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MIGRATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIZENS TO POLAND CAUSED BY RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE IN 2022

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Abstract

As a result of the war – Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022 – a huge number of refugees began to flee to the countries bordering with Ukraine in the west – including mainly to Poland. This regarded women, children and the elderly, because due to the ordered mobilization of men aged 18–60–years old, they could not, with some exceptions, leave Ukraine. This is a completely new situation – no such large European nation has been forced to migrate so violently since World War II. The aim of the article is to present and analyze the migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland caused by the Russian invasion – the course of this migration and the places where refugees stayed on the territory of Poland. Since Russia's activities had increased anxiety already before the invasion began, the analysis also covers the earlier period. Therefore, migration has been presented in detail since 1 January 2022, while 31 July 2022 has been adopted as the end date of the analyzed data.

Key words

migration, refugees, war in Ukraine, Poland.

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1. Introduction

The war which began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has caused huge migration to the countries bordering with Ukraine in the west – including mainly to Poland. This is a completely new situation. There has been no military attack of one state on another in Europe and the outbreak of a full-scale war since World War II. Also since then, no such large European nation has been forced to migrate so suddenly.

The aim of the article is to present and analyze the migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland caused by the Russian invasion. Since Russia's activities, mainly

the gathering of the troops along the border with Ukraine, had increased anxiety already before the invasion began, the analysis also covers the earlier period. Therefore, migration has been presented in detail since 1 January 2022, while 31 July 2022 has been adopted as the end date of the analyzed data.

There are currently few studies available, usually of a report nature, presenting this issue. Among them, the analysis by Duszczyk and Kaczmarczyk (2022a) presenting Ukrainians' migration to Poland in the first two months after the Russian invasion and outlining three scenarios for the next 12–20 months could be mentioned. Another study by the same authors (Duszczyk, Kaczmarczyk, 2022b)

focuses on the issues of residence, work, health care and education for migrants from Ukraine in Poland. A picture of the course of Ukrainians' migration to Poland and the assistance provided to them was presented by Byrska (2022). Currently, there are also few studies on the war migration of Ukrainians to other countries. One can mention here a more comprehensive work by Gerlach and Ryndzak (2022) depicting migration from Ukraine. Reactions to the war migration of Ukrainians in the countries of Central and Western Europe were described by De Coninck (2022). On the other hand, Brücker et al. (2022) presented the implications related to the migration of Ukrainians to Germany in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. All the aforementioned publications form the background to this work. However, this article is a development of some of the above-mentioned analyses of Ukrainians' migration caused by the war.

This is one selected effect of Russia's attack on Ukraine. Yet, the war in Ukraine leads to many far-reaching changes not only in the region, but also in Europe and in the world – political, economic, social and environmental ones (cf. Ben Hassen, El Bilali, 2022; Magula et al., 2022; Prebilič, Jereb, 2022; Rawtani et al., 2022).

2. Background

The start of protests in Kiev and then in other cities of Ukraine on 21 November 2013 can be considered as a recent starting point for the sequence of events leading to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Not signing an association agreement with the European Union by Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich from the pro-Russian Party of Regions directly led to these protests. This fact and the main place of demonstrations – the central square of Kiev – soon gave the name to these activities: Euromaidan. Attempts to suppress the unrest, especially on 30 November 2013, led to its strengthening. The escalation between 18 and 20 February 2014 was marked by bloody fighting in the Ukrainian capital. On February 21, militia squads were removed from the streets of Kiev, and Viktor Yanukovich left the capital. The next day, the Ukrainian parliament removed him from office. On 28 February, Yanukovich made a public appearance at a press conference in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. He declared that ousting him from power by the Verkhovna Rada was illegal, and thus he still considers himself to be the president of Ukraine. On 1 March, he asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to use the country's armed forces to restore stability in Ukraine.

The ousting of Viktor Yanukovich from power led to the intensification of Russia's activities in Crimea, and in the Lugansk and Donetsk oblasts. This was accompanied by the Russian authorities' narrative that, as a result of the involvement of the West – the European Union and the United States – in Ukraine, the rightful president was deposed, and neo-Nazis took over power, which led to economic and social chaos (Marples, 2016).

