

War-driven wave of Ukrainian emigration to Europe: an attempt to evaluate the scale and consequences (the view of Ukrainian researchers)

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to evaluate the scale and consequences of the emigration of Ukrainians triggered by the military aggression of the Russian Federation. The paper also attempts to determine the composition of the refugees.

The first weeks of the military aggression saw the most active departure of the population from Ukraine, after that the number of those seeking refuge decreased. According to the estimation of the Ptukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine based on the data from the State Border Guard Service, the number of ‘refugees from the war in Ukraine’ reached 3 million as of the end of June 2022. The emigrants are mainly residents of Kyiv and Kharkiv, which results in a much higher specific weight of people with higher education than the national average. This fact combined with an orientation towards employment rather than social assistance (a mentality that is relatively close to Europeans), suggests a high probability (especially compared to the same emigrants from other countries, including Syria and Afghanistan) for most Ukrainian women to successfully adapt to life across the border. This is especially true for those who came to Poland, due to the minimal linguistic and cultural differences between the countries.

The potential amount of irreversible migration losses, depending on the military and economic factors, ranges from 600–700 thousand to 5–5.5 million people. Considering the fact that approximately 3 million Ukrainians had already been staying (working) abroad before 2022, the war is likely to result in a demographic catastrophe for Ukraine, whose demographic potential has been utterly exhausted.

Key words: migration, forced migration, refugees, temporary protection, return of migrants, migration policy.

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1. Introduction

The start of a full-scale war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine has resulted in millions of Ukrainians losing their homes and jobs, occupation of certain regions of Ukraine that were controlled by the Ukrainian government until February 24, 2022, and significant civilian casualties. These processes have led to the unprecedented levels of the forced migration since the Second World War: the residents of Ukrainian territories adjacent to the war or occupied zone have begun to move en masse to both foreign countries and relatively safe regions of Ukraine. These processes require scientific understanding; the assessment of their scale and consequences becomes extremely important. Such assessments are necessary to identify the effects of large-scale forced migration, to develop recommendations for their regulation and for identifying prospects for the post-war economic recovery.

Ukraine has accumulated considerable experience in assessing migration losses, especially losses from external labour migration and military intervention of the Russian Federation in Donbas since 2014 (Ptoukha Institute, 2018), as well as the COVID-19 pandemic (Libanova, E. M., & Pozniak, O. V., 2020). But the military migration crisis of 2022 is far ahead of all migration phenomena observed in Ukraine during 1991–2021 in terms of scale and level of threat.

The presented article focuses on estimating the number of forced external migrants and the issue of forced relocation within the country as well as labour migration of Ukrainian citizens abroad are outside of the objectives of this study.

The study is based mainly on data from Ukrainian statistical sources whose data formation procedures are well studied by the authors.

The research involves finding answers to the following questions:

1. How the migration behaviour of Ukrainians changed with the start of a full-scale war?
2. What are the real scales of forced migration abroad and the return of forced migrants?
3. How catastrophic the demographic consequences of forced migration will be for Ukraine?
4. What should be the migration policy of Ukraine in new conditions?

2. Methodology

In conditions of active hostilities in a large part of the country, the main problem of evaluation is the lack of information: the production of official statistics is stopped, conducting sample surveys, at least “face to face”, is extremely complicated.

The situation is exacerbated by the lack of a census since 2001 and, consequently, the lack of reliable data on the number and composition of the Ukraine's population, especially, its territorial location. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and especially since the beginning of hostilities, the difficulties in conducting large-scale sample surveys during 2020–2021 have also had an effect, but above all large-scale movements of the population, and outside Ukraine in particular. Estimates of the number of those who left vary from 3 to 6 million people, and according to the expert opinions based on incomplete data from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, about a third of them are children. It is clear, that it is extremely difficult to provide a reliable survey of these people through telephone interviews. But a much more significant impact on representativeness may be due to either the lower willingness to participate in polls of the citizens with “pro-Russian” sentiments, or the insincerity of those who have taken part in the poll (given the huge wave of patriotism and prevailing opinion in the society, consciously or even subconsciously, the unwillingness of a large part of the Ukrainian population to give sincere answers). Accordingly, there are good reasons to believe that the artificial increase in the number of respondents who are loyal to their own state is significant. According to the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, such an increase is at least 4–6% (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2022a). A number of surveys of Ukrainian migrants have been conducted in recipient countries. However, even in these cases, it is difficult to ensure the representativeness of the sample, since different categories of forced migrants may show different degrees of readiness to participate in surveys. That is, in modern conditions, each individual survey cannot be considered as fully representative, moreover, the results of such surveys quickly become outdated.

