

LATVIA

On the Way Back: Surveys with Ukrainian Nationals

2023 ANNUAL REPORT
Country Analysis

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Cover photo: IOM field workers welcome people from Ukraine in Zahony to support them and provide information.
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KEY FINDINGS

Top 3 countries of stay:

- Poland (31%)
- Russian Federation (20%)
- Germany (19%)

Top 3 oblasts* of origin:

- Donetska (26%)
- Luhanska (18%)
- Zaporizka (15%)

* Regions in Ukraine

Destinations:

To the oblast of origin (86%)



To a different oblast (14%):
Donetska, Kyiv city, Luhanska

Needs:

General information (83%)

Food supplies (11%)

Short-term accommodation (3%)

Multiple answers possible

Intentions:

- Long-term stay (prospective returnees) (49%)
- Short-term visit (29%)
- Don't know (20%)
- Prefer not to answer (2%)

Assistance*:

- Financial support (91%)
- Accommodation (67%)
- Food supplies (60%)

**Multiple answers possible*

Entries & exits:



went back to Ukraine twice or more prior to the survey.

Displacement:

27%

were displaced between January and June 2022.

Travel:

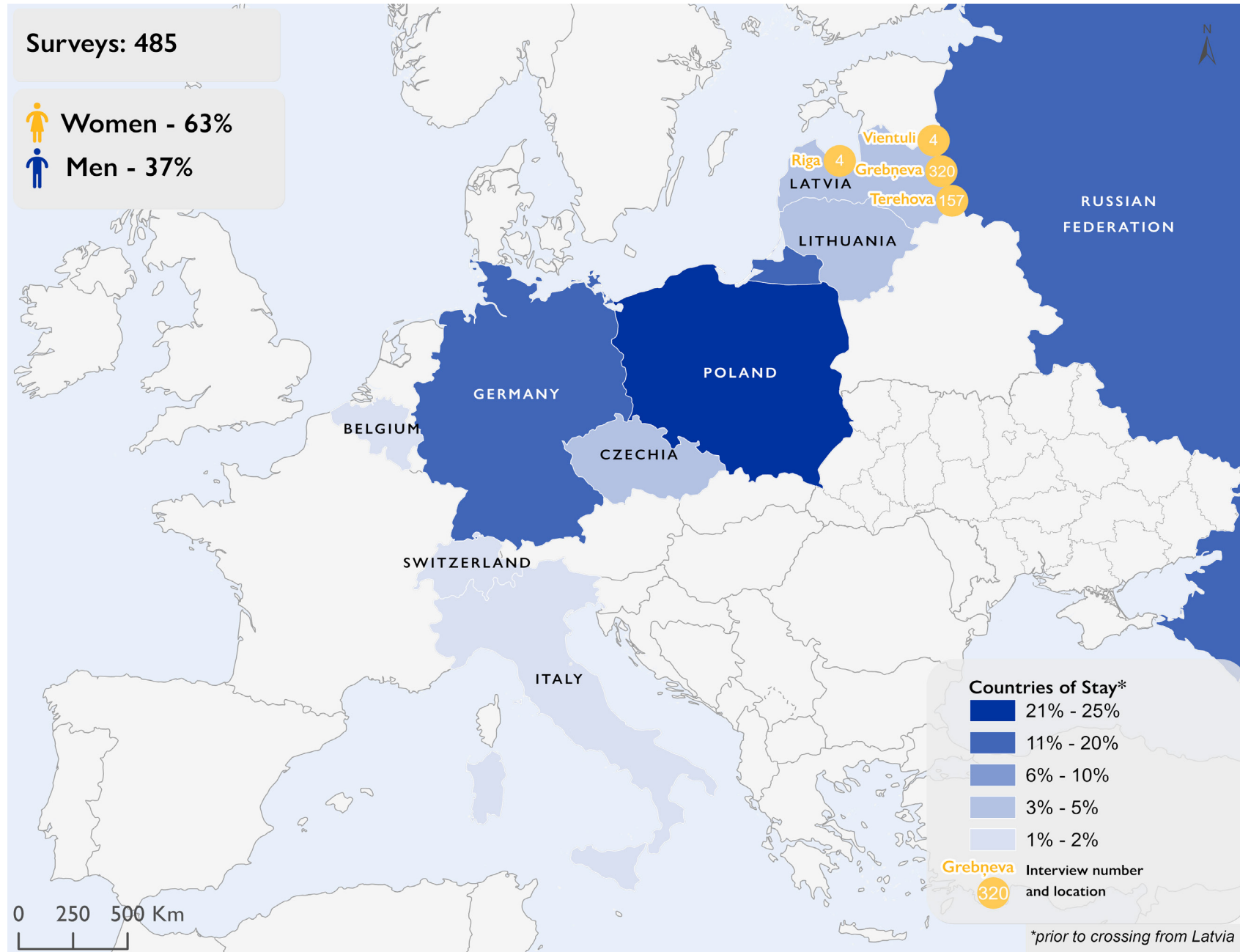
68%

returning to Ukraine alone.

