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## **Citizens of Ukraine on the Polish labour market - experiences of the year of war**

**Abstract:** The influx of refugees from Ukraine in the last year could have led to an uncontrolled increase in unemployment in Poland and Europe, but it did not happen. European countries took immediate action to support refugees from Ukraine and integrate them into the labour market. One of the most important changes introduced in Poland after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine was the opening of the labour market for refugees from this country. Currently, every citizen of Ukraine can legally work for any employer. In 2022, a total of 1 million 9 thousand jobs were legalized in Poland. citizens of Ukraine, who are the dominant group of foreigners on our labour market. According to Polish Social Security Institute data, at the end of 2022, the number of foreigners who declared Ukrainian citizenship in the application for pension and disability insurance was nearly 746,000. At the end of May 2023, there were 16,419 Ukrainian citizens registered in Polish employment offices, including 15,116 unemployed (650 people entitled to unemployment benefits). In the article, I analyse the actions taken as a result of Russia's attack on Ukraine in the first year of the war and show that the Polish economy, despite the crisis caused by the war, requires constant supplementing of the labour supply of employees. I raise the issues of the activities of employment services and cite the results of research conducted in Polish and European employment services.

**Key words:** foreigners, qualifications, employment policy, labour market, refugees, Ukraine, employment

### **Introduction**

Before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Europe was facing the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, i.e. high unemployment in some countries (e.g. Spain, Portugal, Greece) and difficulties on the labour market - the need to hire many workers in various sectors. A large group of third-country workers returned to their home countries during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in labour shortages. Foreigners most often filled the gaps in professions requiring

lower qualifications, but there was also a growing interest in specialists and people whose work required higher skills and appropriate professional preparation. It was justified from the point of view of the labour market, because workers were recruited where native citizens did not decide to work. Specialists, whose deficit was also noticeable (e.g. medics, IT specialists), were also brought in. In the discourse undertaken at the level of the Member States of the European Union, it was emphasized that legal work and residence should be promoted and the employment of workers from third countries should be facilitated, while illegal immigration should be prevented and stopped.

The need for a strategic approach resulted in the establishment of a new body by the European Commission - the Labour Migration Platform. The platform was set up to accelerate labour migration from third countries to the EU and ensure that it is well managed and targeted where labour and skills are needed. There are job vacancies in many sectors that European companies cannot fill. It is necessary to improve working conditions, provide education for migrant children and provide accommodation.

Russia's attack on Ukraine undoubtedly contributed to the acceleration of migration processes and decisions related to the employment of citizens from third countries. The estimates of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicate that from the beginning of the Russian invasion in February to the end of 2022, about 17.4 million people left Ukraine, and about 9.3 million people returned during this time<sup>1</sup>. Approx. 9.2 million people crossed the border with Poland (some of these people returned to Ukraine after 7.35 million trips, and some went to other countries). It is estimated that there are currently about 7.9 million refugees from Ukraine in Europe, including about 1.5 million in Poland. The data of the Polish Border Guard indicate that From February 24, 2022, according to the latest data, on the section of the border with Ukraine, recorded about 11 million crossings of the border by Ukrainian citizens to Poland, at the same time, over 9 million crossings of the border by Ukrainian citizens in the exit direction (as of 1 May 2023).<sup>2</sup>

Over 4.8 million Ukrainian refugees registered in temporary protection programs in Europe<sup>3</sup> (as at the end of February 2023), including over 2.1 million in the euro area countries.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> (6.03.2023).

<sup>2</sup> The Border Guard, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html> (6.03.2023).

<sup>3</sup> Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for providing temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures to promote a balance of effort between Member States in receiving and bearing the consequences of such persons (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001). The directive was first launched in response to the unprecedented Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, to provide quick and effective assistance to those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

This figure is significant and corresponds to around 0.6% of the population of the euro area. The use of different sources in different countries affects the statistical accuracy, and there are difficulties in distinguishing persons covered by temporary protection from other Ukrainian citizens who started working in the country before the war. However, it can be estimated that in the Eurozone, the proportion of Ukrainian refugees is the highest in the Baltic region at 3.2% in Estonia, 2.7% in Lithuania and 2.4% in Latvia<sup>4</sup>. Among the largest euro area countries, the number of Ukrainian refugees covered by temporary protection systems reached 1.1% of the population in Germany, 0.2% in France, 0.3% in Italy, 0.4% in Spain and 0.5% in the Netherlands. Outside the eurozone, the largest country receiving Ukrainian refugees in Europe is Poland and the Czech Republic. In both countries, the percentage of the Ukrainian refugee population exceeds 4%. The data shows that among the beneficiaries of temporary protection, 33% are children under 18, 60.4% are between 18 and 64, and 6.6% are over 65. In terms of gender, 34.2% are men (but half of them are under 18) and 65.8% are women. Considering the working age population between 18 and 64, only 26.7% are male and 73.3% are female<sup>5</sup>.

