



The Future of EU Immigration

SUMMARY

In February of 2022 the world woke up to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This attack on the sovereignty of Ukraine initiated the largest and fastest refugee movement in Europe since WWII.¹

Poland serves as a model for European and NATO response, as the needs for Ukrainian refugee support are inevitably needed to match Moscow's tactics in 2023. This policy brief calls for renewed commitment to support and address the need of immigrants and refugees from Ukraine as paramount to the security and economic future of a unified Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Poland advocates for expanded discussion and action to support the ongoing need for clear policy and response to immigrants by the European Union (EU) through commitment to:

- Provide funding to EU border countries to expand and maintain migrant control and integration points.
- Creation of EU-wide programs and infrastructure to create humanitarian corridors to integrate migrant and refugee populations deeper within the EU.
- Collaboration with NATO to address the use of migrants and refugees as a defense issue.

400,000

UKRAINIANS FLED IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER INVASION.

8

MILLION

REFUGEES IN EUROPE AS OF JANUARY 2023

5

MILLION

JUST UNDER 5M ARE REGISTERED FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTION

1.5

MILLION

REFUGEES REMAIN IN POLAND - THE LARGEST OF ANY COUNTRY IN EUROPE.

SOURCE: UNHCR: UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION²

INTRODUCTION

The European Union is presently experiencing a crisis.

The migration tsunami brought on by the conflict in Ukraine, which broke out in 2022, as well as the continued global problem of forced migration brought on by individuals escaping war, violence, and breaches of fundamental human rights from the middle and near east, have put present policies of individual member states as well as the EU as a whole to the test. The reality that the current structures are ineffective and overdue for reform is evident from historical and contemporary events.

Migration policies aim to make it either simpler or more difficult for people to enter and remain in a country. In contrast, the EU's migration strategy is significantly more dictated by individual member states than by any kind of shared guiding principles. This produces significant diversity in how and what migrants are permitted into EU countries, creates complication in sharing information and hinders efforts to alleviate the burden on border states' resources.³

Midway through 2021, individuals from conflict-affected nations began to arrive at the Poland-Belarus border, adding a new dimension to the already complex issue of immigration. This strategy of hybrid warfare is an attempt to trigger a political crisis in Poland and the EU by taking advantage of the absence of clear unified policy between member states in order to create turmoil and demand ransom. The involvement of the Lukashenko dictatorship in Belarus in assisting movements of people to the border has been extensively documented.³

It is extremely doubtful that this will be the last time that migrants have the potential to be used as human weapons in wars. With anticipated growing political unrest and conflict - already widespread throughout the African continent and the Middle East - combined with an increase in the number of climate migrants especially from coastal areas,³ there is massive potential for these hybrid-war techniques to expand along with migrant numbers. Failure to act will also carry large economic impact, as limited resources and uneven application of integration standards hobble efforts to see economic returns from integrating migrants into host countries either temporarily or permanently. These facts underscore the significance of having a uniform unified strategy about how migrants are managed, processed, and reviewed for entry into the EU.

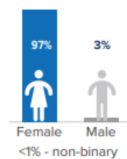


CURRENT STATE: MIGRATION POPULATION TRENDS

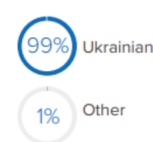
The Russian war in Ukraine has displaced women and children disproportionately to men.

97 percent of Ukrainian newcomers are women, most are between ages 31 and 45, and 78 percent have children. Only a tiny share are men, since, with a few exceptions for caretakers and large families, fighting-age men have not been allowed to leave Ukraine. A large majority, 63 percent, of refugees would like to find work in Poland creating competition in the labor market.^{4,5}

Gender Breakdown



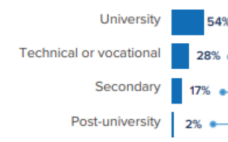
Nationality



Top 5 pre-displacement employment status



Highest formal education level



Age differences in employment:

