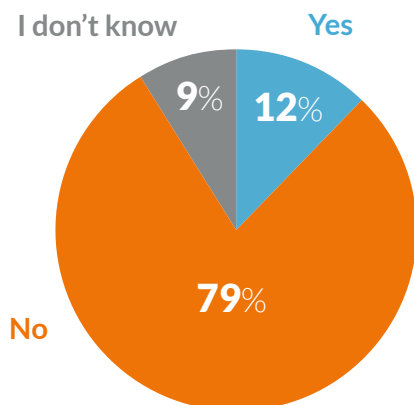
Are your relatives planning to join in Poland?



Are you of Polish descent?

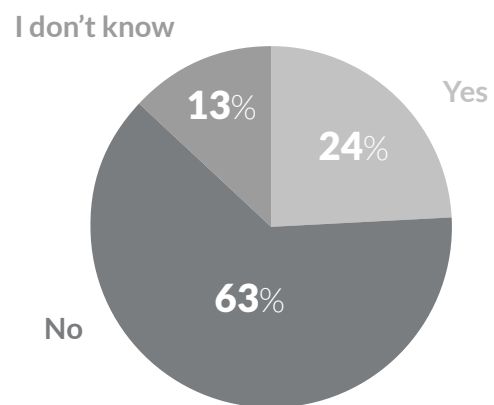
2022

N=400



2021

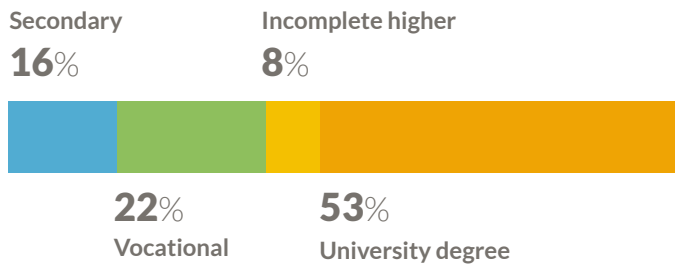
N=600



## Education

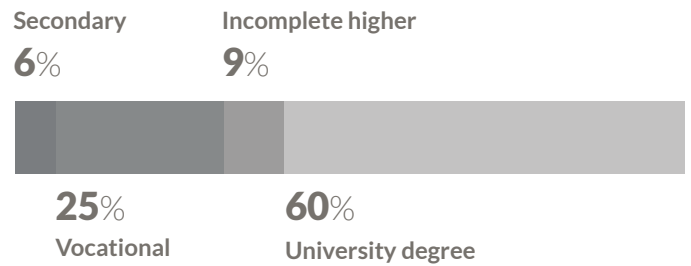
2022

N=400



2021

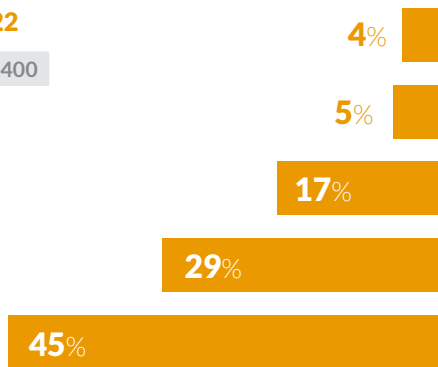
N=600



## How would you rate your knowledge of Polish?

2022

N=400



Fluent and very good

27%

Good

19%

Average