On the night of 26/27 February, armed Russian soldiers without uniforms (so-called green men) seized the buildings of the Parliament and the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Simferopol and then put up Russian flags on them. In the following days, Russia annexed Crimea. A referendum on incorporating the peninsula to Russia held on 16 March 2014 was part of this process. It became a pretext for the declaration of independence of the Republic of Crimea on 17 March and the incorporation of Crimea by Russia on 18 March. These actions were not recognized by the international community, which is primarily confirmed by the resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine adopted on 27 March by the UN General Assembly (Resolution..., 2014).

After Yanukovich and the pro-Russian Party of Regions were removed from power, demonstrations of supporters of broad autonomy or even joining of the Lugansk and Donetsk oblasts to Russia began in the regions. In April 2014, the armed forces of the Russian Federation launched aggression as part of a hybrid war in the south-eastern area of the Ukrainian state, conducting direct military operations there. As a result, two internationally unrecognized entities were created in the territory of the Donbas: the People's Republic of Luhansk and the People's Republic of Donetsk.

On 17 July 2014, a Boeing 777 Malaysia Airlines passenger plane was shot down over the territory controlled by the Donetsk People's Republic on flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur with 298 passengers on board. It was hit by a ground-to-air missile Buk M1 launched from the missile launchers of the armed forces of the Russian Federation. Despite intense and large-scale disinformation regarding who is responsible for the shooting down of the aircraft (Rietjens, 2019), Western countries condemned Russia and tightened the relatively lenient sanctions introduced as a result of the annexation of Crimea (Korhonen, 2019).

Despite the signing of the ceasefire in Minsk, which was supposed to enter into force on 5 September 2014, the fighting in eastern Ukraine continued until January 2015. At that time, the so-called second battle for the Donetsk airport, one

of the bloodiest battles of the Donbass war, took place. Later, despite the ceasefire, there were many skirmishes and incidents.

These events led to an increase in anti-Russian sentiments among the Ukrainian population and to closer relations with the European Union and military cooperation with NATO (cf. Balukh, 2019; Legucka, 2017; Pietnoczka, 2018). The Ukrainian army was reorganized, better trained with the help of NATO countries, and equipped with newer weapons.

At the turn of March and April 2021, Russia began to gather thousands of soldiers and military equipment near its border with Ukraine, which was the largest mobilization of forces since the annexation of Crimea in 2014. In September 2021, together with Belarus, Russia conducted regular "Zapad" military maneuvers along the Ukrainian and NATO borders, but this time they were on the largest scale since the collapse of the USSR. According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, 200,000 soldiers took part in them (Dyner, 2021).

After their completion, Russia left its military forces along the border with Ukraine and continued strengthening them in the following months. Under the pretext of further exercises together with the Belarusian army "Allied Decisiveness 2022," at the turn of January and February 2022, more than 120,000 Russian troops were stationed in the vicinity of the border with Ukraine, including tactical strikers transferred from the Eastern Military District. Three large landing ships of the Baltic Fleet and three of the Northern Fleet were sent to the Black Sea, with troops of the Marine Corps.

On 21 February 2022, Vladimir Putin signed a declaration recognizing the independence and sovereignty of two separatist republics in eastern Ukraine – the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic, and the agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between Russia and those republics. On 24 February 2022, at 5:55 Moscow time (4:55 Eastern European time in Ukraine), Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a message to the nation, during which he announced the start of a military special operation in Ukraine. At that time, the invasion began with four main strikes: from the north to Kiev, from the north and east to Kharkiv, in the Donbass area, from the south from the Crimean area to Melitopol, and Kherson and further to Mykolaiv.

Russia's attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 caused rapid migration of Ukrainian residents not only within the country, but also to other countries, including Poland. However, the migration of Ukrainians to Poland already took place much earlier – even before 2004, i.e. before Poland's accession to

the European Union. It intensified after 2014, which was related to the complications of the political and economic situation in Ukraine primarily resulting from the conflict with Russia – the annexation of Crimea and separatist anti-Ukrainian activities in the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts (cf. Brunarska et al., 2012; Jaroszewicz, 2015; Stokłosa, 2017; Wawryniuk, 2017; Wendt et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, until the beginning of 2022, migration to Poland was generally for employment purposes. It was influenced by high prices in Ukraine, low wages, a high level of corruption, lack of stability and probably lack of faith in the improvement of the situation in the country (cf. Hoffman, Reichel, 2011; Wendt et al., 2018).