32%

returning with the same group with whom they left.

Map 1: Locations of surveys deployed in Latvia, and countries of stay outside of Ukraine



The map is for illustration purposes. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

1. Socio-Demographic Profile

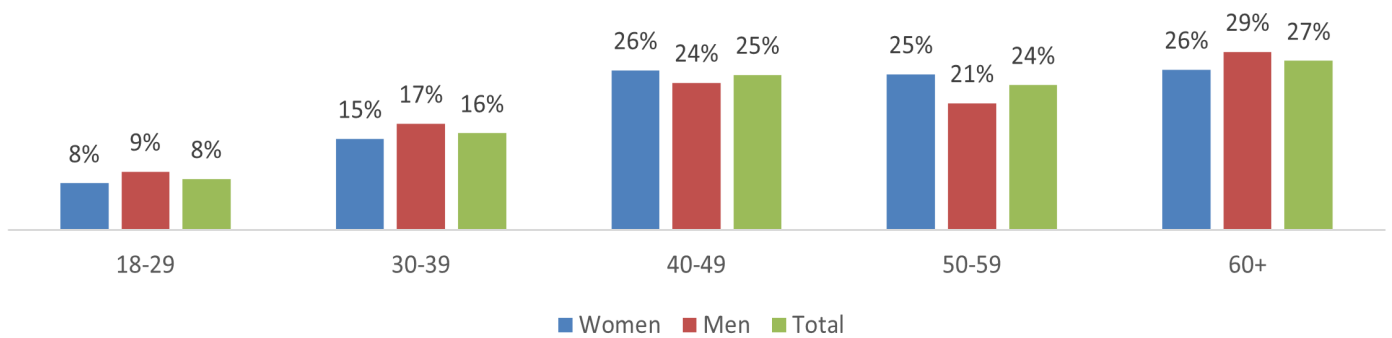
Gender and age

This survey presents findings on assistance, length of stay and destinations of refugees from Ukraine who travelled through the Russian Federation to reach non-governmental controlled areas in Ukraine. The respondents were interviewed at crossing or transit points while they were leaving Latvia.

Out of them, 63 per cent were women, and 37 per cent were men. The average age for women in the sample (50

years old) was slightly higher than the average age of men (49 years old). The majority of respondents were aged 60 years or older (27%), followed by those aged between 40 and 49 (25%) and between 50 and 59 years (24%). The largest age group among women was 60 years and above (26%), followed by those aged between 40 and 49 (26%). Among men, the predominant age group was 60 years and above (29%), followed by those

Figure 1: Age, by gender and total (%), (N=485)