The level of employment of Ukrainian citizens has increased across Europe, with the demographic structure of Ukrainian refugees being an important factor in finding a job. Before the war, it was mainly men who left Ukraine to look for work. They worked in sectors of the economy where there were staff shortages, in deficit professions (e.g. machine operator assistant, welder, locksmith, plasterer, simple construction work). After the outbreak of war, mostly women with children and dependents come to European countries. They usually take up jobs in the service sector, gastronomy, hotel industry, care sector (care for children, the elderly). Ukrainian women often take jobs much below their qualifications, which is caused, among others, by a sense of temporariness, unfamiliarity with the language, the Polish legal and accounting system, or the need to recognize diplomas. OECD estimates indicate that thanks to the influx of refugees from Ukraine, in 2022 the labour force in the EU increased by 0.2-0.8% (0.3-1.3 million people), and it was distributed differently in individual countries. Labour shortages in many host countries have created good preconditions for the successful integration of refugees into the labour market. Among the countries with the highest estimated increase in the labour force were: the Czech Republic (+2.2%), Poland (+2.1%) and Estonia (+1.9%)<sup>6</sup>. It turned out that the citizens of Ukraine are simply needed on the labour market.

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<sup>4</sup> V. Botelho, H. Hägele, Integrating Ukrainian refugees into the euro area labour market, <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/blog/date/2023/html/ecb.blog.230301~3bb24371c8.en.html> (6.03.2023).

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

## **Refugees from Ukraine in Poland in the first year of the war**

On March 12, 2022, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland passed an act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in a relationship with the armed conflict on the territory of that country<sup>7</sup>, which entered into force retroactively (from February 24, 2022). The law guaranteed the legality of stay for Ukrainian citizens, as well as their non-Ukrainian spouses who entered Poland from the beginning of the Russian invasion, for a period of 18 months. Pursuant to the Act, refugees from Ukraine may, among others, obtain a PESEL number, as well as take up work in Poland and gain access to health care. Pupils and students can start or continue their education in Polish schools and universities.

Thanks to the open labour market towards people from Ukraine, Poland has strengthened its leading position in Europe in terms of the influx of foreigners to perform work. Before the war, Poland simplified the rules of access to the labour market for foreigners by introducing the so-called declaration on entrusting work to a foreigner - this solution (otherwise known as the "declaration procedure" or "simplified procedure") concerned citizens of 6 countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia (on October 25, 2022, citizens of the Russian Federation were excluded from the possibility of using the simplified procedure<sup>8</sup>) and Ukraine. It allows you to obtain permission to perform work - without the need to obtain a work permit for a period of up to 24 months. The condition for using the simplified procedure is that the employer receives an entry of a declaration on entrusting work to a foreigner to the register of declarations in the poviats labour office (the document is issued within 7 days). A special Ukrainian act introduced a new solution - notification of entrusting work to a citizen of Ukraine. It consists only in the obligation to notify the poviats labour office by the entity entrusting the performance of work to a Ukrainian citizen, within 14 days from the date of taking up the job, via the [praca.gov.pl](https://praca.gov.pl) ICT system, about the fact that it has employed a person from Ukraine. The number of notifications about entrusting work to a citizen of Ukraine by the end of 2022 amounted to approx. 780,000, and in the first days of March 2023 it already reached 980,000. 66% of notifications concerned the intention to entrust work to women. By July 24, 1,415,624 notifications of entrusting work to 810,549 foreigners from Ukraine were received.

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<sup>7</sup> Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of this state (Journal of Laws, item 583, as amended).

<sup>8</sup> Regulation of the Minister of Family and Social Policy of October 25, 2022 amending the regulation on countries to which citizens apply certain provisions regarding seasonal work permits and provisions regarding the declaration of entrusting work to a foreigner (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 2204), Regulation of the Minister of Family and Social Policy of October 25, 2022 on determining the cases in which a work permit for a foreigner is issued regardless of the detailed conditions for issuing work permits for foreigners (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 2203).