At the same time, the increased migration of Ukrainians to Poland was and is primarily caused by its geographical proximity (which is associated with low travel costs), linguistic and cultural similarity and the existence of migration networks (above all, a large number of employment agencies aiming to recruit Ukrainians before they leave their own country, the possibility of obtaining assistance in Poland in finding work, housing, legalization of stay, etc., from family members or friends who had emigrated earlier, as well as after arriving in Poland, access to legal, medical and employment assistance in their language) and the liberalization of the Polish migration policy towards Ukrainians long before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (cf. Brunarska et al., 2012).

The migration of Ukrainians was also supported by shortages in the labor market in Poland caused by the large migration of young Poles to Western European countries, the ageing population and the restoration of the retirement age at 60 years old for women and 65 years for men, and a good economic situation (Kałuża-Kopias, 2016; Wendt et al., 2018). All this facilitated taking a decision on migration to Poland by potential emigrants in Ukraine.

Knowledge about the number of Ukrainians residing in Poland both before Russia's invasion of Ukraine and at present is fragmentary (cf. Brunarska, 2014). According to the estimates of Statistics Poland, at the end of December 2019, there were 1.351 million citizens of Ukraine in Poland, and at the end of February 2020 (i.e. at the moment of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic), 1.391 million (Populacja cudzoziemców..., 2020).

One should assume that these numbers are exaggerated due to the fact that they have been calculated on the basis of administrative records. A significant numbers of Ukrainians, although present in the records, do not stay in Poland permanently.

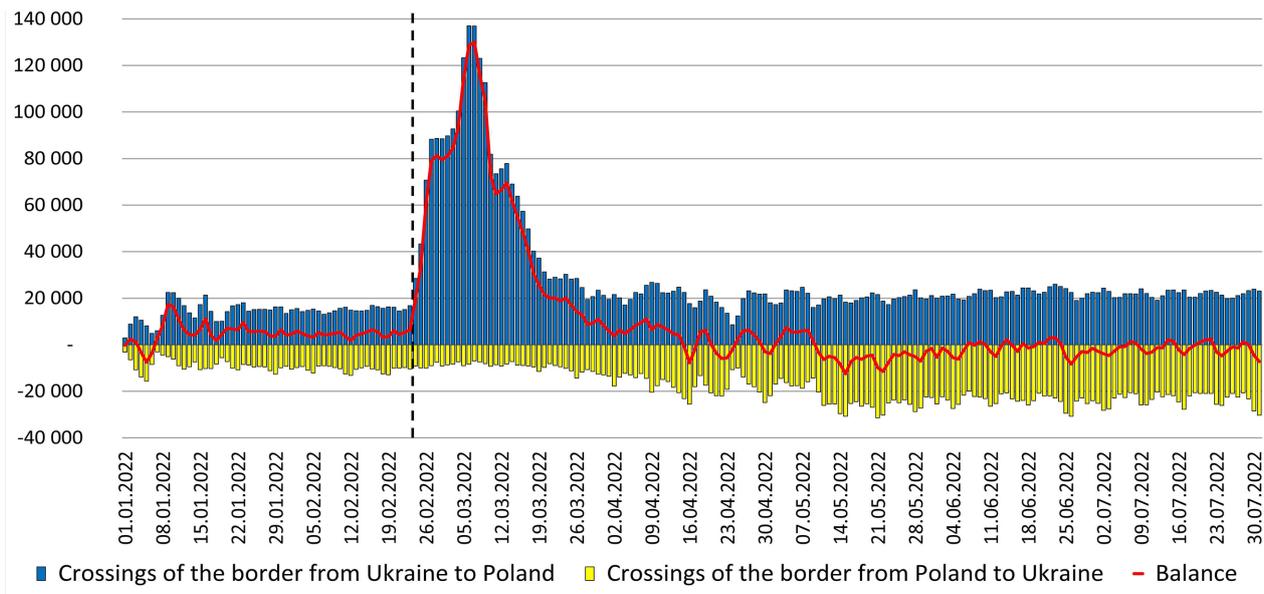


Fig. 1. Crossing of the Polish-Ukrainian border by Ukrainian citizens from 1 January to 31 July 2022 with marking of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Source: own study based on The Polish Border Guard Headquarters data (Dane statystyczne dotyczące sytuacji..., 2022).