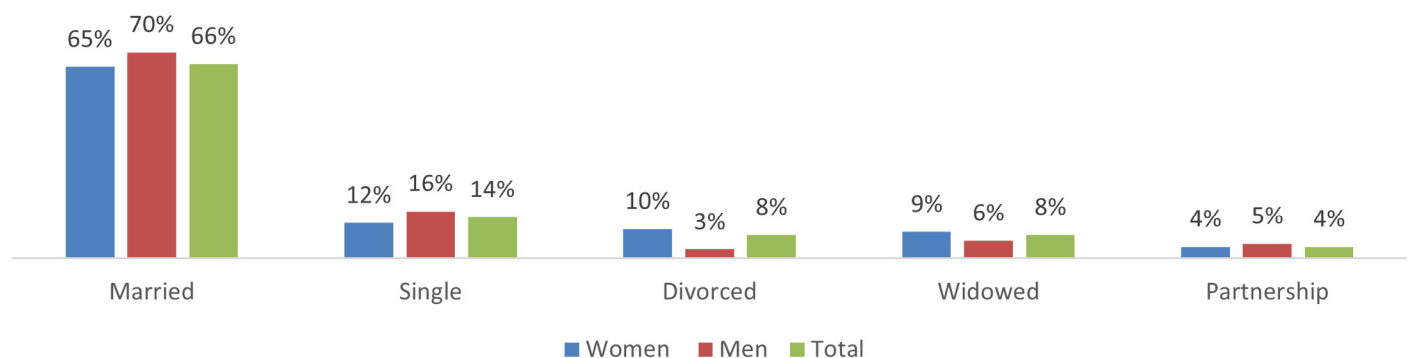
Marital status

Over half of the respondents were married (66%), while fourteen per cent were single. Eight per cent were divorced and another eight per cent were widowed. The remaining four per cent were in a partnership.

The share of single persons was higher among men

than among women (16% versus 12%), while men were more likely to be married in the sample (70% versus 65%). Women were more likely than men to be widowed (9% versus 6%).

Figure 2: Marital status, by gender and total (%), (N=485)



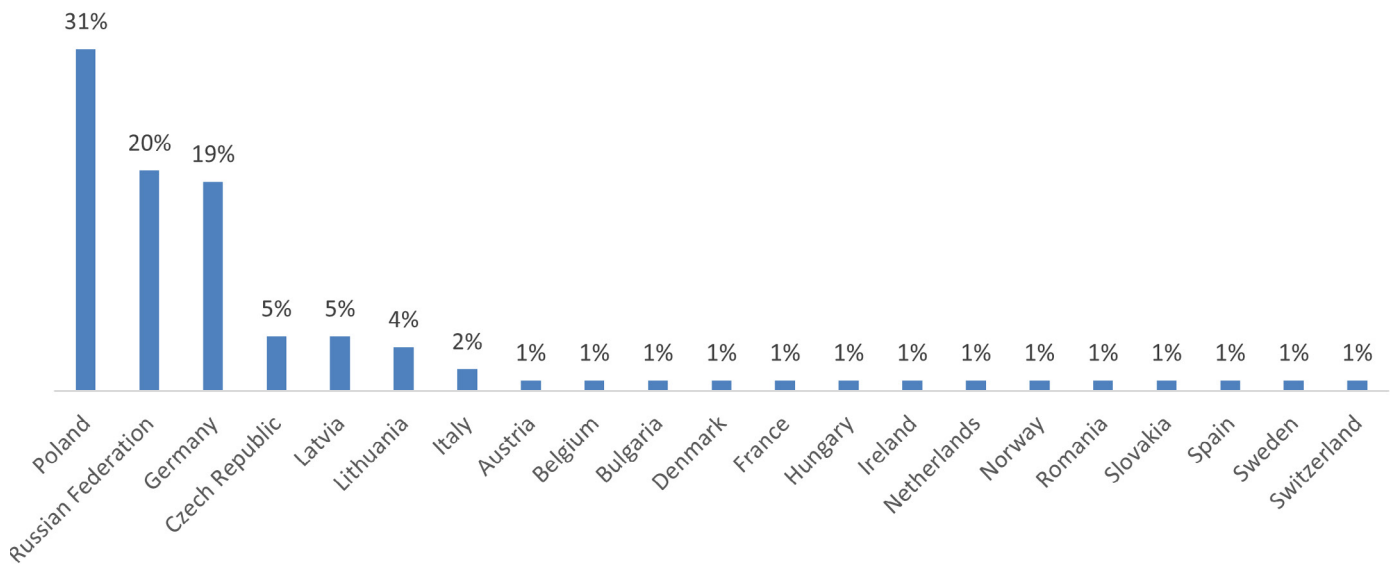
2. Time Outside of Ukraine

Countries of stay

Only five per cent of the surveyed Ukrainian nationals spent most of their time outside Ukraine in Latvia. The majority (95%) spent their time outside of Ukraine in other countries. Poland accounted for 31 per cent, the Russian Federation for 20 per cent, and Germany for

19 per cent. A smaller portion of respondents stayed in Czechia (5%), Lithuania (4%), as well as Italy (2%), Austria, Belgium (1% each). The remaining twelve per cent of respondents lived in other countries before returning to Ukraine through Latvia.

Figure 3: Countries of stay (%), (N=369)



Average time since initial displacement

The approximate duration of time spent outside of Ukraine can be assessed by looking at the difference between respondents' initial date of displacement from Ukraine, and the date of interview.