Theoretically, “big databases” can be used, including the data from the mobile providers, to assess the extent and direction of resettlement and for further sample design, but this requires overcoming a number of barriers, the protection of private data in particular. Moreover, limitation for the application of this method is a significant number of phones that were lost/abandoned by Ukrainian citizens, as well as “squeezed” by the occupants, the need to take into account the possession of two (several) phones by one person, lack of telephones among the representatives of the youngest and older ages. Besides, the amount of the holders of Ukrainian telephone numbers who are abroad will include not only those who left the war, but also external labour migrants, who were working abroad before the active phase of the war. Therefore, we now have to focus on rather eclectic information from open sources, and (in key cases) rely on expert opinions and assessments.

3. Transformations of migratory behavior of the population in wartime

Migration processes have traditionally been an important factor in the human activity, the economy in particular, of every country, that is subject to armed aggression, but they are no less important after the war. Part of the population inevitably leaves their homeland, and sometimes without returning even after the establishment of peace, some move from one territory to another. Russia's military aggression, which began on February 24, 2022, with the bombing of a large number of settlements throughout Ukraine and caused massive destruction of civilian infrastructure, especially housing, has led to large-scale relocations to the safer western regions and beyond.

With the expansion of the area of active hostilities and the aggressor's open desire to cause as much damage to the human and economic potential of Ukraine as possible, the number of evacuees grew: the same cities were both the centres of gravity and centres of mass departure (Odesa, Dnipro, Lviv, and, from the end of March, Kyiv as well). But it seems that large-scale migration movements will not be limited to the war period. Awareness of a large part of the population, entrepreneurs in particular, of the risks posed by the proximity of the borders of an aggressive neighbour is likely to lead to mass relocation to the western and central regions after the end of hostilities.

Priority will be given to building a resilient economy: renovation of the industrial and social infrastructure, and further economic activity while maximizing protection against the risks and threats, posed by the actions of an aggressive neighbour. Besides investment, this will require territorial compliance of labour supply and demand (Libanova, E. M., Pozniak, O. V., & Tsybal, O. I., 2022).

Undoubtedly, the worst losses are the mass deaths of soldiers and civilians, especially children, the loss of the potential births due to the deaths of pregnant women, and the excess mortality associated with the deteriorating living conditions of many Ukrainians. Moreover, starting from the end of 2022, a significant decrease in the births is expected due to the postponement of births by the large contingents of the population during the crisis. However, migration losses, while not so terrible in the humanistic dimension, are more numerous, measured not even in hundreds of thousands, but in millions of people, who left the country fleeing the horrors of the war, saving their own lives and the lives of their children, parents and grandchildren. The issue of their maximum return from abroad should become one of the cornerstones of the post-war development of both the Ukrainian economy and Ukrainian society as a whole.

The strategy and tactics of this development, in turn, should be based on the assessment of the current migration processes and their subsequent course, above all, on the quality information about the initial scale of departure, and composition of those who were leaving the country, their plans and intentions at the moment of departure, and their change over the time, forecasts of the future returns. The most reliable source

of information on the extent of external migration seems to be the border crossing records.

Lack of jobs in the places of resettlement within Ukraine (as the western regions, where the majority of internally displaced persons are concentrated, traditionally differ in this, and that is the main factor in the spread of labour migration there) forces to consider the option of going abroad even those who were not going to.