It is worth emphasizing here that in 2022 the so-called spec The Ukrainian law has been amended many times. One of the amendments introduced the principle that the work entrusted to a citizen of Ukraine cannot be for a lower working time or a smaller number of hours than indicated in the notification and for remuneration not lower than the remuneration set at the rate specified in the notification, proportionally increased in the case of increasing the working time or the number of working hours. This condition was introduced on the initiative of the National Labour Inspectorate (PIP), in order to ensure an adequate standard of protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens related to their work in Poland, and above all to limit the possibility of exploitation by dishonest employers or becoming a victim of trafficking in human beings, as well as to enable labour inspectors to conduct effective control activities in this respect.

The number of Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland after a year of war is difficult to estimate precisely, especially when it comes to the number of working people. The dynamic increase in the influx of foreigners to work in Poland has been visible since 2014, however, in the years 2018-2022, 12 million permits were issued legalizing the work of foreigners, of which over 9 million concerned Ukrainian citizens. Of course, this does not mean that everyone works in Poland today, because to a large extent work and stay are circular in nature - different people stay with us at different times. There may be several reasons for this situation, e.g. the foreigner has already finished work and left or has not decided to work at all despite the documents received. According to data from PESEL registers, by the end of February 2023, almost 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens were registered, including 640,000 are minors. At the same time, it should be noted that, according to various studies, 1-1.5 million Ukrainian citizens could have stayed in Poland before the outbreak of war. The employment rate of refugees from Ukraine, taking into account the short time for integration, is very high. According to the research of the National Bank of Poland, it is 65%, and according to the research of the Migration Research Centre (OBM), it is even 71% - these values are similar or even higher than the employment rate for women in Poland. OBM research also shows that with 71% of working people, the percentage of the unemployed is 17% and the percentage of professionally inactive is 12%. Refugees from Ukraine are therefore much more often professionally active than Poles (especially women), but they are also much more likely to be unemployed. What is very interesting, according to OBM research, as many as 28% of refugees work remotely for a Ukrainian employer. According to various studies, approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of refugees from Ukraine have higher education. Most often - according to OBM research - this education concerns administration and business (25%), engineering and production (14%), teaching (10%) and humanities (9%), which at least partly explains why some refugees with higher education cannot immediately

find a job in their profession. Some of the professions learned by refugees from Ukraine are regulated professions, and the process of adapting qualifications to Polish requirements is time-consuming (access to medical professions has already been partially facilitated). For this reason, and also because of their lack of language skills, refugees often take jobs that are well below their qualifications.

Before I present the comparative statistics of all documents issued for foreigners in 2021 and 2022, it should be emphasized that in the current legal system there are four procedures for legalizing the employment of a foreigner:

- Work permit for a foreigner - issued by the voivode for a period of up to 3 years, applies to all sections of the Polish Classification of Activities, apart from those defined as seasonal.
- Seasonal work permit - was introduced in 2018 in connection with the implementation of EU law, applies to PKD subclasses recognized as seasonal (part of agriculture as well as catering and hotel industry), issued by the Polish local mayor for a period of up to 9 months in a given calendar year.
- Declaration on entrusting work to a foreigner – mentioned earlier, the solution applies to citizens of 5 countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.
- Notification of entrusting work to a citizen of Ukraine - a solution introduced pursuant to the provisions of the Act of March 12, 2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict in the territory of this country (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 583). With applicable regulations. The only condition for using this solution is to notify the poviats labour office competent for the seat of the entity entrusting work to a foreigner or the place of residence of the entity about entrusting work to a citizen of Ukraine. This requirement is fulfilled by the entity entrusting the work within 14 days from the date of commencement of work by a citizen of Ukraine, using the ICT system.
- Uniform residence and work permit (property of voivodeship offices and the Office for Foreigners as the appeal body) - entitles the foreigner to work and gives grounds for legal stay. A citizen of Ukraine submits an application for a uniform residence and work permit in person to the voivodship office.