32%

Bad

18%

I do not speak Polish

6%

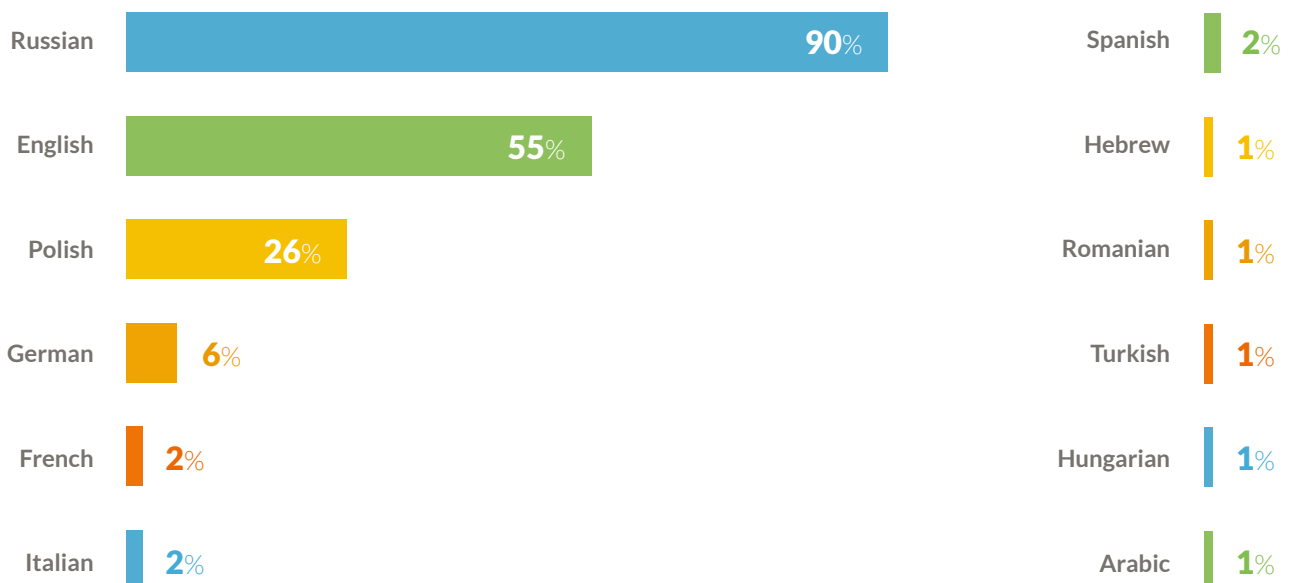
2021

N=600

## Which languages do you speak at least at a communicative level?

(multiple responses possible)

N=400

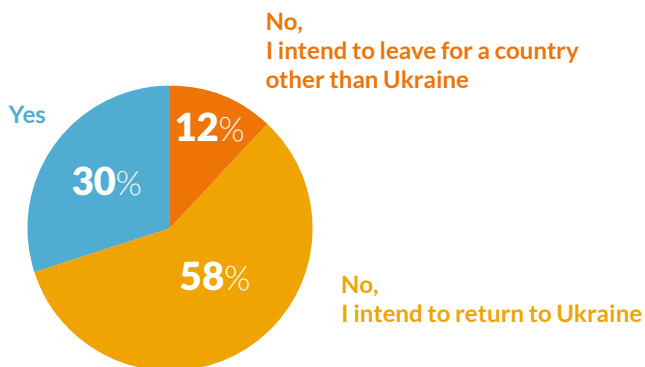


What had the greatest influence on your choice of Poland as a country to stay in during the war?

(multiple responses possible)



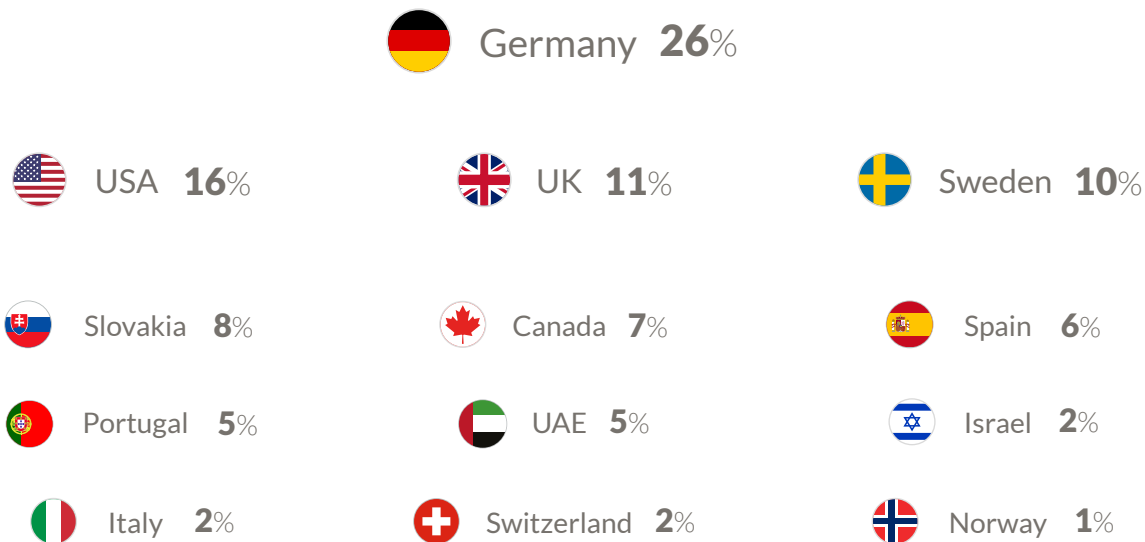
Are you planning to stay in Poland for longer?