4. Dynamics of forced departure from Ukraine

According to the State Border Guard Service, over 4.8 million people left Ukraine in the period from February 24 to June 5 (State Border Guard Service, 2022). The data refer to the borders with the EU and Moldova, as the checkpoints on the borders with Russia, Belarus and the Transnistrian border with Moldova have been closed since the beginning of the war, and include foreigners who actively were leaving Ukraine during the first weeks of the war (e.g. among 110 thousand persons who crossed the borders of Ukraine with Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary on February 27, 2020, foreigners accounted for about 18%). The data show the number of crossings of the border, so some people can enter the statistics many times. Moreover, 64.7% of those who left crossed the Ukrainian-Polish border, and, say, from March 3 to March 10, this figure exceeded 70%. Of course, not all of these people stayed in Poland, many moved on, first of all, to Germany, but there is no doubt that Poland became the centre of refuge for Ukrainian “refugees from the war”: according to various estimates, 40 to 50% of Ukrainians found refuge here, from 10 to 15% stopped in Germany, 5–8% – in the Czech Republic. In general, the final place of evacuation was chosen mostly spontaneously, more often due to the presence of relatives and acquaintances. Also, if the main motive for focusing on Poland is proximity (territorial, cultural, linguistic), Germany was chosen due to better social conditions for refugees, and the Czech Republic – due to the greater employment opportunities (4Service Group, 2022; Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2022).

In view of the almost complete lack of data on the population of those who left Ukraine due to the war, the lack of information about those who refused to participate in the survey and the inability to build a correct sample, respondents' answers should not be considered representative and applied to all those who left. At the same time, given the rather large number of contingents of interviewed “military emigrants” (from 0.5 to 3.5 thousand people), it is correct enough to consider them relevant to illustrate the processes taking place, and their changes in particular.

Most of those who went abroad did so in the first weeks of the war. In general, the dynamics of daily departures from Ukraine indicates that there were 3 periods (Figure 1):

- peak departure – February 24 – March 9: (on average, 107 thousand persons were leaving the country per day, and in total 1.5 million persons left in 14 days);
- stabilization – March 10 – May 9: (on average, 28 thousand persons were leaving the country per day and in total, more than 2.5 million persons left in 59 days);
- predominance of the number of entries over the number of exits – from May 10 (on average, 32 thousand persons were leaving the country during May 10 – June 06 per a day, and in total, more than 900 thousand persons left in 28 days).

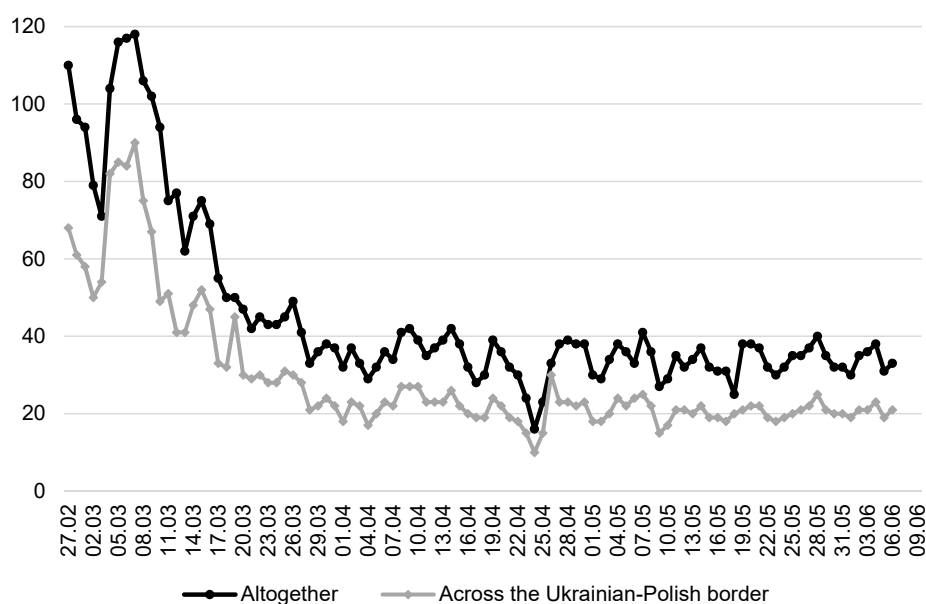


Figure 1. The number of persons who left Ukraine through the Ukrainian-Polish border, thousand persons.

Source: State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

According to a survey conducted by the Gradus Research Company in May 2022, 37% of city residents with a population of 50 thousand people or more left their homes because of the war. About a quarter of migrants went abroad, while the vast majority relocated within Ukraine (Gradus Research Company, 2022).