Therefore, the real number of Ukrainians in Poland before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was over 1 million. Then, it decreased – according to an estimate of Statistics Poland, by the end of April 2020, the population of Ukrainian citizens in Poland decreased by 160,000 as a result of their return to their own country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Populacja cudzoziemców., 2020). With an improvement in the pandemic-related situation, in particular in 2021, the number of Ukrainians in Poland increased again. According to the estimates of the Center of Migration Research at the University of Warsaw, in December 2021, their number was close to that before the outbreak of the pandemic and ranged between 1.0 and 1.3 million (Olender, 2021).

3. Migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland caused by the war

Already in the period preceding Russia's invasion of Ukraine – in January and February 2022, the number of Ukrainian citizens entering Poland through all Polish-Ukrainian land border crossings was higher than the number of those leaving¹. The only exceptions are: (1) a slight advantage (0.2 thous.) on 1 January caused by the return to Ukraine after the New Year's Eve party and (2) a clear advantage (14.3 thous.) on 4–6 January caused by the return

to Ukraine before Christmas, which in the Eastern Churches, and in the case of Ukraine, mainly in the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches, is celebrated on 7–9 January (Fig. 1).

In the entire period from 1 January to 23 February 2022, 266.0 thous. Ukrainian citizens entered Poland through Polish-Ukrainian border crossings. This is probably due to three reasons:

1. The economic migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland, but also to other European Union countries, which was presented earlier.
2. Returning to Poland and other European Union countries, of people working or living there permanently after the holiday period – in fact, lasting from December 24 (Christmas Eve in the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches) to January 9, or even to January 14, i.e. New Year in Eastern Churches (in the period of January 8–17, 2022, the surplus of Ukrainian citizens who entered Poland through the Polish-Ukrainian border crossings was almost 90.0 thous.).
3. Migration caused by the growing risk of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 caused a spike in the number of departures from Ukraine (Fig. 1). During the apogee of March 6–7, 137.0 thous. and 136.9 thous. Ukrainian citizens entered Poland via the Polish-Ukrainian border crossing points, respectively (the surplus over those entering Ukraine amounted to 128.6 thous. and 130.0 thous. citizens, respectively). In the period of 30 days from Russia's attack on Ukraine, i.e. until 25 March, the surplus of Ukrainian citizens entering Poland over those leaving amounted to 1,859.3 thous.

¹ All the presented data on border traffic come from the Polish Border Guard Headquarters (Dane statystyczne dotyczące sytuacji..., 2022).

The presented data are subject to two conditions: (1) As a result of the invasion, Ukraine suspended all airline connections, both domestic and international². (2) The fact that the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, signed a decree on the general mobilization of men aged 18–60 on 24 February shortly after 11 pm Eastern European time in Ukraine resulted in a ban on them leaving Ukraine, with certain exceptions³.

Since the second half of March 2022, due to the effective defense of the homeland by Ukrainian armed forces and the growing failure of the invading Russian army, there has been a steady increase in the number of Ukrainian citizens crossing the border from Poland to Ukraine (Fig. 1). The first moment when their number was higher than the number of Ukrainian citizens crossing the border to Poland was 15–17 April (by 10.5 thous.).

This was probably affected by two factors: (1) One of the greatest successes of the military forces of Ukraine since the beginning of the war: hitting of the Russian missile cruiser “Moscow,” the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet, by two Ukrainian anti-ship missiles “Neptune” on 13 April and the confirmation of its sinking on the next day by the Russian Ministry of Defense; (2) Easter celebrated on 17–18 April 2022 in the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches and its upcoming celebration in Eastern Churches on 24–25 April 2022.

However, before the first daily surplus of Ukrainian citizens who entered Ukraine through the Polish-Ukrainian border over those who entered Poland from it, in the entire period from 24 February to 14 April, this balance amounted to 2,017.9 thous. to the advantage of the latter.