Among the total sample, 23 per cent of respondents were displaced between March and June 2022, while another 24 per cent were displaced between July and December 2022.

Displacement rates fluctuated between 2 per cent and 7 per cent from January to June 2023, and eleven per cent were displaced from July to December of the same year.

Table 1: Approximate time in displacement until the date of interview (%), (N=485)

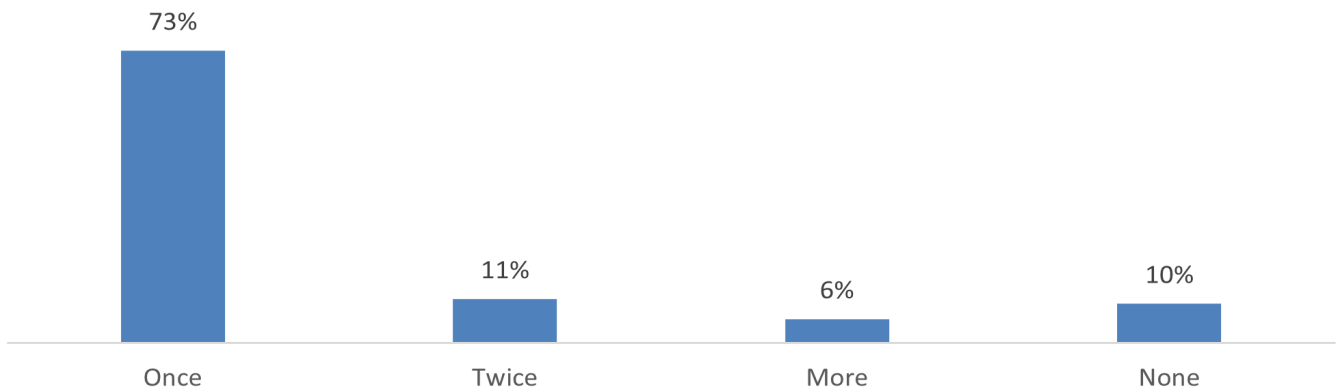
Date of initial displacement	% of respondents
Before 2022	11%
Jan-Mar 2022	13%
Apr-Jun 2022	14%
Jul-Sept 2022	12%
Oct-Dec 2022	11%
Jan-Mar 2023	9%
Apr-Jun 2023	19%
Jul-Sept 2023	9%
Oct-Dec 2023	2%

Number of exits/entries to and from Ukraine

Most respondents (73%) have entered or exited Ukraine only once since February 2022. Eleven per cent of respondents have entered or exited the country twice during that time period, while

six per cent have done so more than two times. The remaining ten per cent have never returned to Ukraine since the time of their displacement.

Figure 4: Number of entries/exits between 24 February 2022 and 30 December 2023 (%), (N=485)



Transport

Forty-one per cent of respondents travelled to Latvia using public transport, particularly minibuses. This was closely followed by twenty-seven per cent who opted for personal vehicles. Additionally, approximately twenty-three per cent of respondents entered Latvia on foot, while eight per cent arrived via bus transportation.

Figure 5: Main modes of transportation (%), N=(485)

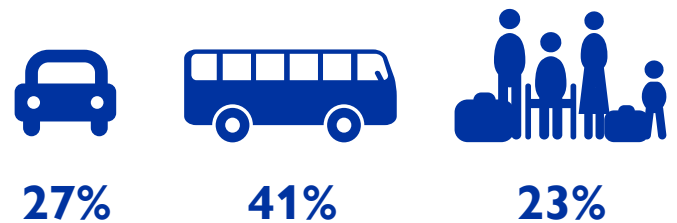
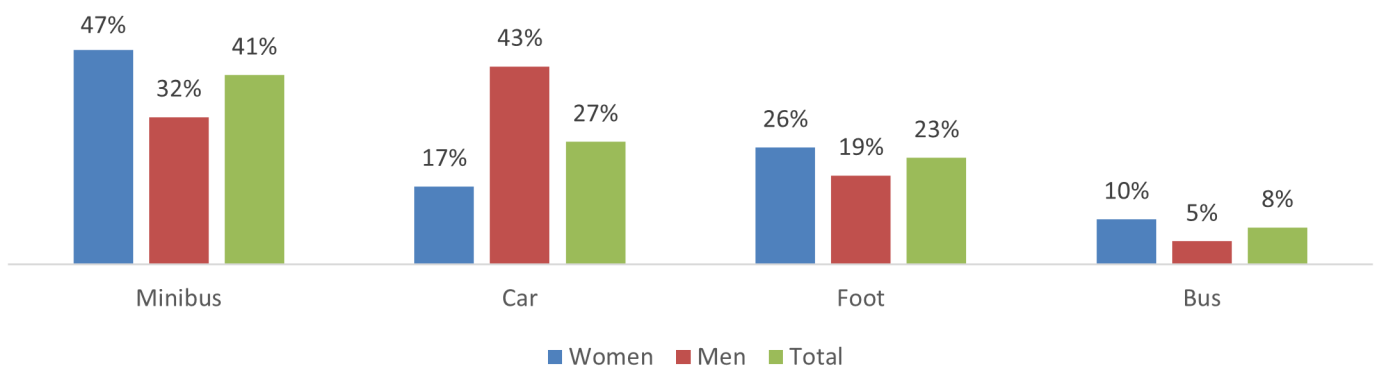