Quite naturally and as expected, mostly women, children and the elderly were leaving Ukraine. Namely, in the total number of persons who left Ukraine for the period of February 24 – April 10, the share of women is 66%, persons under 18 years of age –

31%, and over 60 years of age – 13%. According to the structural characteristics of those who left, the first day of the war (February 24) stands out, when the ban on the departure of men aged 18–60, who can be mobilized, had not yet been enacted. Accordingly, among those who left Ukraine on February 24, men of the corresponding age accounted for more than 40.5%, while during the period of February 25 – April 10 – 11.2%.

Due to the fact that the residents of the cities (more than 90%) and persons aged 18–59 years (56%) dominate among those who left, most of them (more than 60%) have a higher education or academic degree. This is, evidently, the basis of their high competitiveness in the labour market, even if they have to work not in the obtained profession.

5. The flow of arrivals of the population to Ukraine

The return flow is also very large: a total of 2.8 million people have entered Ukraine since the beginning of the war, the share of Ukrainian citizens from March 2 to June 2 is 87.8%. At first, in the first 2 weeks, men were actively returning from abroad, their share reached 80% among 200 thousand people who entered Ukraine, i.e. mostly migrant workers returned to participate in the defence of their country, to help the family in these difficult times, etc.; most of them have preserved their Ukrainian roots and, most likely, have close relatives here. However, already at the turn of March-April, the main part of border crossings began to account for various forms of the pendulum migration.

First, a significant part of those who entered Ukraine in the second half of April were returning to celebrate Easter (which in 2022 fell on April 17 and 24). Thus, on Friday-Saturday, on the eve of Catholic Easter, 74 thousand persons entered Ukraine, or 37 thousand on average per day; on the eve of Orthodox Easter – 73 thousand persons, or 36.5 thousand persons per day, while during the period from Monday, April 18 to Thursday, April 21, an average of 32 thousand persons were entering per day (Figure 2).

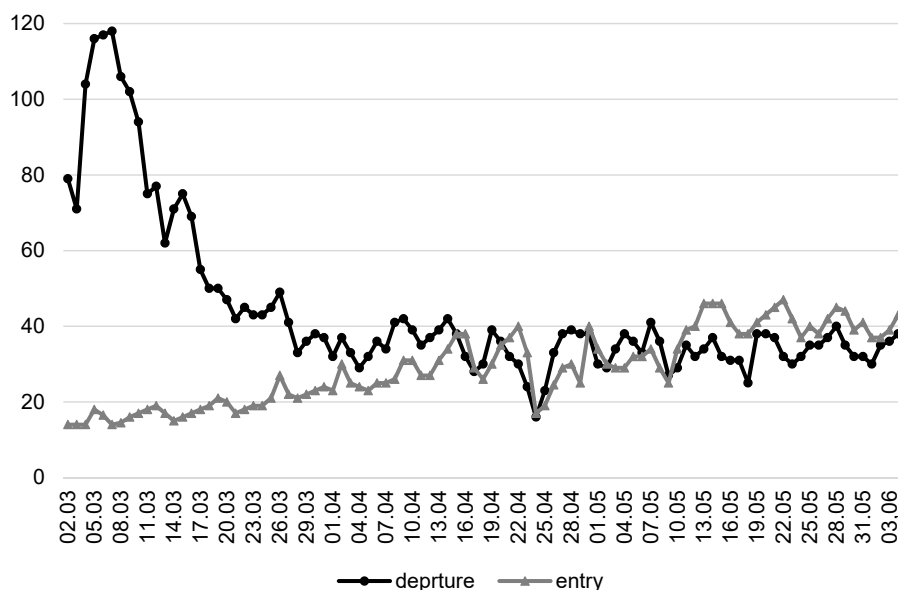


Figure 2. The scale of departures and entries to Ukraine, thousand persons.

Source: State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

Second, the families evidently desired to see their husbands/parents, and this explains the significantly higher number of entrances to Ukraine on Saturdays (on average, 33 thousand persons entered on Saturday from March 2 to June 6, while, say, on Monday – 26 thousand). The peaks of arrivals on Saturdays began to be recorded as early as Saturday, March 5, and from March 26, the growth of entry into Ukraine on Saturdays increased significantly. The peak values of departures are not so much tied to the days of the week, because the short-term stay of women/children in Ukraine varies from less than a day to several days.