The Easter holidays in the Eastern Churches should also be associated with another moment when the number of Ukrainian citizens who left Poland through the Polish-Ukrainian border was higher than the number of those who crossed the border when entering Poland. This occurred on 21–24 April, and the number was higher by 17.2 thous.

The next moment was 30 April and 1 May (by 6.8 thous.), which was mainly due to a long weekend in Poland (in 2022, lasting from 30 April to 3 May) related to the International Labor Day and the 3 May Constitution Day (Fig. 1).

After each of the three moments described above, when a larger number of Ukrainian citizens were recorded who crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border

when entering Ukraine, there were periods when there were more Ukrainian citizens entering Poland. In the periods of 18–20 April, 25–29 April and 2–9 May, these numbers were higher by 12.0 thous., 20.5 thous. and 36.1 thous., respectively. As a result, Ukrainian citizens who left their country through the Polish-Ukrainian border crossings outnumbered, although relatively slightly, those who returned to Ukraine. In the period from 15 April to 9 May, their number was higher by 34.2 thous.

The situation changed after 10 May 2022. This occurred after two periods of higher numbers of Ukrainian citizens entering Poland through Polish-Ukrainian border crossings: (1) prior to the invasion – from 7 January to 23 February; (2) after the invasion began – from 24 February to 14 April, and during the period with the first three moments with the superiority of Ukrainian citizens returning to their own country from 15 April to 9 May.

In the time perspective covered by this analysis, i.e. until 31 July, a numerical superiority of Ukrainian citizens who crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border entering Ukraine was recorded (Fig. 1).

This surplus, broken down by individual days, was not large (taking into account the size of the previous exodus from Ukraine) and was interrupted several times when there was a small surplus of people leaving Ukraine. Nevertheless, in the entire period from 10 May to 31 July, the number was higher by 227.9 thous., with more returns in the initial period – from 10 May to 6 June (more by 154.1 thous.).

Despite the above-described period with the predominance of Ukrainian citizens who crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border returning to Ukraine, the number of Ukrainian citizens who left their country through the Polish-Ukrainian border crossings over those who entered Ukraine clearly dominates the entire period of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine from 24 February to 31 July. This number is higher by 1,824.2 thous. However, in the entire period of the analysis, i.e. from 1 January to 31 July, this number is higher by 2,090.2 thous.

4. Place of residence of refugees of Ukrainian citizenship in Poland

The Polish Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict in the territory of this country (Ustawa..., 2022) gave Ukrainian citizens and their family members a possibility to legalize their stay in Poland. This applies only to those persons who have legally arrived in the territory of Poland since 24 February 2022. The

² The Ukrainian State Air Traffic Services Enterprise announced the closure of the country’s airspace for civilian flights as of 2:45 am Eastern European time in Ukraine as a result of intelligence informing about the commencement of Russian military operations immediately prior to the invasion of Ukraine.

³ They were mainly men supporting at least three children up to the age of 18 and single parents.

application must be submitted in person⁴ and in writing with a handwritten legible signature at the municipality seat. Applications may be submitted to any municipal office. However, it can be presumed that they are submitted to the offices of the municipalities proper for the place of residence – or possibly to the office of the neighboring municipality. By 31 July 2022, 1,261.0 thous.⁵ such applications were submitted, among them 896.7 thous. from women and from 364.4 thous. men.

1. The Szczecin, Koszalin and Gdańsk Coastal Belt.
2. Warsaw with its surroundings (in particular, the Grójec powiat) and the surroundings of Łódź.
3. The western and south-western parts of Poland.
4. Large agglomerations – in particular, Warsaw, Wrocław, Tricity, Kraków and Poznań.
5. The Tatra powiat in the south.
6. The poviats of the Bieszczady and Lesko in the southeast.