- For younger respondents (18-24 y.o.) most common employment status was education (30%), followed by unemployment (19%).
- Respondents aged 25+ most often worked in wholesale.

by age group

Education Level	18-24	25-39	40-59	60+
University	41%	61%	49%	44%
Technical or vocational	27%	22%	32%	35%
Secondary	32%	13%	17%	19%
Post-university	0%	3%	1%	2%

SOURCE: UNHCR THE UN REFUGEE AGENCY. REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE IN POLAND PROFILING UPDATE JUNE 2022

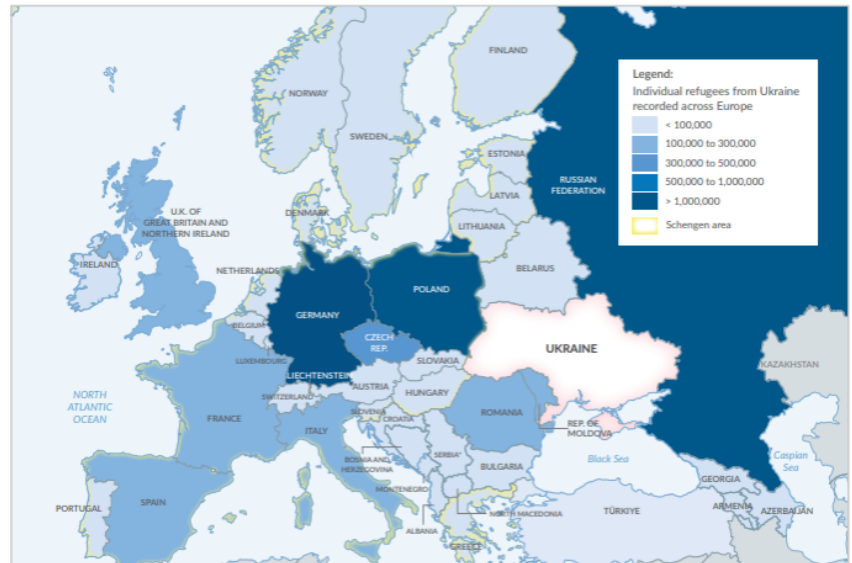
54 percent have a university degree, 2 percent have a higher education degree, 28 percent have undergone vocational education, and 17 percent have secondary education.⁶ Solidarity to Ukraine has mobilized the Polish people to hang Ukrainian flags, volunteer their help at refugee reception points, and housed thousands of families. It's reported that two thirds of Poles have contributed to these efforts.⁷

CURRENT STATE: HYBRID WARFARE AND THE COST OF MIGRANTS

As the war in Ukraine continues into 2023, there is evidence that Vladimir Putin's tactics will shift. Russia's leverage over NATO and the EU is continuing to weaken despite cutting off gas flows to Europe. Nine rounds of sanctions were unanimously backed by all 27 EU member states, and military support for Ukraine has been steadfast. However, Putin will not back down and will turn to asymmetric warfare (espionage, drone and missile strikes, support for terrorism, proxy and hybrid wars) against the West, to weaken NATO unity. On the Ukrainian front Putin won't be able to take or re-take much territory, instead using aggression directly towards the Ukrainian people in forms of attacking critical infrastructure.⁸

Additionally, Putin is taking a page from Belarus' dictator Alexander Lukashenko playbook of hybrid warfare with EU border states, allowing migrants and drugs to flood in. In September 2022, Russia announced "the skies over Kaliningrad would be open to airlines from foreign countries" signaling encouragement to refugees to use the border with northern Poland for EU entry. As long as the Ukrainian people and their infrastructure are under attack they will require safe refuge in Poland and the border states. In the first year of placement, there are significant costs a host country of a refugee carries. However, the longer a refugee stays they become productive assets, outweighing the original costs.¹⁰ The Eastern countries of Europe have provided strong support for the largest amounts of refugees, also carrying the initial costs. The EU and NATO must have a unified fiscal and programmatic response to bridge the refugees to established employment, long-term mental and physical health, and Ukrainian reconstruction.