Third, around mid-March a process of shuttle migrations began, in order to withdraw cash abroad from cards of the Ukrainian banks, and from mid-April it became mass; it is a fairly effective commercial tool given exchange rate differences when withdrawing cash in Ukraine and abroad, and, if possible, further resale of foreign currency on the black market. It is clear that it was not so much people who physically crossed the border, as cards issued by Ukrainian banks (according to unofficial estimates, one person crossed the border with dozens of cards). And this flow does not have a significant impact on the overall migration movement, but its existence should not be completely neglected.

Fourth, we cannot ignore the so-called “automobile shuttle migration” related to the import of the used cars for own use and for sale without paying excise duty from

April 5. In particular, in the period of February 27 to March 13, the state border of Ukraine in both directions was crossed by an average of 14.9 thousand cars per day (unfortunately, the State Border Guard Service does not provide information separately on the amount of departure and entry of road transport), while during the period of March 14 – April 13 – 13.7 thousand cars per day, and during April 14 – June 6 – 17.4 thousand cars.

Besides, local border traffic remains widespread (or even has increased) – i.e. crossings of the border by residents of the territory within up to 30 km from the common border with Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary, for various social, cultural, family and economic reasons, not related to paid work. In particular, the delivery in small batches (i.e. within the limits not subject to customs duties) of products, and, in the long term, building materials, which became widespread before the war, continues.

Thus, all external migration flows are far from being limited to border crossing by the “war refugees”. Those “refugees from the war” who for various reasons could not adapt abroad, whose place of residence in Ukraine was released or became more or less safe due to the cessation of hostilities near it, began to return to Ukraine in late March.

From May 10 (the day after May 9, a sacred date for Russians, analysts and the public expected the possibility of a nuclear strike on that day), 7 thousand more people have been entering Ukraine every day than have been leaving, and the cumulative difference for the period from May 10 to June 6 is 200 thousand persons.

In total, during the war, the total number of Ukrainians (“refugees from the war”, labour and shuttle migrants) abroad increased by 2.8 million, with 65% of this increase in the first two weeks.

6. Estimation of the number of forced external migrants from Ukraine

A number of information sources provide higher data on the number of the “war refugees” from Ukraine than the State Border Guard Service. In particular, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of June 7, 2022, 7.3 million people left Ukraine, of which just over 1.1 million were deported and left for Russia and Belarus and about 6.2 million left across the western borders with the EU and Moldova (UNHCR, 2022a). At the same time, more than 2.3 million people entered Ukraine during the same period.

In assessing the scale of the military wave of Ukrainian emigration, the data of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine will be used as reference. It should be noted that almost one-way departure over time has changed to a combination of different types of movements, which were mentioned above (temporary return to see a husband or other relatives, import of a car under the procedure of preferential customs clearance with

prior departure, departure to withdraw funds from a card abroad, temporary return of external labour migrants to visit relatives, celebration of Easter, etc.).

According to Ukrainian border guards, the scale of departures from Ukraine is smaller than assessments of UNHCR, with which scientists of the EU countries agree (Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration, 2022). Identifying the reasons for the differences between these data sources requires a detailed study of the procedures for the formation of data sources of information from outside Ukraine, in particular through expert interviews with representatives of the headquarters of international organizations and authorities of the recipient countries. The most obvious reasons for the difference (illegal departure from Ukraine of male citizens and arrival of Ukrainian citizens from the territory of the aggressor countries), cannot explain its size. Solving this problem requires a special study with the involvement of specialists from both Ukraine and the recipient countries and may be a topic or component of an international scientific project.