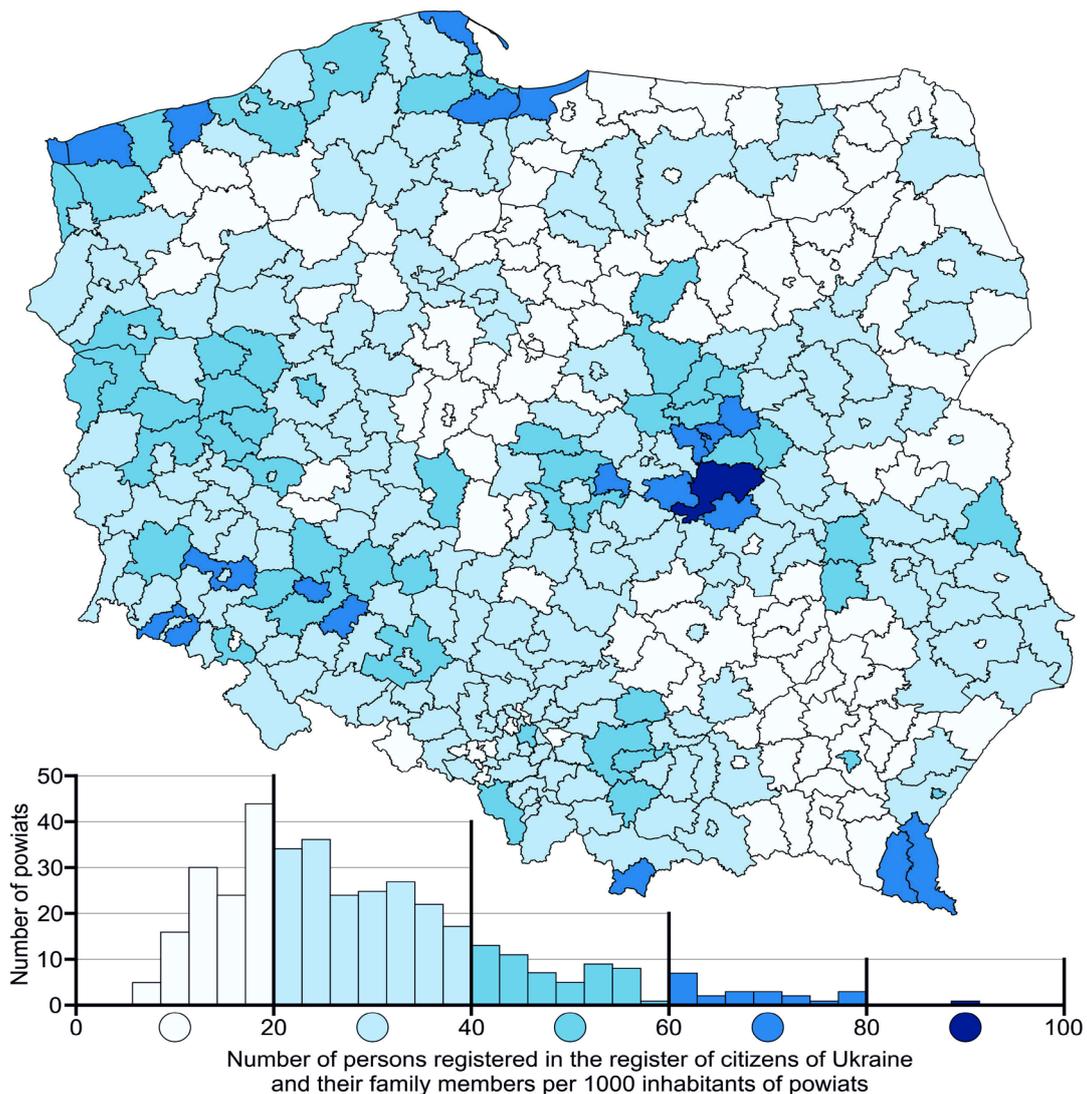


Fig. 2. Number of persons figuring in the register of citizens of Ukraine and their family members per 1,000 inhabitants of poviats in Poland – as of 31 July 2022.

Source: own study based on data from The Chancellery of the Prime Minister (Statistical data on applications..., 2022).

This disparity is due to the ban on men aged 18–60 years old leaving Ukraine. Fig. 2. presents the number of persons figuring in the register of citizens of Ukraine and their family members per 1,000 inhabitants of poviats in Poland as of 31 July 2022⁶.

