

## Family and the Intention to Stay -- A Comparison of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany and Poland

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Since its escalation in late February 2022, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine triggered a significant influx of refugees into various European countries. This movement of Ukrainians seeking safety has affected neighbouring nations and more distant ones.

This presentation provides insights from an early ad-hoc survey of Ukrainian refugees in Germany and Poland conducted in spring 2022. It pays specific attention to the composition of groups in which people fled, the existence of prior contacts to Germany and Poland, and refugees' expectations regarding the duration of their stay. These topics are of high importance with respect to political measures directed at the forced migrants, civil society support and their possible labour market integration. Whether refugees can eventually return to Ukraine will largely depend on the continuation and outcome of the war. However, it cannot be assumed that refugees will be able or willing to return immediately after hostilities cease. This may be due, among other things, to the fact that essential infrastructure has been destroyed in many areas. Furthermore, if individuals from the start assumed that the war would last for an extended period, they might have concentrated on developing new prospects for a permanent live abroad right away.

The presentation is based on data from the Online Survey of Ukrainian Refugees (OSUR), which was conducted by the GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences in the second half of April 2022. The survey targeted refugees from Ukraine in Germany and Poland. Due to the use of an innovative sampling approach, which employed social networking sites as recruitment tools, this web-based survey could be conducted only a few weeks after the start of the war. More specifically, data pertaining to 1,091 individuals (633 in Germany and 459 in Poland) will constitute the foundation of this talk.

We will show that the two sub-samples exhibit both commonalities and differences. In both countries, we surveyed mainly women of approx. 35 years of age. Clear differences are visible regarding the origin regions of respondents, indicating, for example, that a substantial share of the Ukrainians surveyed in Poland originated from regions close to the border between both countries, while many of those surveyed in Germany originated from Kyiv city and Kyiv oblast.

Most respondents (79 percent in Germany and 77 percent in Poland) did not leave Ukraine alone but accompanied by children, siblings, friends, or others. Only 7 (Germany) and 5 percent (Poland), respectively, of the survey participants were housed in refugee shelters or other government-sponsored facilities at the time of the project, highlighting the importance of private citizens (including family and friends) volunteering to house these refugees in both countries.

Clear differences can be observed with respect to expected return possibilities. While 60 percent of respondents in Poland envisioned returning to their home country within six months, the same held true for only 45 percent in Germany. Six percent in the latter country and four percent of participants in Poland stated that they did not intend to return at all.

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