The first date after which a significant convergence of the number of border crossings at the exit and entry began is March 27, 2022 (the difference between those who left and those who arrived on this day was 19 thousand persons, while on the previous day – 22 thousand persons, the next day – 12 thousand persons, and after that this number did not exceed 15 thousand persons). This happened on the eve of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions of Ukraine. Accordingly, we will assume March 27 as the date of transition from the dominance of forced departure to the formation of a system of multidirectional and multi-purpose flows. Then, the total number of forced external migrants left for the EU and Moldova was 2.37 million. According to UNHCR, just over 1 million people left or were deported to the aggressor countries, for a total of 3.4 million. At the same time, as it has been already mentioned, at least 200 thousand persons can be considered returnees to Ukraine. Then, the number of forced external migrants from the country is 3.2 million persons, i.e. (taking into account possible estimation errors) about 3.0 million persons as of the beginning of June 2022.

7. The situation of Ukrainians abroad and prospects for return

The prospects for return of the Ukrainian “refugees from the war” from abroad are determined by a number of unpredictable factors, such as: the further course of the hostilities (the duration of the active phase and their spread throughout the country, with time having a greater impact on return decisions and geography on decision to depart); the general economic situation in Ukraine, and the quickness of restoration of the infrastructure and housing after the end of the war (employment opportunities, restoration of infrastructure, especially housing, educational, medical); maintaining ties

with relatives in Ukraine, recipient countries' policy towards Ukrainians (opportunities for adaptation of forced migrants from Ukraine: employment, access to educational and medical services, social support, etc., in particular), which is largely determined by the attitude of the local population (Libanova, E. M., Pozniak, O. V., & Tsymbal, O. I., 2022).

A significant part of the forced migrants associate their return to Ukraine with the possibility of pre-accumulation of at least minimal resources for the restoration of destroyed housing and lost property, in order to avoid the need to ask for help.

Those are not going to return in the near future and are wary of such opportunities, who have already left their homes for the second time since 2014.

According to a survey conducted in early March by the authoritative sociological service of France in the three largest EU countries (Germany, France, Italy) and Poland, the fifth largest but geographically closest to Ukraine, the population of these countries show fantastically high solidarity with Ukrainians. Currently, a total of 87% of people agree, for example, with the reception and support of refugees (92% of Poles, 90% of Germans and Italians, 80% of French). For comparison: in 2015 (after the annexation of the Crimea and the Russian invasion of Donetsk and Luhansk regions) 46% of French, 77% of Italians and 79% of Germans supported the reception of refugees from Ukraine. Such support is unlikely to last very long, it will decline over time (probably, depending on the duration of the war as the war progresses), but it is currently extremely high.

Of course, the authorities of the recipient countries have to respond to this situation. That is why 10 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, France, the Czech Republic) and Georgia have introduced, for example, free rail travel for Ukrainians (Today, 2022). Ukraine's western neighbours and Ireland have allowed Ukrainians to enter without a passport (The Browser, 2022a). The EU has activated its Temporary Protection Directive, which may be extended for up to three years (Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration, 2022). Additional benefits and simplifications of procedures are provided by the legislation of most countries (Depo, 2022).

Examples of legislative norms governing the stay of citizens of Ukraine. According to the law regulating the terms of stay of the Ukrainian refugees in the country and their social support, in Poland (March 13) for all citizens of Ukraine and members of their families without Ukrainian citizenship, including those born in Poland, who entered Poland after February 24, the legality of staying in Poland for 18 months is guaranteed, with the possibility of submitting an application for temporary residence for a period of 3 years after 9 months of stay in the country; students and schoolchildren can continue their studies in Polish educational institutions; all Ukrainian refugees receive a work

permit and access to medical care, a one-time cash benefit of 300 zlotys (approximately 63 euros) per person. The document also provides benefits for the Poles who will provide food and accommodation for citizens of Ukraine (Public, 2022).

In the Czech Republic, from March 21, 2022, a special law regulates the provision of protection and visas (Ukrainians who arrive in the Czech Republic fleeing from Russian aggression, receive special visas to live in the country), employment (without special permission) (Ukrainian news, 2022), social security, access to health care and education, the ability to quickly get free housing (those who take in refugees from Ukraine, receive 120 euros per person per month); needy migrants can also count on a cash benefit of 200 euros per month (TSN, 2022).