N=400

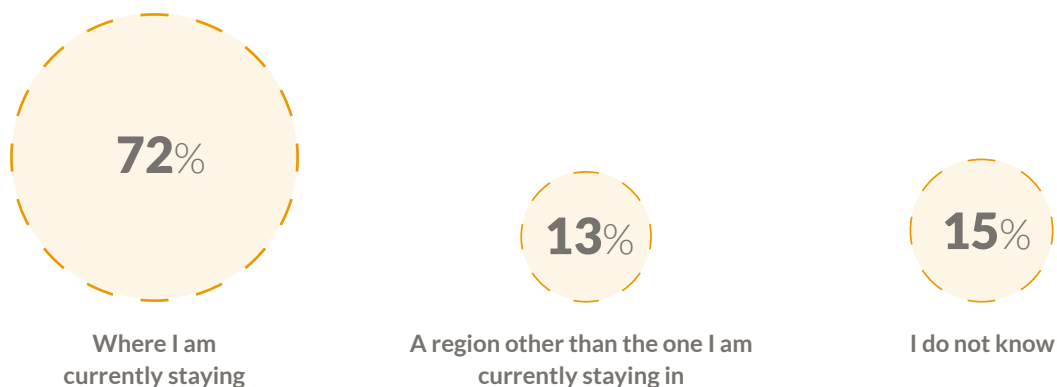
## Which country do you intend to go to?

(among those planning to leave)

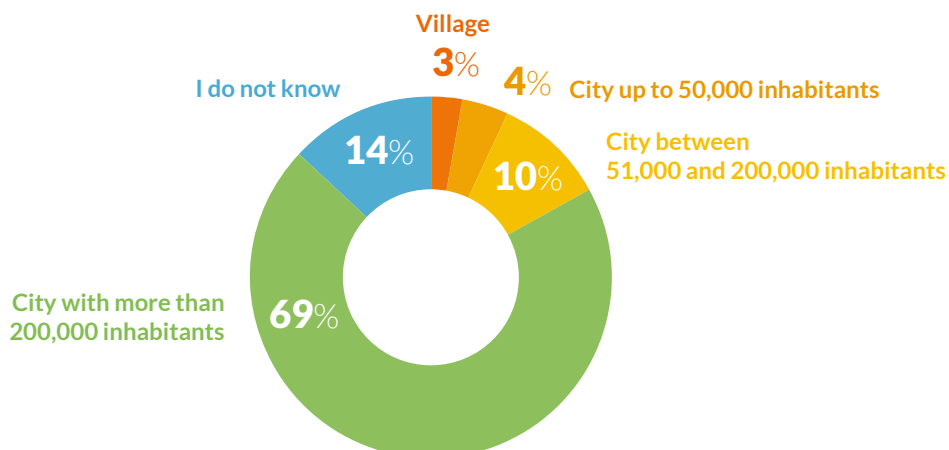


## Which region of Poland do you intend to live in?

N=120



## What size town do you intend to live in?



N=120



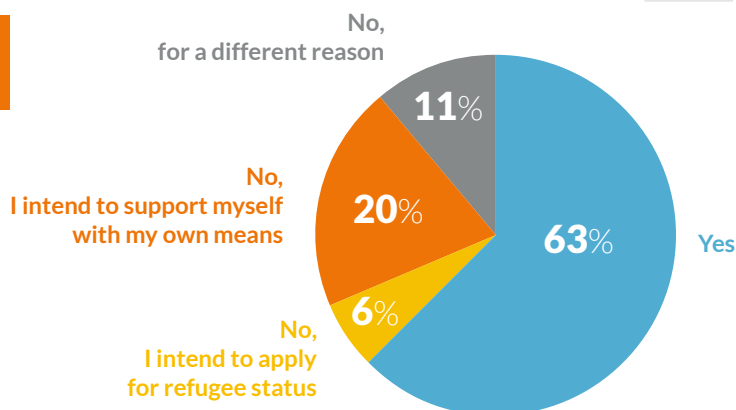
## Have you worked in Poland before?