Figure 6: Main modes of transportation (%), (N=224)



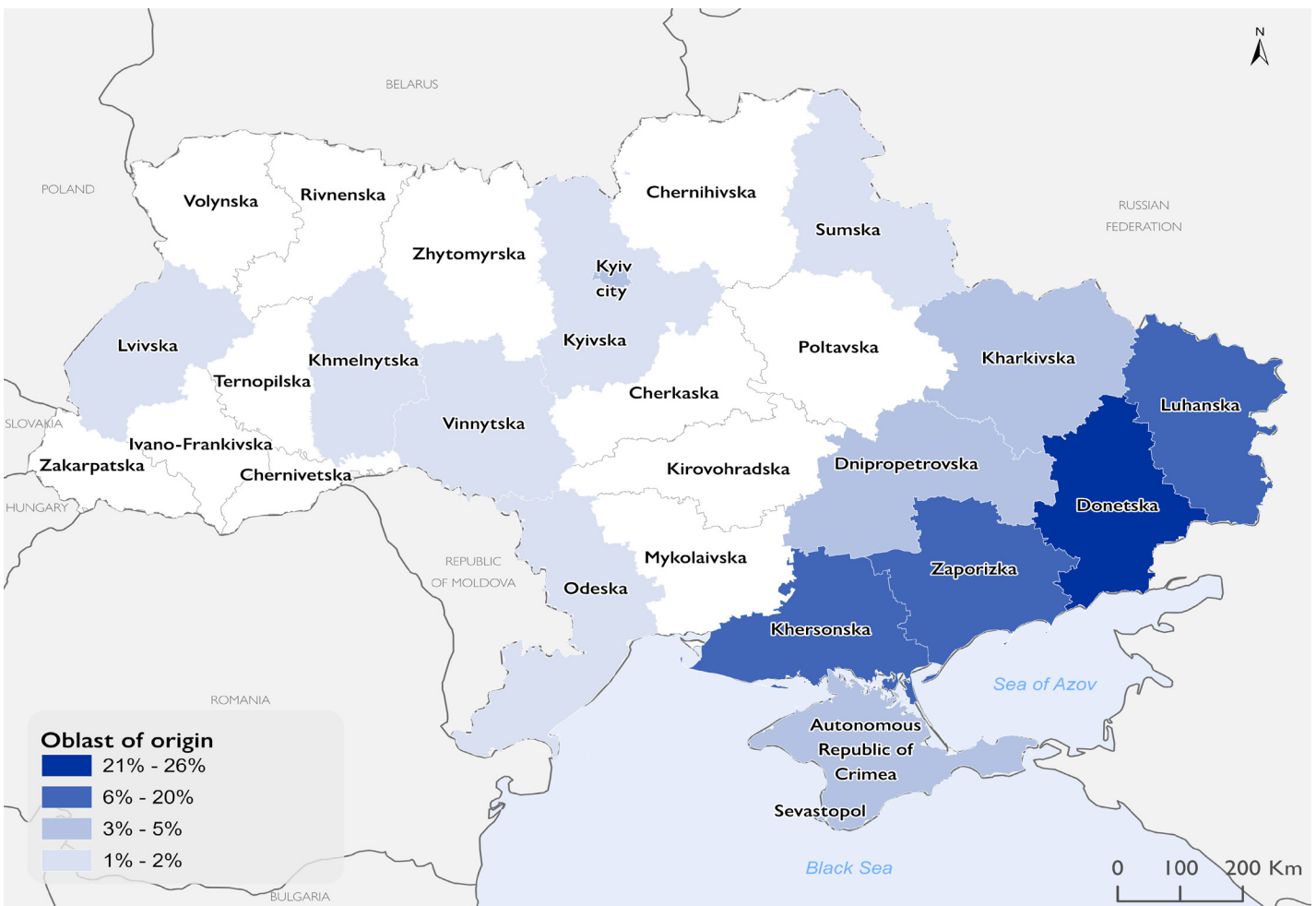
3. Oblasts (regions) of Origin and Destination