Refugees from Ukraine across Europe (as of 24 January 2023)



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. *Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 [1999]) Source: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe

SOURCE: UNHCR REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EUROPE - UKRAINE SITUATION FLASH UPDATE #39 (JANUARY 2023)

The Economic Consequences of Unmanaged Migration.

The EU only partially regulates asylum proceedings. Currently, the first nation in which an asylum seeker registers is responsible for documentary processing. However, national regulations vary greatly among EU member states for even the most fundamental criteria. Few countries adhere to the basic conditions for asylum, causing a backlog of applicants and stressing the economic systems of gateway nations such as Greece, Italy, Hungary, and, more recently, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. A lack of long-term cooperative strategy from the EU for supporting Ukraine migrants and other immigrants will increasingly cause the economic burden to fall onto not just individual EU states, but local governments, non-government organizations, and private citizens.¹¹

In 2022 alone, it is anticipated that Poles will have spent €5.45 billion for Ukrainian refugees, equivalent to 1% of their gross domestic product (GDP), with more than a third of these funds coming from private donations. Poland's city government have been at the forefront of the reaction, along with Polish NGOs, expanding on resources and efforts greatly to meet the requirements of Ukrainian immigrants.¹²

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Poland has established qualified processes for the immediate impact of large numbers of refugees which can serve as models for other European countries as first and second residency hosts. Almost one million first residence permits to immigrants from outside the EU, more than any other EU member state, were issued from Poland as of mid-2022.¹³ The electronic submission process for work permits, work permit renewals, and special immigration permissions were streamlined through a single online portal, rather than with local immigration authorities. In an effort to grow the pipeline of qualified candidates from displaced Ukrainians into the labor market, the Local Labor Office identifies those who are interested in open jobs and matches them to the job requirements, and sends their information to prospective employers. New checks and balances were put into place that identifies employers who are in labor disputes to qualified workers. Process and time waste was removed by only requiring the ID page of a passport to be submitted for work permits, rather than all pages.¹⁴ A testament to the success of these programmatic and process changes is the fact that half of the working-age people who have fled Ukraine are now employed in Poland.¹⁵

Countries featured in the Refugee Response Plan

Country	Data Date	Refugees from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes	Refugees from Ukraine recorded in country	Border crossings from Ukraine*	Border crossings to Ukraine**
Poland	1/24/2023	1,563,386	1,563,386	9,182,436	7,011,752
Czech Republic	1/22/2023	482,618	483,620	Not applicable	Not applicable
Slovakia	1/24/2023	107,004	107,203	1,127,957	863,983
Romania	1/22/2023	109,413	106,835	1,870,837	1,505,618
Republic of Moldova	1/24/2023	Not applicable	102,160	755,368	388,888
Bulgaria	1/21/2023	151,332	50,219	Not applicable	Not applicable
Hungary	1/24/2023	33,603	33,603	2,117,868	Data not available
Total		2,447,356	2,447,026	15,054,466	9,770,241

SOURCE: [HTTPS://DATA.UNHCR.ORG/EN/SITUATIONS/UKRAINE/LOCATION?SECRET=UNHCRRESTRICTED](https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location?secret=unhcrrestricted)