N=400

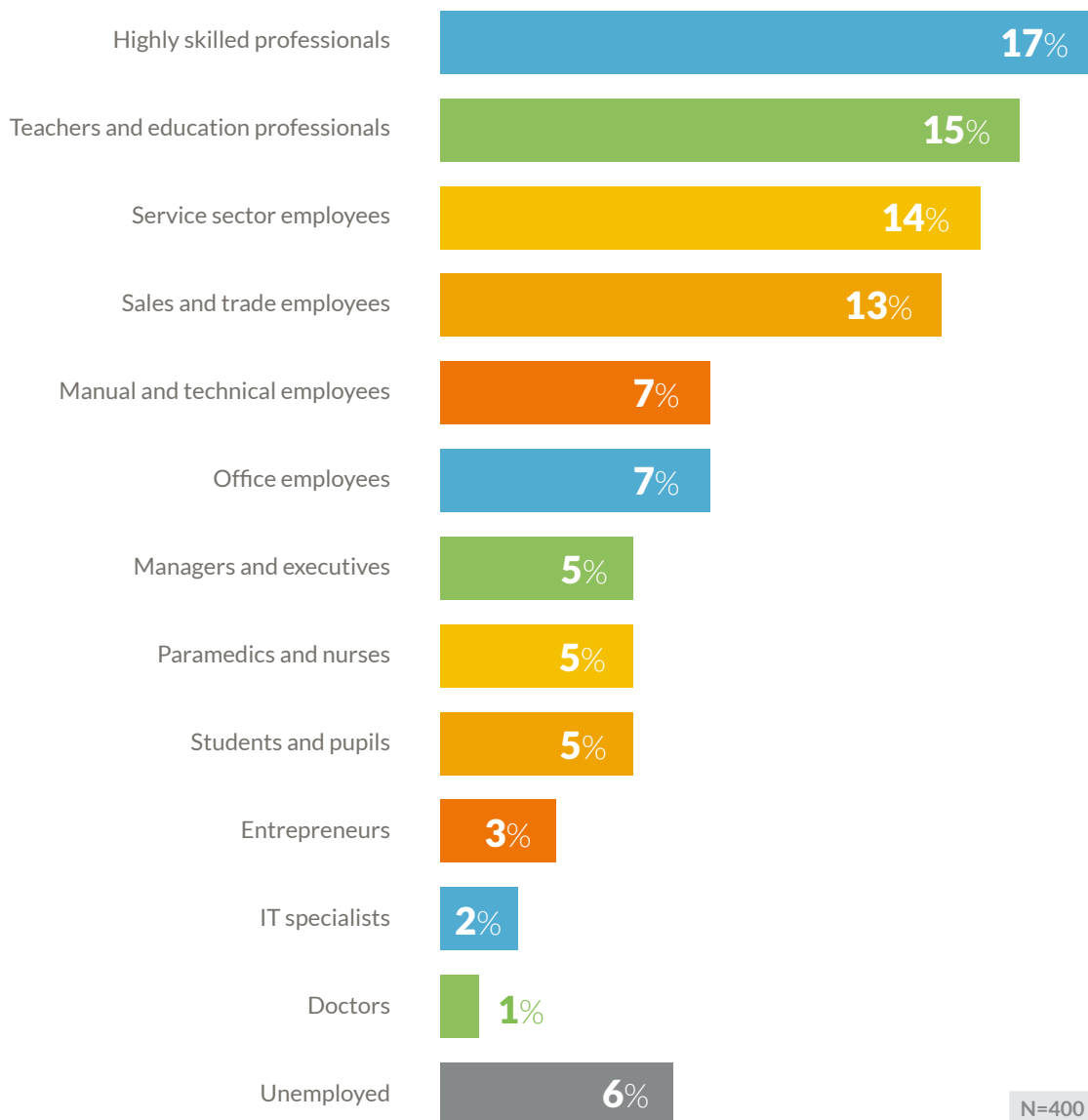


## Are you planning to work in Poland under the special law?