**Tab. 1 Foreigners on the Polish labour market in 2021 and 2022**

Citizenship	2021		2022	
	Number	%	Number	%
Ukraine	2 071 377	79,7%	1 503 286	67,9%
Belarus	134 046	5,2%	231 529	10,5%
Georgia	139 360	5,4%	150 385	6,8%
Moldova	82 607	3,2%	48 632	2,2%
India	15 376	0,6%	41 817	1,9%
Uzbekistan	15 079	0,6%	33 566	1,5%
Türkiye	7353	0,3%	25 055	1,1%
Philippines	13 532	0,5%	22 875	1,0%
Nepal	10 957	0,4%	20 129	0,9%
Russia	41 391	1,6%	18 538	0,8%
Others	66 414	2,6%	119 286	5,4%
<b>Together</b>	<b>2 597 492</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>2 215 098</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Source: CeSAR analytical and reporting system of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy in Poland.

Taking into account the citizenship of foreigners coming to work in Poland, the number of documents legalizing work issued to citizens of Ukraine has almost doubled. This has both an impact on the total number of issued documents and a decrease in the percentage share in 2022 in relation to all foreigners. At the same time, there is a noticeable increase in the number of documents issued to citizens of other countries, e.g. Belarus, Georgia, Philippines, India.

According to the data of the Polish Social Insurance Institution, at the end of 2022, the number of foreigners in the social security system reached 1 million 63 thousand. and it was a result of about 188 thousand. higher than at the beginning of 2022. Nearly 746,000 of the insured were persons who declared Ukrainian citizenship in the application for pension and disability insurance.

**Tab. 2 Citizens of Ukraine on the Polish labour market in 2018-2022 by type of document admitting them to the labour market**

Type of document	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Declaration on entrusting work to a foreigner	1 457 795	1 505 027	1 363 792	1 635 104	610 824
Work permit	237 827	329 815	299 531	325 213	85 074
Seasonal work permit	132 132	124 091	124 008	111 060	22 843
Notification of entrusting work	0	0	0	0	784 545
<b>Razem</b>	<b>1 827 754</b>	<b>1 958 933</b>	<b>1 787 331</b>	<b>2 071 377</b>	<b>1 503 286</b>

Source: CeSAR analytical and reporting system of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy in Poland.

The data of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy show that almost 2/3 of Ukrainian citizens work in Poland on the basis of a mandate contract, almost 1/3 on the basis of an employment contract, other forms of employment constitute a marginal percentage. At the same time, it can be noticed that 79% of issued documents legalizing the work of a foreigner are issued for a period exceeding 180 days. In 2022, Ukrainian citizens most often worked in the following industries: industrial processing - 31%, transport and storage - 17%, activities in the field of administration and support services - 16%, construction - 12%. They were employed as: elementary workers - 45%, industrial workers and craftsmen - 18%, operators and assemblers of machines and devices - 15%, office workers - 8%, service workers and sellers - 6%, others - 8% (including 2% are specialists). Most foreigners worked in the following voivodeships: Mazowieckie - 21%, Wielkopolskie - 10%, Dolnośląskie - 10%, Śląskie - 9% and Łódzkie - 9%.

### **Assistance on the Polish labour market in numbers**

Citizens of Ukraine can use the assistance of employment services. Every citizen of Ukraine may register with the employment office as unemployed or looking for a job on the same terms as a citizen of the Republic of Poland. In total, from February 24 to December 31, 2022, 83,000 people registered with employment offices. of Ukrainian citizens, including approx. 90% of Ukrainian citizens registering in employment offices were women, approx. 30% had higher education and 73% were under 45 years old. In turn, 69.2 thous. people, including approx. 22,000 citizens of Ukraine began to participate in the so-called active forms (mostly internships, trainings and intervention works), and 18.9 thous. people were deregistered due to



taking up unsubsidized work or unsubsidized economic activity. According to data from employment offices, a significant number of refugee women have high qualifications, such as economists, accountants, doctors and teachers. Some of these professions are regulated professions, and the process of adapting qualifications to Polish requirements is time-consuming, which is why many people take jobs significantly below their qualifications. Knowledge of the language is of great importance.

From February 24, 2022 to May 30, 2023, 104.8 thousand people registered with employment offices. of Ukrainian citizens, including 88.5% of Ukrainian citizens registering in employment offices were women, 29.4% had higher education and 72.6% were under 45 years old. In turn, 90.3 thous. people (88.9% were women), including 25.9 thousand citizens of Ukraine began to participate in the so-called active forms (usually internships, trainings and intervention works), and 27.1 thous. people were deregistered due to taking up unsubsidized work or unsubsidized economic activity. At the end of May 2023, 16,419 citizens of Ukraine were registered, including 15,116 unemployed (650 people entitled to unemployment benefits).