A simplified temporary refugee program for refugees from Ukraine (CUAET) was launched in Canada on March 17. Ukrainian refugees and their next of kin of any nationality can stay in Canada as temporary residents for up to three years by applying online for a Canadian guest visa and presenting biometric data (fingerprints and photographs). Elementary and high school students have the opportunity to register and start attending school immediately upon arrival in Canada. Anyone can apply for permission to study at a higher education institution. To obtain a work permit for 3 years, Ukrainians have to submit an application at the same time as applying for a visa (The Browser, 2022b).

The UK Government has announced two schemes to support Ukrainian nationals to come in the UK: the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The Ukraine Family Scheme allows applicants to join their family members in the UK. To apply to the Ukraine Family Scheme, a person must be Ukrainian or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national who is applying to the scheme, and have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022. The family member in the UK must be one of the following: a) a British national; b) someone settled in the UK – for example, they have indefinite leave to remain, settled status or proof of permanent residence; c) someone from the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland who has pre-settled status and started living in the UK before 1 January 2021; d) someone with refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme will offer a route to those who have no family ties to the UK but instead have someone here willing to provide them with a home. It will enable individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to volunteer accommodation and provide a route to safety for Ukrainians, and their immediate family members, forced to escape their homeland. Those who come under this scheme will be able to live and work in the UK for up to three years, and access public services. Ukrainian nationals or the immediate family members of a Ukrainian national who were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022 are eligible for the scheme (UNHCR, 2022b).

The most popular status among Ukrainians abroad seems to be that of a temporary protection recipient in the EU, which allows them to visit Ukraine, change their place of residence, etc. It is the focus of almost 70% of polled migrants (4Service Group, 2022). This gives some indication of their intentions to return to Ukraine. But at the same time, this status provides more opportunities for the employment and obtaining of a new, more competitive profession, which will contribute to better prospects for adaptation abroad.

Assessing the prospects for return to Ukraine of those who left after February 24, 2022, we cannot ignore their division into two completely unequal groups: the majority are those who left Ukraine in search of safety, and quite insignificant number are those who decided to take the opportunity to move to a more developed, more prosperous country (most of those who ended up abroad immediately went to other countries). We should not try to bring back people from the second group, they have chosen just such a fate. Instead, of course, it is necessary to strive for the maximum return of mothers with children, and not to get a mass exodus of their husbands after the war. According to various (with an unclear degree of representativeness) estimates, 60 to 90% of migrants seek to return to Ukraine. Thus, according to 4Service (the survey was conducted on March 28 – April 04 and covered 3,027 Ukrainians abroad), 89% of refugees plan to return to Ukraine, but 61% of them believe they may stay abroad if the war lasts long; 67% are going to stay abroad until the end of the war, and only 18% expect the war to continue for several more months. 57% of migrants named safety as a condition for return, while only 9% and 5%, respectively, chose critical importance of employment and housing (4Service Group, 2022).

But we should take into account that such intentions are expressed by people in a state of stress and on an incredible wave of patriotic unity. Refugees, in such circumstances, often cannot admit even to themselves other aspirations, let alone the announcement of such intentions. This, in fact, is a manifestation of the artificial shift of answers in the “pro-Ukrainian direction”, which is almost inevitable in modern conditions. Moreover, the mood for return/non-return may change over time, as the longer the war lasts, the more Ukrainian “refugees” will integrate into host communities. The logic of this process suggests that the highest risks of non-return are inherent in, on the one hand, the most vulnerable groups (single mothers with young children, large families, people with special needs) who can count on receiving significant refugee status in EU countries; on the other hand, in the most active and qualified people who are able to quickly find a job and adapt to new conditions. The second group is quite numerous. Thus, according to the data of the Center for Eastern European Studies at the University of Warsaw, almost two thirds of adult refugees from the war have higher education and professional experience, which is

in short supply in Poland – in particular, specialists in education, medicine, industrial construction, IT (GALINFO, 2022).

It is obvious that both contingents can be replenished in the future by men of working age, who will reunite with the family as soon as possible. Developed countries need an influx of labour due to the aging and reducing of their permanent population, and the current wage gap combined with destroyed housing and/or lack of decent employment prospects will inevitably create similar risks. This is already openly said by senior IMF officials, assessing the economic losses and prospects of the countries that are actively accepting Ukrainians.