N=400



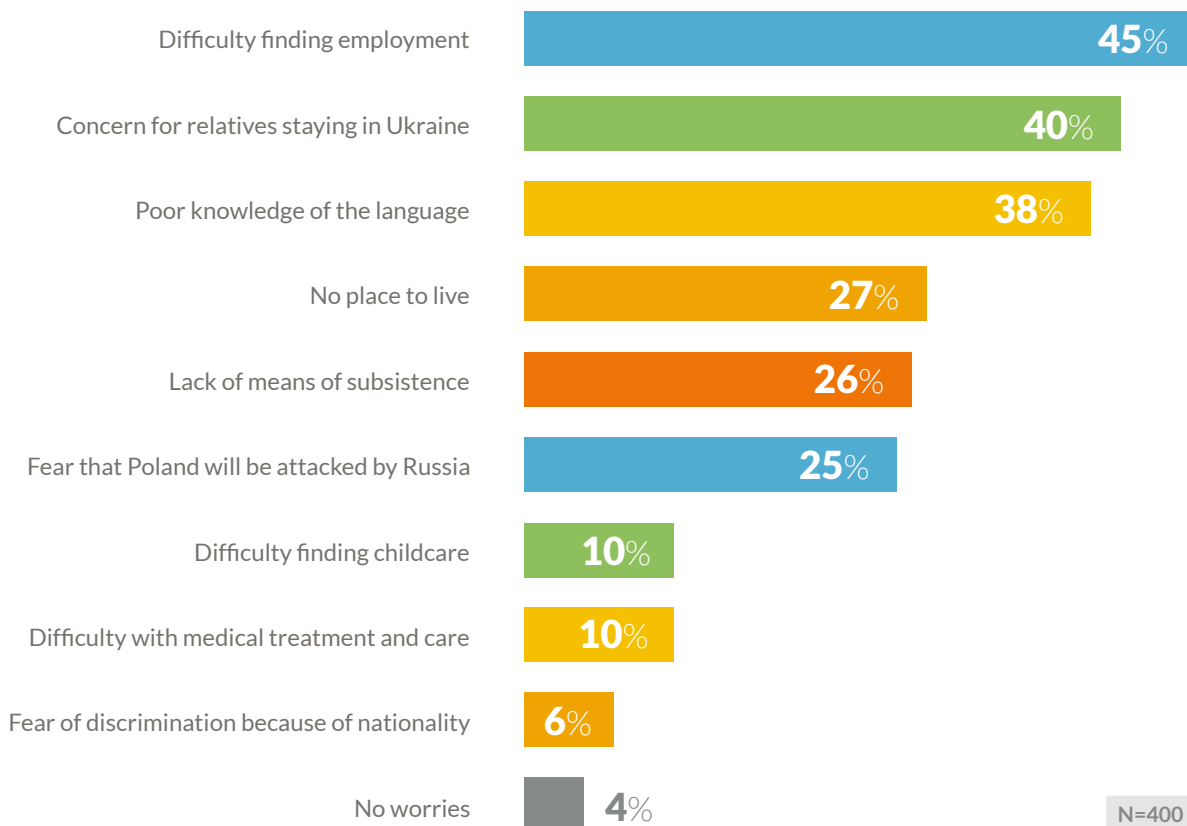
## What profession did you have in Ukraine?