Origin or habitual residence

The majority (72%) came from four oblasts in Ukraine: Donetsk (26%), Luhanska (18%), Zaporizka (15%), Khersonska (13%) – which are the most eastern regions of the country with big parts of the territory currently

not under governmental control. The remaining 28 per cent of respondents came from 19 other oblasts in Ukraine.

Map 2: Oblast of origin before leaving Ukraine



The map is for illustration purposes. The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Destinations

Eighty-six per cent of respondents stated that they intended to return to the same oblast they were displaced from. A smaller portion of respondents (14%) planned to go to a different oblast. Among those returning to a different oblast (N=66), 22 respondents

intended to go to Donetsk, 10 intended to go to Kyiv city, 8 to Luhanska. Additionally, five respondents expressed a desire to move to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, while two respondents each intended to settle in Lvivska, Mykolaivska, and Odeska oblasts.

4. Intentions and Reasons to Return to Ukraine

Long-term (prospective returnees)

For the purpose of the analysis, “short-term visitors” are those who intended to spend 0-30 days in Ukraine, while respondents intending to stay for more than one month are labelled as “prospective returnees”.

Forty-nine per cent of respondents expressed their intention to return to Ukraine. Out of this group (N=240), 47 per cent stated that their primary motivation for returning was to reunite with their families.

This was followed by 38 per cent of respondents who wanted to return because they missed their home, and 23 per cent wished to visit someone abroad. Eighteen per cent expressed a desire to assist other family members or friends, while ten per cent cited the need to check on their property in Ukraine as their reason for return. Additionally, eight per cent mentioned a lack of resources as a contributing factor to their decision to return.

Less frequently mentioned reasons for returning included improved situation in Ukraine (6%), the prospect of meeting with family members (4%), unemployment concerns (4%), and prioritizing family safety (3%).

Short-term stay

On the other hand, 29 per cent of respondents were planning a short-term visit to Ukraine only.

The primary reasons cited for their visits were to meet family (55%) and to check on property left in Ukraine (37%). Additionally, 27 per cent wanted to collect their personal belongings, while 25 per cent aimed to assist their families. Sixteen per cent were going for a short-term visit to help their members leave the country, and 15 per cent specifically travelled to bring supplies to people in Ukraine.

Ten per cent sought to reunite with their families, while the remaining respondents expressed a desire to return for a short visit due to homesickness in Ukraine, while others needed to renew or obtain their documents (2% each).

Table 2. Main reasons for coming back to Ukraine total (%), (N=240)
(multiple answers possible)

Listed reasons	% total
Reunite with family	47%
Miss home	38%
Visit someone abroad	23%
Help family	18%
Check on property	10%
Lack of resources	8%
Improved situation in Ukraine	6%
Meet family	4%
Lack of job	4%
Family safety	3%

Table 3. Main reasons for staying in Ukraine for a short-term period (%), (N=139)
(multiple answers possible)