Many simplifications have been introduced in Polish regulations regulating the functioning of the labour market, e.g. it was possible for the offices to finance the fee charged for the nostrification procedure or the procedure for confirming the completion of studies at a certain level, and it was also possible to finance Polish language training for Ukrainian citizens practicing medical professions from the Labour Fund, the procedure for organizing by labour offices was simplified group trainings in the Polish language for the unemployed and foreigners looking for work, and the use of vocational trainings was made possible for foreigners. As part of the Labour Fund, additional reserve funds were released for 33 poviats labour offices in the total amount of approx. PLN 12.2 million for the implementation of the professional activation program for unemployed foreigners, including those covered by international protection.

A special online platform was created <https://pracawpolsce.gov.pl/> which enables job search. There are currently over 3.6 thousand registered on the site. users and over 250,000 available job offers. On the basis of the created profile, a citizen of Ukraine automatically receives information about job offers matched to his qualifications in the Central Database of Job Offers, as well as on other websites with job advertisements.

On February 25, 2022, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy announced a competition for tenders entitled "Together we can do more". As part of the competition, local governments, non-governmental organizations and labour market institutions could apply for funds for professional activation and integration of foreigners legally residing in Poland, especially refugees from Ukraine (and Afghanistan). As part of the Competition, 112 projects are implemented, in

which the main target group are women and children from Ukraine. Most of the projects include Polish language courses and psychological assistance. Almost PLN 102 million was allocated for the implementation of all projects. About 43,000 foreigners are covered by assistance activities.

### **Perception of economic immigrants on local labour markets in Poland**

For several years, the Polish Ministry of Family and Social Policy has been conducting a survey addressed to 340 poviats labour offices concerning the impact of employing foreigners on local labour markets. The last survey was conducted in October and November 2022. 329 Poviats Labour Offices representing 362 poviats took part in the survey. The survey contained 14 questions (13 closed and 1 open)<sup>9</sup>. The main conclusions of the study: about 70% of offices assess the impact of employing foreigners as positive or rather positive, 28.5% - neutral, and only 1.7% - rather negative (there were no responses with a negative impact). Labour offices more often point to the spread of civil law contracts as a threat to the labour market, rather than pushing Poles out of the labour market or lowering wages on local labour markets. Employees of employment offices indicated that the main factor motivating employers to employ foreigners is the lack of Polish job candidates. When asked for comments on the applicable regulations and ideas for their change, labour offices indicated the need to amend the regulations regarding the obligation to apply for information from the mayor when submitting an application for a work permit (elimination of the so-called labour market test<sup>10</sup> or significant extension of the list of professions exempt from it). The multitude of procedures and regulations regarding Ukrainian citizens related to their legal stay was also pointed out, the validity of many acts at the same time regarding the admission of foreigners to the Polish labour market and the need to simplify procedures for employees from other third countries, especially in terms of access to work, was pointed out seasonal.

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<sup>9</sup> Impact of employment of foreigners on local labour markets. Analysis of the survey of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy addressed to Poviats Labour Offices, Labour Market Department, Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Warsaw, January 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Currently, the labour market test is carried out only for about 10% of foreigners. The majority of foreigners working in Poland are citizens of countries exempt from the labour market test (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). Other foreigners exempted from the labour market test are persons performing professions that are scarce on the labour market, e.g. IT specialists. In cases where a labour market test is required and carried out, its effectiveness is very low. In the vast majority of cases, its result is a statement that the poviats labour office is unable to meet the employer's staffing needs. Cases in which a poviats labour office finds a suitable candidate for an employer are rare, which is why this procedure has been a burden for labour offices for years.

The study confirmed that in the near future it will be very important to improve the procedures for entrusting work to foreigners. This is consistent with maintaining the current approach to admitting foreigners to the Polish labour market, according to which the legal provisions and thus the rules in force in the country should respond flexibly to the changing demand for foreign workers.

### **Open Europe**

From the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, public employment services throughout Europe (not only in EU countries) reacted quickly to the influx of refugees from Ukraine. The incorporation of Ukrainian refugees into the labour market was faster compared to other refugee groups. Contrary to previous influxes of refugees, people coming from Ukraine have the right to look for work at a much earlier stage. The Directive on temporary protection, launched by the EU at the beginning of March 2022, grants refugees from Ukraine the right to immediately take up employment or self-employment (but Member States may introduce their own more precise regulations). The obligations of the European Union countries towards persons enjoying temporary protection include the rights of beneficiaries of temporary protection, such as: residence permit for the entire period of protection (which may last from one to three years), relevant information on temporary protection, guarantees of access to the asylum procedure, access to employment, subject to the rules applicable to a given profession and national labour market policies and general employment conditions, access to suitable accommodation or housing, access to social welfare or means of subsistence, if necessary access to medical care, access to education of people under 18 to the state education system, possibility of family reunification in certain circumstances, access to banking services, e.g. opening a basic bank account, moving to another EU country, freedom of movement, etc. The vast majority of refugees from Ukraine settle in the host societies<sup>11</sup>.