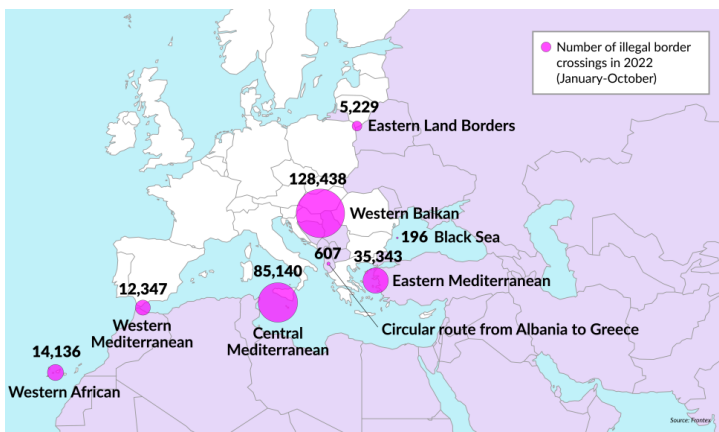
Economic Impacts

Immigrants often integrate slowly into the job markets of their host nations. When they initially arrive, asylum seekers receive assistance currently funded by the host nation. Additionally, until their legal status is determined, they are frequently not permitted to work or may only do so with restrictions. Thus, the earnings and employment inequalities are most obvious during the first few years in the host nation, and they lessen over time.

If they find employment within their host country after integrating, migrants contribute to the economy of the host country by paying taxes and social security contributions after achieving economic integration. Reducing the amount of time it takes for migrants to integrate and find employment benefits not just the individual, but also the country in which they are living and working.¹¹

Policies to bridge this gap through funding, streamlined requirements and cooperation are critical to reducing the impact of accepting migrant populations.

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ARRIVAL AND INTEGRATION IS CRITICAL TO REDUCING ECONOMIC IMPACT TO BORDER COUNTRIES.



SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.GISREPORTSONLINE.COM/R/EU-MIGRATION-CRISIS/](https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/eu-migration-crisis/)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The time to act is now. By committing to take action and provide funds to border countries in tandem with policies to create humanitarian corridors under cooperative EU efforts, the collective EU can expect these action to:

1. STRENGTHEN EU BORDER SECURITY

UN Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2322 (2016), and 2396 (2017) call on Member States to develop and implement systems to collect data and identify terrorists. With ongoing threats from Russia and allies, the cooperation, collaboration, and formal information exchange between member states of the EU can significantly improve border security and border management when combined with additional funding and resources to countries with permeable borders.

2. PREVENT OVERFLOW ON CURRENT STRAINED SYSTEMS

As the number of migrants continues to rise, the current EU system is easily overrun. A functional system for managing migrants and borders requires redoubled efforts to develop a more unified and collaborative approach. To alleviate existing pressures, policies must prioritize enhancing reception and processing capacities, as well as prioritizing allocation of financial resources to EU nations bordering war zones, where the majority of displaced individuals are located.

3. STRENGTHEN EU RESOLVE FOR THREATS OF WAR

Sanctions alone are not enough. Precedence must be set that the EU and its member states will not cave into demands from countries waging war on our doorstep. Decisive, clear action is needed now to not only bring an end to the current war, but send a clear message for the future.

4. HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS

Developing strategies to properly handle all types of migrants will lessen the loss of life and the likelihood of exploitation and trafficking. In addition to fulfilling member responsibilities under the EU Charter and Article 14 of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights, efforts and policy will also satisfy member obligations under the EU Charter.^{16, 17}

“This is not just a regional conflict. Russia’s war against Ukraine is a potential source of global conflagration. This war will affect our countries as well as yours, if it hasn’t already,”

Polish President Andrzej Duda to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2022.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Putin will not win the war against Ukraine. On 16 December 2022, in reaction to Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and the severity of the current escalation against people and civilian infrastructure, the Council enacted its ninth set of sanctions.¹⁹ Still, he is not deterred from continuing the offensive against the people and infrastructure of Ukraine, making the refugee crisis an indefinite problem. Poland, who has emerged as a security linchpin in the EU, has in many respects set the tone for Europe's humanitarian reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the beginning of the invasion, Poland has welcomed more Ukrainian refugees than any other European country, in addition to giving a variety of benefits. The Polish government has registered almost 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees in the past year. This conflict and its outcomes will define the region's future geopolitical landscape.¹⁸ **The EU must remain steadfast to the plight of the Ukrainian people by funding first-resident costs to border countries, expanding successful integration programs across the EU, and collaborating with NATO to increase border security.** These actions will bolster solidarity with Ukraine and ultimately strengthen the whole of Europe.

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