On this basis, one can distinguish the following areas with a higher number of refugees from Ukraine who are citizens of that country in reference to the number of inhabitants of poviats in Poland:

⁴ Submission of an application on behalf of a person without legal capacity or with limited legal capacity shall require his/her presence at time of submission of the application. Exceptions apply to those who are under 12 years of age. As regards persons who, due to their state of health or disability, are unable to submit the application in person at the seat of the municipality authority, are given a possibility to submit the application at the place of their residence.

⁵ Data on the submitted applications come from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (Dane statystyczne dot. wniosków..., 2022).

⁶ The number of inhabitants in the counties according to the data of the Statistics Poland, as of 30 June 2021, was used for the calculations.

In order to explain such spatial distribution at least partially, it should be noted that among the refugees from Ukraine, as many as 539.7 thous. women of the working age (as such were considered women born in 1963–2003) submitted their applications – 42.8% of all applications. By contrast, only 59.6 thous. or 4.7% of all applications were submitted by men in the same age cohort. There were 566.5 thous. or 44.9% of all applications concerning children and adolescents – i.e. those born in 2004–2022. There were also 95.2 thous., or 7.5% of all applications regarding all those born in 1962 or earlier. These data show that among refugees from Ukraine who have legalized their stay in Poland, women of working age, children and adolescents born in 2004–2022 dominate. They account for 87.7% of all application.

One can also assume that the place of stay of refugees in Poland is determined by three main factors, partly related to one another: (1) the received assistance in terms of accommodation and employment; (2) the availability and cost of accommodation; (3) employment opportunities.

As a result, a higher number of refugees from Ukraine per 1,000 inhabitants of poviats of the coastal belt in the north and in the Tatras poviat in the south of Poland, as well as partly in the Bieszczady and Lesko poviats in the south-east most likely results from: (1) a possibility of employing women in tourism and leisure facilities (mainly in hospitality and gastronomy), which is seasonal in nature; (2) the availability of accommodation. Simultaneously, one cannot exclude that some applications were submitted in these areas by refugees from Ukraine during their holiday trips.

A larger number of refugees from Ukraine in the vicinity of Warsaw and Łódź, in the western part of Poland and in Lower Silesia are most likely affected by employment opportunities in agriculture and horticulture. Here, the Grójec poviat – the largest fruit farming area in Poland – is a special case holding a record in the number of applications submitted by Ukrainians – as many as 91.4 per 1,000 inhabitants of the poviat (the next places being occupied by the Brzeziny poviat of an agricultural nature near Łódź – 79.1 applications per 1,000 inhabitants, the Nowy Dwór poviat of a coastal and therefore leisure location (but also of an agricultural nature) to the east of Gdańsk – 78.4 applications per 1,000 inhabitants and the previously described Tatra poviat of a leisure nature in the south of Poland – 77.9 applications per 1,000 inhabitants).

A significant number of refugees from Ukraine stayed in large agglomerations – in particular in Warsaw, Wrocław, Tricity, Kraków and Poznań. This may be influenced by the gender and age structure of refugees from Ukraine. Therefore, it is possible that they are more likely to choose places with a larger labor

market for women and greater access to kindergartens and schools. In addition, a significant number of refugees from Ukraine stayed in the vicinity of large cities – in particular Warsaw, Łódź, Tricity, Wrocław and Krakow. This may be due to lower accommodation costs, with simultaneous great accessibility to benefits that are offered by the proximity of a large city.

This is also confirmed by the report of the Paweł Adamowicz Center for Analysis and Research of the Union of Polish Metropolises from July 2022. (*Miejska gościnność...*, 2022). The number of all Ukrainians, including those who entered Poland before 24 February 2022, living in 12 metropolitan areas⁷ in May 2022, was estimated at 2,327.0 thous., and those living outside them at 1,046.0 thous.

In the migration of Ukrainians, some have seen an opportunity to mitigate depopulation processes in Poland (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, 2018; Śleszyński, 2016). These voices also appeared in the media coverage along with the influx of a huge number of refugees from Ukraine after the Russian attack on 24 February 2022. Nevertheless, the results presented in Fig. 2 show that these expressed hopes and expectations are met only to a small extent. Refugees from Ukraine settle down in relatively small numbers in the areas subject to the strongest depopulation in Poland, in particular those away from the large cities of eastern, north-eastern and central Poland (i.e. Podlasie, the Suwałki Region, Warmia and Mazury, Lublin Land, Masovia and the Lodz Region). In contrast, they clearly settle in areas where the number of inhabitants is increasing anyway as a result of internal migration – in particular in the surroundings of large cities, as well as in large cities themselves and in holiday and tourist destinations.