According to a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, only 42.9% of Ukrainians plan the future of their children and grandchildren in Ukraine if the hot phase of the war continues. In the event of a truce and the postponement of the war, 54.7% of the Ukrainians plan for the future of their children and grandchildren in Ukraine. The conditions under which more than three quarters of respondents agree to plan the future of their children and grandchildren in Ukraine are as follows: change of power in Russia to democratic (76.8%), Ukraine's accession to NATO or obtaining stronger security guarantees (85.1%), capitulation and disarmament of Russia (84.5%). On the other hand, less than 2% of Ukrainians plan to leave Ukraine for children/grandchildren in any case (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2022b).

Summarizing data from a number of sociological surveys and expert assessments shows that even under the best conditions, at least 20% of forced migrants will not return to Ukraine. If we assume that 3 million people (see above) is the fixed number for the end of June of Ukrainians who went abroad in search of safe environment and did not return, under conditions of rapid de-escalation and cessation of the war (at least its active phase), irreversible migration losses are likely to be 600–700 thousand people. If the number of those forced to leave Ukraine increases to 7–8 million, as expected in the EU and international organizations (European truth, 2022), i.e. if the fighting continues for several more months and spreads throughout Ukraine, more than half of forced migrants will remain abroad, in addition, the husbands of irreversible migrant women will be reunited with their families after the end of martial law. Then, in the long run irreversible migration losses will inevitably increase to 5.0–5.5 million persons.

8. Discussion and conclusions

Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine has led to a catastrophic increase in external migration and to a number of migration problems, such as: the threat of non-return of a large number of people who went abroad, and the risks of departure of

the men whose families are abroad after the lifting of the current ban (at the end of the war or its active phase), which will increase the share of non-returnees.

According to estimates by the Ptukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, based on the data from the State Border Guard Service, as of June 1 2022, the number of “refugees from the war” from Ukraine is about 3 million persons. Possible amount of irreversible migration losses ranges from 600–700 thousand to 5.0–5.5 million persons, in accordance with the military and economic factors. This threatens a demographic catastrophe for the country the demographic potential of which has been exhausted. The total amount of migration losses (including external labour migrants) can reach more than 20% of the population, and the losses of children, women of childbearing age and highly educated persons may be even more intense.

Considering the development of demographic processes, promoting the maximum return of Ukrainians from abroad is one of the main tasks of the post-war strategy of Ukraine's development. All available levers of economic, cultural and social nature must be engaged to solve it.

The Ukrainian government must keep in touch with our compatriots, provide opportunities for children (and not only) to learn Ukrainian language and history, establish online learning of other disciplines in Ukrainian; demonstrate all possible manifestations of the fact that neither the Ukrainian state, nor the Ukrainian authorities have forgotten about them, that even if their homes are destroyed, they will be rebuilt after their return (or even earlier), and the state will take efforts to make wages fairer and more comparable to standards, such as in Poland and the Czech Republic; help in keeping social and employment links with the previous place of work, for example, through remote employment and/or long vacations. An important area of action can be online adult learning for competitive professions, such as IT-related, which can be mastered remotely and which will be in demand in the post-war Ukrainian economy. This training should be conducted by Ukrainian specialists, which will have an additional effect: the preservation of jobs in Ukraine during the war.

Considering that by 2022 3–3.5 million Ukrainians were working abroad, which means that now there are more than 6 million of them there, the issue of the post-war return of our compatriots, a quarter of whom are children, is perhaps the most important in the context of preserving the Ukrainian nation and national security. Preservation of Ukrainian roots, as evidenced by the mass return of male migrant workers who have come back to defend Ukraine, plays a key role in the return decision.

Of course, we will need not only patriotic but also economic motivation, such as: the opportunity to receive a reasonable salary in Ukraine, more rapid economic growth, democratic development, combating legal nihilism and corruption, which has nearly choked us. It seems that many potential and actual migrant workers will be encouraged

either to return, or to refuse to leave. As for the “refugees from the war”, economic incentives are likely to be important and effective for them, because it will not be easy for everyone to find a suitable job abroad, especially with small children, and financial assistance is nowhere and never sufficient enough to maintain average living standards.

It is also important to strengthen cooperation with the authorities of the recipient countries, in particular in matters of psychological support for forced migrants, their identification, and in the future – in the development and implementation of return programs.

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