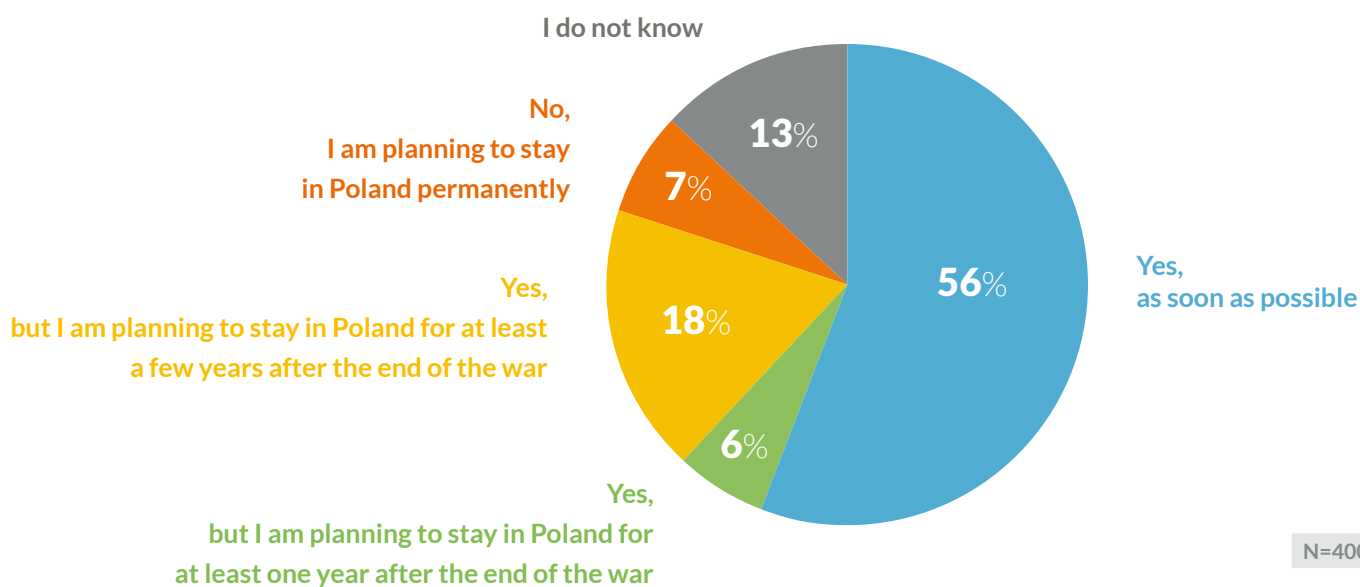
N=400

What are your concerns about living abroad?

(multiple responses possible)



Will you return to Ukraine after the war ends?



**METHODOLOGY**

The study of refugees from Ukraine residing in Poland was carried out by means of direct individual interviews using tablets (CAPI F2F). The interviews were conducted in Ukrainian with Ukrainian citizens who left Ukraine and arrived in Poland after 24 February 2022.

The study was carried out between 23 March and 3 April 2022 on a sample of n=400 adult (18+) refugees from Ukraine.

The respondents were interviewed in two cities – Warsaw and Krakow. The interviews were conducted in the vicinity of the PESEL number collection sites, railway stations and reception points for refugees.

The survey was random, which ensured its representative character. The cross-sectional character of the respondents is confirmed by the fact that they included residents of all regions of Ukraine, representatives of different age groups, professions, education levels, as well as urban and rural residents.

The survey received responses from 85% of women and 15% of men. In order to reflect the gender structure (in terms of the gender structure in statistics on assigning PESEL numbers to refugees), a gender weighting (93.5% female, 6.5% male) was applied to the results.

The results were compared with an earlier study of foreign workers from Ukraine in Poland of December 2021 (CAWI, n=600).



## THE WAR BROUGHT A CHANGE IN THE MIGRATORY GENDER STRUCTURE

From 24 February 2022 men (citizens of Ukraine) aged between 18 and 60, with a few exceptions, are not allowed to leave Ukraine due to the introduction of martial law. This makes women the majority (94%) among the refugees. Analysing the gender structure of migrants from Ukraine from previous studies, we can see a fundamental difference. So far, men have constituted the core of Ukrainian migrants. As a result of military operations this tendency has been suddenly and strongly reversed.

## EDUCATED PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS PROFESSIONS CAME TO POLAND, BUT THEY DO NOT SPEAK POLISH

The largest group of refugees from Ukraine, 36%, are people from the northern regions (mainly from the Kiev region - 30%). This is probably due to the fact that in February and March the Russian forces concentrated their military operations on areas around the capital of Ukraine. This region was subjected to systematic shelling, regular battles took place there and some villages were temporarily occupied by the Russian troops.

Among the refugees, similarly to workers from Ukraine surveyed in the last month of 2021, there is a predominance of people with higher education (61%). However, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of people with secondary education (16% among the refugees and only 6% among the workers in December last year).