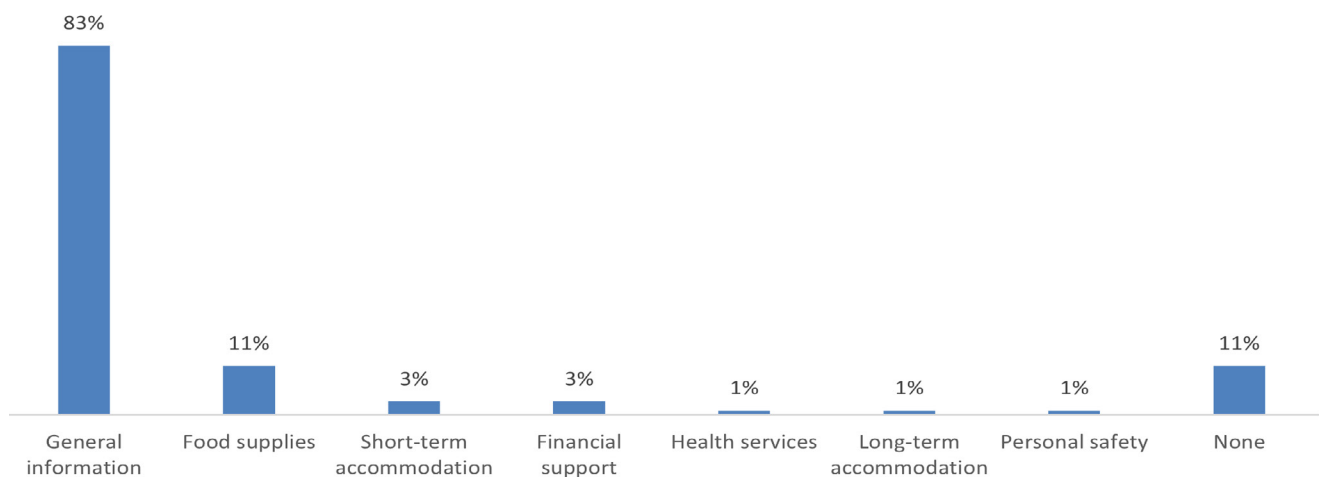
Listed reasons	% total
Meet family	55%
Check on property	37%
Collect personal belongings	27%
Help family	25%
Help family leave	16%
Bring supplies	15%
Reunite with family	10%
Miss home	2%
Documents	2%

5. Needs, Assistance, and Challenges

The majority of the surveyed (83%) indicated that their most immediate need at the time of the interview was for general information. Following that, eleven per cent of the respondents reported a need for food supplies. Other less frequently mentioned needs included

short-term accommodation (3%), financial support (3%), health services (1%), long-term accommodation (1%), and personal safety (1% each). Eleven per cent of the respondents stated that they had no immediate needs at the time of the survey.

Figure 7: Needs upon crossing back (%), (N=485) (multiple answers possible)



Assistance in Latvia

The majority of respondents (91%) reported receiving financial support. Additionally, 67 per cent of respondents received accommodation assistance, while 60 per cent received food supplies. Personal hygiene and sanitary supplies were received by 30 per cent of respondents, while 24 per cent received clothes and shoes. Other areas of assistance included transportation (21%), vouchers (9%), and toys (4%).

Unequal treatment

Ninety-eight per cent of respondents reported not having encountered any form of discrimination in the country of displacement. The remaining two per cent reported having experienced some form of discrimination.

Table 4. Main areas of assistance received (%), (N=228) (multiple answers possible)

Type of assistance received	Total (%)
Financial support	91%
Accommodation	67%
Food supplies	60%
Personal hygiene and sanitary supplies	30%
Clothes & shoes	24%
Transportation	21%
Vouchers	9%
Toys	6%

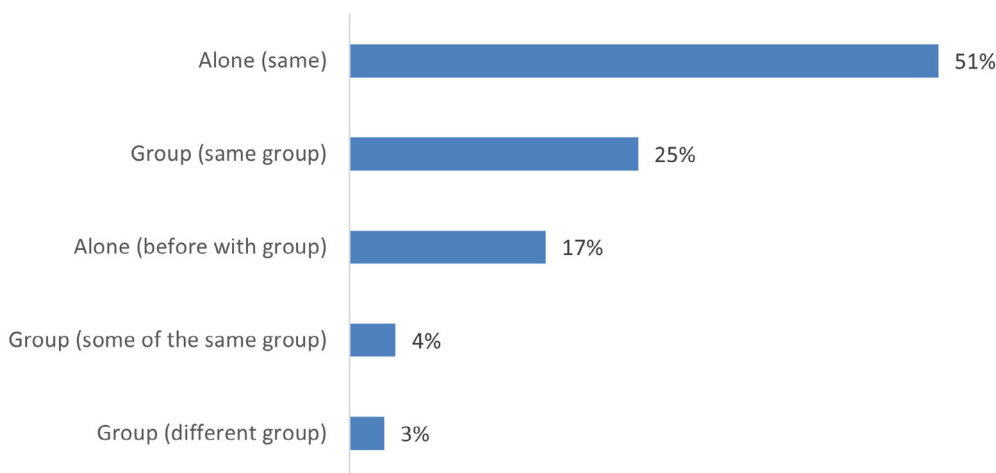
6. Group Composition

Travel mode

Out of the 485 respondents, 51 per cent indicated that they are returning to Ukraine alone, while 25 per cent stated that they are returning with the same group they entered the country of displacement with. Seventeen per cent of the respondents are returning to Ukraine alone despite originally leaving

with a group. A small proportion (4%) mentioned returning to Ukraine with some of their original travel members. Finally, three per cent mentioned returning to Ukraine with a different group than the one they initially exited the country with.