As part of the network of European public employment services<sup>12</sup>, the European Commission conducts a regular survey showing the support offered by national employment services to refugees from Ukraine. In it, Member States reaffirm that language training and recognition of professional skills are key factors for refugees to work. Most countries rely mainly on active labour market policies and available labour market instruments existing in these countries. In

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<sup>11</sup> European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, Temporary protection, [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection_en) (10.03.2023).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.pesnetwork.eu>, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1100&langId=en>

some countries, English (Norway) courses are offered in addition to the language course of the host country. Other countries (eg Lithuania) have abolished qualification requirements or have abolished skills assessment for some occupations. The survey showed that cooperation with employers takes various forms. Some employment offices offer subsidies or training support to employers employing Ukrainian citizens, or organize events, e.g. job fairs in order to associate a job offer with a refugee (Bulgaria, Denmark, Romania).

The migration crisis related to the war in Ukraine has shown that the priority should be to look for bridges between migrations and the needs of local labour markets, with the simultaneous need to care for working conditions and integration in the host society. The problem of recognition of qualifications is indicated by all European countries, but the problem is wider than the recognition of diplomas, because some migrants do not have any documents confirming education and qualifications. It seems that the recognition of professional qualifications is currently one of the most important topics in the context of attracting talents and increasing the attractiveness of EU (or more broadly: European) labour markets for qualified migrants. Migrations, however, affect many areas (not only the labour market, but also security, education, housing, health care), which is why it is a very complex issue, also in the context of the war in Ukraine. Experts from various European countries emphasize that economic migration should not be treated as a remedy for all problems related to the lack of workers. It is important to activate the native labour force, the unused resources of people who have been professionally inactive so far, the long-term unemployed, etc.

## **Summary**

Ukraine is a country with a large migration potential, which, however, is slowly depleting as a result of the war. Staff shortages both on the Polish labour market and European labour markets will continue for many years to come. The challenge facing the labour markets in the near future is the identification of threats related to accepting refugees from Ukraine: first of all, "tiredness of solidarity" and helping, Russian propaganda, increase in the cost of living (due to the increase in inflation), housing crisis, visible decrease in social solidarity, the dilemma of uncertainty of staying in a given place, possible tensions in society. One should bear in mind the impact of the increase in the prices of raw materials in the energy sector on the general activity of enterprises, which translates into employment and possible layoffs in the event of inability to maintain jobs. It is also necessary to take into account the full use of the human potential of refugees. One can expect an increase in employment in industries with a large share

of women (gastronomy, trade, services, care) and thus a weakening of the pressure on wages in these sectors.

Long-term integration of Ukrainians in labour markets, in particular directing the professional potential of refugees in terms of the needs of these markets in individual European countries, will be related to the need to support professional activity and entrepreneurship, mainly of Ukrainian women: organization of language courses, including language courses in accordance with market demand and the introduction of a quick system for confirming professional qualifications.

Particular attention should also be paid to ensuring the safety of foreign employees not only through effective and targeted inspections by the labour inspectorate, but also through preventive measures aimed at increasing the respect of labour law by employers. It is important to continuously promote Internet tools run by employment services that facilitate matching candidates from Ukraine with employers.

Initiatives undertaken by the European Commission, such as the EU Talent Partnerships, the EU Talent Pool and the Labor Migration Platform, underline the importance of strengthening legal migration channels, in particular with countries that have strategic importance in terms of migration management from the perspective of the European Union. It is also important to match qualified workers wishing to move to the EU with the needs of EU employers, with the key issue of recognizing and recognizing qualifications.

The mass influx of Ukrainian citizens after February 24, 2022 did not strain the Polish labour market, despite fears in the context of certain spheres of life in which people fleeing the war, mainly women and children, were granted the same rights as Poles. It did not cause an unemployment crisis in European labour markets either. The unemployment rate in Poland in May 2023 was 2.7% compared to 6.1% in the entire European Union.

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