## ALMOST 1/3 OF THE RESPONDENTS PLAN TO STAY IN POLAND FOR LONGER

Geographical proximity and length of the border line between Poland and Ukraine makes Poland, as a direct neighbour, the main destination of migration for Ukrainians fleeing the war. It is also significant that apart from the common border Ukraine is connected to Poland by cultural and linguistic proximity, and even before the outbreak of the war the citizens of this country would come to Poland in large numbers in search of work and a better life. This is the reason why Poland became the first, and often the final, stop for Ukrainians fleeing the war. Among the reasons for choosing Poland as a migration country the refugees mention cultural proximity (36%), having friends (27%) and/or family in

## ABOUT 2/3 OF THE REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE WANT TO FIND EMPLOYMENT IN POLAND

The vast majority of Ukrainian refugees (as many as 63%) intend to take up employment during their stay in Poland. Only one in five respondents declare living off their own financial means (20%). However, poor knowledge of Polish, the gender structure of the refugees, as well as the necessity to provide care for their underage children may cause difficulties in finding their place on the Polish labour market. Especially if we take into account the fact that almost 70% of the refugees want to live in cities with more than 200 thousand inhabitants. Easier access to social

However, the age structure has not changed much. Still, people aged between 26 and 45 are the most mobile group. On the one hand, this may result from greater courage to seek safety outside their own country, on the other hand, it may be related to the need of protecting children from the threat of Russian troops. Almost 2/3 of the refugees from Ukraine came to Poland with children under the age of 18 (63%). Mothers with children are a group which requires special care in terms of psychological care, as many children may be traumatised by their war experiences, and in terms of adapting work processes to enable childcare.

A significant proportion of the respondents worked in the services and trade sectors (27%) before the outbreak of the war. Many of the refugees are highly qualified professionals (17%) and employees in the education sector (15%), who were forced by the Russian aggression to leave their homes and jobs.

In contrast to the migrants working in Poland in 2021, very few of the refugees speak Polish. Only 9% declare good or very good knowledge of the language (as compared to 45% of respondents in December 2021). Moreover, as many as 4/5 of the refugees have not worked in Poland before. This means that problems with finding a job matching their skills will deepen. Many refugees will be forced to work below their level of competence until they have learnt Polish. Language courses may prove to be one of the most necessary systemic solutions that will allow for rapid integration and absorption into the Polish labour market.

Poland (24%), as well as the friendly attitude of Poles towards Ukrainian citizens (19%).

Most refugees want to return to Ukraine, but every third respondent declares they would like to stay in Poland for longer. However, some respondents do not intend to stay in Poland, nor do they want to return to their homeland (12%). Most often they indicate Germany (26%), the United States (16%), the United Kingdom (11%) and Sweden (10%) as their final destination. This may result from the opening of these countries to war refugees - the previous legislation did not allow free access to the labour markets of any of these countries, as well as social policies. Nevertheless, most refugees intend to return to Ukraine immediately after the war has ended (56%).

infrastructure in large towns and cities does not mean, however, that it will be equally easy to find a job or a flat there.

Willingness to relocate remains low among the refugees. As many as 72% of them intend to stay in Poland in the regions where they are currently residing. Taking into account the fact that 63% of the refugees came to Poland with children, their lack of willingness to relocate should not come as a surprise. Some children have already started education in Polish schools, slowly adapting to life in a new place. Another change of environment could have a negative impact on the development, emotions and the sense of security of the youngest refugees.

**61%**

of refugees from Ukraine have higher or incomplete higher education

**26%**

of respondents declare knowledge of Polish at least at a communicative level

**55%**

of respondents declare knowledge of English at least at a communicative level

**30%**

of refugees declare willingness to stay in Poland for longer

**56%**

of respondents plan to return to Ukraine after the war is over

**48%**

of refugees declare that their relatives who stayed in Ukraine are planning to come to Poland

**63%**

of respondents are planning to take up employment in Poland

**18%**

of refugees are highly qualified specialists

**82%**

of respondents have not had experience with work in Poland

**6%**

refugees are doctors, paramedics or nurses

**38 YO**

is the average age of refugees from Ukraine

**63%**

of respondents declare they came to Poland with underage children

**5%**

of refugees are retired

**69%**

of respondents prefer to stay in cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants

**45%**

of respondents are afraid of difficulties with finding employment in Poland



### EWL MIGRATION PLATFORM

Founded in 2007, the EWL Group successfully connects jobseekers from four continents with employers in the EU. As a migration platform, whose activities go far beyond the scope of traditional employment agencies and combine the offline and online worlds, the company is the leader on the Polish market of employment of foreigners.