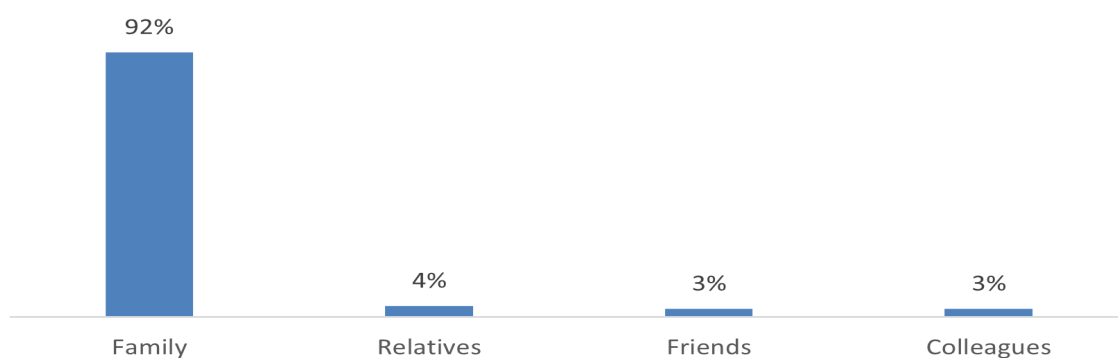
Figure 8: Travel mode (%), (N=485)



Among those travelling in a group (N=154), the majority (92%) were travelling with their family members. Additionally, four per cent of respondents

mentioned travelling with relatives. Three per cent of the group were accompanied by friends, while another three travelled with colleagues.

Figure 9: Group composition (%), (N=154) (multiple answers possible)



7. Methodology

Background

This report is based on a survey of displacement patterns, needs and intentions conducted by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in the countries included in the Regional Response Plan for Ukraine in 2023: 6 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia – and other 5 countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine since the start of the war in February 2022 – Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

This report is based on data collected between February and December 2023. Trained enumerators conducted in-person surveys with adult refugees from Ukraine and other TCNs (18 years of age and above). Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained in DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM's approach to migrant protection and assistance, data collection ethics and information and referral mechanisms.

Respondents were selected randomly by enumerators at selected entry, exit, transit points and accommodation centers. Respondents included persons traveling by car, bus, foot, and train. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Surveys were administered only if consent from the respondent was given. The respondent could stop the survey at any time. All enumerators reviewed the data for

systematic issues with responses and did not identify any errors. This report only considered fully complete surveys in the analysis.

Country-level implementation and limitations

DTM has been active in Latvia since July 2022. The data for this report was collected between 28 February and 21 December 2023. Overall, 485 valid surveys were collected by a team of 4 enumerators (2 female and 2 male), covering 3 transit/crossing points. Sixty-seven per cent of surveys were collected in Grebneva, 32 per cent in Terehova, and the remaining one per cent in Vientuli crossing points.

Surveys were conducted in Russian and Ukrainian. The survey respondents were chosen at random from locations within three transit and reception locations that receive high volumes of individuals entering Latvia, with either public or private transport.

While enumerators tried to ensure that respondents represented diverse profiles, the operational reality of fieldwork posed various challenges. Not all survey locations are equally accessible to enumerators. Depending on the survey site, individuals may not be able to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire. While the results are not representative, the data shows strong internal consistency with each country and at the regional level.

DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the main displacement patterns – origin country and region – for refugees of any nationality fleeing from Ukraine because of the war. It captures the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended final destination and prospects of permanence in the country of the survey/first reception; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several IOM's DTM tools were deployed in countries neighbouring Ukraine and in other countries particularly impacted by the new arrivals of migrants and refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult: <https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>
DTM is part of IOM's Global Data Institute.