Interestingly, refugees from Ukraine in a relatively small numbers stayed near the border with Ukraine – i.e., in south-eastern Poland. Although they submitted a large number of applications legalizing the stay in Przemyśl and Rzeszów (52.6 and 41.4 per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively), but one can assume that some of them, especially in Przemyśl, did so on their way, completing this formality as soon as possible after crossing the border.

Among 314 poviats and 66 cities with poviat rights, the most numerous are those in which the number of applications submitted by refugees from Ukraine ranged from 12.0 to 37.9 per 1,000 inhabitants. There are 270 such poviats (Fig. 2). There were 26 poviats with 11.9 or fewer submitted applications per 1,000 inhabitants (the least in the Kolno poviat located in the eastern part of the Podlaskie Voivodeship – 5.2 per

⁷ These are metropolitan areas of Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Warsaw and Wrocław.

1000 inhabitants). There were 84 poviats with 38.0 or more submitted applications per 1000 inhabitants (the highest number in the previously mentioned Grójec powiat located to the south of Warsaw – 91.4 per 1,000 inhabitants).

5. Conclusion

Poland, which was the destination for economic migration of Ukrainians already before the outbreak of the war, became the main destination for Ukrainian refugees in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Based on the data on crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border, it is possible to indicate first the days of 6–7 March 2022, when the largest daily inflow of Ukrainian citizens across the Polish-Ukrainian border was recorded (the surplus over those leaving in one day to Ukraine amounted to 128.6 thous. and 130.0 thous., respectively). Then, on 9 May 2022, the biggest cumulative value of the inflow of Ukrainian citizens across the Polish-Ukrainian border since the beginning of the invasion was recorded – 2,052.1 thous. After that day, the returns of Ukrainians to their country began to prevail over their departures.

Given that civil traffic has ceased over Ukraine since Russia's invasion, detailed data on crossings of the Polish-Ukrainian border by Ukrainian citizens give an accurate picture of the scale and course of migration resulting from the war. Nevertheless, the entry into the territory of Poland, which is a member of the Schengen Agreement, gives a possibility of free movement to other countries as well. As a result, there is a lack of data that would show for how many refugees from Ukraine Poland has become a transit country.

The number of refugees from Ukraine who stayed in Poland is partially explained by the number of

applications submitted by Ukrainian citizens and their family members to legalize their stay – 1,261.0 thous. of them were submitted by 31 July 2022. At the same time, the comparison of the number of Ukrainians who entered the territory of Poland via the Polish-Ukrainian border (as of 31 July 2022, it was 1,824.2 thous. persons more than those who left for Ukraine via the Polish-Ukrainian border – counting from 24 February 2022) with the number of applications submitted by them cannot be directly compared because: (1) applications are still submitted and it is difficult to estimate how many Ukrainians in Poland have not done yet, (2) Ukrainians who legalized their stay in Poland by submitting their application could also leave for another country at a later moment or return to Ukraine.

An approximate picture of where refugees who are citizens of Ukraine and members of their family settled on the territory of Poland may be given by analyzing in which powiat they submitted applications to legalize their stay. As could be expected, a significant part of them would choose large agglomerations. Nevertheless, surprisingly, a large number of Ukrainians per 1,000 inhabitants of the powiat submitted applications in the counties located along the Baltic coast, as well as in the tourist counties: Tatra in the south of Poland and Bieszczady and Lesko in the south-east of Poland. An interesting issue beyond the scope of this analysis is the question of how much it resulted from the possibility of employing women in tourism and leisure facilities and the availability of accommodation, and how much it was the result of leisure trips of refugees from Ukraine.

Thus, the analysis presented in this article increases knowledge about the scale and course of migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but it is unable to answer all questions and clarify all doubts. Therefore, it should be treated as a starting point for further research.

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