The platform's wide range of services includes the management of the entire migration process: from recruitment, through legalization, provision of accommodation, employee leasing or provision of services in form of outsourcing. Thanks to many years of experience the EWL team of experts has excellent knowledge of local and European labour markets.

### FOUNDATION FOR THE SUPPORT OF MIGRANTS ON THE LABOUR MARKET 'EWL'

Founded in 2015, the Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market 'EWL' aims to initiate and support activities related to the presence of foreigners on the Polish labour market.

Our idea is to raise awareness of rights and obligations and the benefits of legal employment among foreigners, as well as to limit the abuse by dishonest employers. One of the main objectives of the Foundation is to improve multilateral cooperation between employers, government

### THE CENTRE FOR EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

The Centre for East European Studies is a unique academic unit in Poland, continuing the traditions of pre-war Sovietological centres – the East European Institute in Vilnius (1930–1939) and the Eastern Institute in Warsaw (1926–1939). The teaching offer of the Centre includes elite Eastern Studies (1st and 2nd degree and postgraduate courses) as well as schools for foreign students. The lecturers are eminent scientists, diplomats and specialists from Europe and the USA.

The Centre annually organizes international scientific conferences and a series of events building positive relations between Poland and the countries of the former

Every day, thanks to the EWL Group, more than 13,000 people are employed in production plants, logistics centres and warehouses in Europe. In its history, the company has helped more than 120,000 people to relocate and find employment.

The development of the migration platform has been supported since 2021 by the National Centre for Research and Development. Since 2018 EWL S.A. has been conducting sociological studies among foreigners who have taken employment in Poland.

The company is guided by the values of: openness, cooperation and responsibility, being fair, challenging the status quo and market obsession, and the company's vision is changing the global migration market.



institutions, non-governmental organizations and migrants themselves.

The Foundation also does charity work addressed mainly to foreigners who are in a difficult life or financial situation. In addition, it works for European integration, active dialogue and the development of contacts and cooperation between societies. The Foundation's activities are directed, among others, to entities involved in migration processes and participants of the global labour market.



USSR. It is also the publisher of numerous books and magazines devoted to the eastern themes.

In the years 2004–2013, the Centre for East European Studies, under the content-related supervision of Mariusz Kowalski and the general management of Jan Malicki, conducted a series of social studies in Ukraine. The first of them took place in December 2004. A total of about 2,000 questionnaire interviews was carried out, pertaining issues such as political views and preferred directions of international cooperation, with particular emphasis on the place of origin, nationality and language of the respondents' daily communication.



**'REPORT ON CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY Citizens of Ukraine on the Polish labour market. 3rd edition'**

February 2022



**'AN EMPLOYEE FROM UKRAINE wages in Poland'**

December 2019



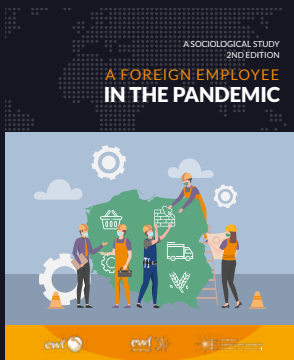
**'A FOREIGN EMPLOYEE in the pandemic. 3rd edition'**

June 2021



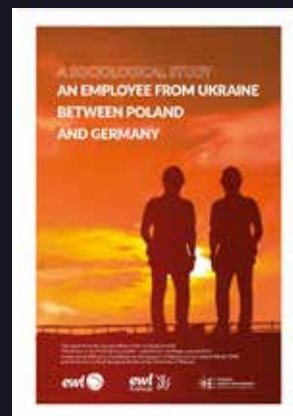
**'UKRAINIANS ON THE POLISH LABOUR MARKET experiences, challenges and perspectives. 2nd edition'**

September 2019



**'A FOREIGN EMPLOYEE in the pandemic. 2nd edition'**

October 2020



**'AN EMPLOYEE FROM UKRAINE between Poland and Germany'**

June 2019



**'A FOREIGN EMPLOYEE in the pandemic'**

May 2020



**'UKRAINIANS ON THE POLISH LABOUR MARKET experiences, challenges and perspectives'**

August 2018

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
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Refugees from Ukraine at the EWL Group Arrivals Department in Warsaw. Photo by Sergey Navoyan of 27 February 2022



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