



## **Main Ukrainian trends and figures in migration**

### **Security factors influencing Ukrainian migration pattern**

The poor economic situation, and the bloody armed conflict are all factors that make increased migration by Ukrainians into the EU more likely. However, this phenomenon has so far mainly been observed in Poland, and applies more to residents of western Ukraine. This is probably a result of two factors. **Firstly**, the forced migrants from the Donbas do not have developed migration networks within the EU (as opposed to Russia). **Secondly**, they still hold out the hope that the conflict is temporary, and that they will be able to return to their places of residence.

Due to the conflict at East of Ukraine the EU also fears the export of security threats, including terrorism, extremism and the uncontrolled proliferation of arms along the section of Ukraine's border with Russia controlled by pro-Russian separatists (about 400 km). One solution that could appease EU concerns would be for Ukraine to create a well-controlled zone isolating the territory occupied by the separatists; another would be the creation of databases and a system of passes preventing members of organised crime groups and terrorist organisations from entering Ukrainian territory and obtaining Ukrainian biometric passports.

In the autumn of 2014, the Ukrainian government began to construct a so-called 'wall', a system of fortifications along the ceasefire line (trenches, barbed wire, and in the future electronic monitoring); and in January it introduced a system for monitoring passenger transport out of the separatist-controlled territories. However, it is hard to believe that Ukraine can continue to build this reinforcement during intense exchanges of fire.

### **Internally displaced persons**

Paradoxically, the conflict in the east of Ukraine has had little impact on the migration and refugee situation in the European Union. Given the huge scale of internal displacement, the number of Ukrainians who have applied for refugee status in the EU countries (around 10,000 people in 2014, mainly in Poland, Germany and Sweden) is quite modest.

As occurs throughout the world, internal displacement in Ukraine is the product of a political crisis. The first wave of displacement occurred in March 2014 prior to Crimea's referendum to join the Russian Federation, followed by a second wave after Russia's annexation of Crimea. The displaced population consisted of pro-Ukraine activists, journalists, government officials, and Crimean Tatars, a Muslim ethnic minority group.



According to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, approximately 20,000 of the country's 1.2 million IDPs are from Crimea

### **Refugees/Asylum seekers from Ukraine**

In addition to internally displacement, many Ukrainians have reportedly sought refugee outside of the country. According to government figures, as of April 30, 2015 the number of Ukrainians who have sought asylum, residence permits, and other forms of legal stay in foreign countries is reported to be 822,700 with the majority going to the Russian Federation (678,200) and to Belarus (81,070)

In addition there were 3,648 applications for international protection in Germany, 3,270 in Poland, 2,647 in Italy, 1,637 in Sweden, 1,625 in France, and smaller numbers in Moldova, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia. 674,300, of which 542,800 have gone to Russia, 80,700 to Belarus, and the remaining asylum seekers and externally displaced Ukrainians have gone to Moldova, Poland, Hungary, and Romania. (UNHCR Ukraine Operational Update, 11–30 April 2015," UNHCR Kyiv, April 30, 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/unhcr-ukraine-operational-update-11-30-april-2015> )

In 2014, it was spike of activity in the EU from the Ukrainian asylum seekers, because number of applications increased by 13 times. However, 14050 Ukrainian asylum applicants accounted only for 2,2% of the total from all non-member countries. This trend continues in the first half of 2015 when there were 11440 Ukrainian applications in the EU-28. But the low speed of processing applications and the vast majority of rejected applications (74%) let assume that most Ukrainian applicants are not priority and also are not eligible for refugee status. For example, in first half of 2015 in Poland there were only 5 positive decisions on Ukrainian applications, when other 925 applications were rejected.

### **Labour migrants**

The main destination countries of labour migrants were Russia, Poland, Italy and Czech Republic. Current number of labour migrants from Ukraine probably is higher than 1.2 million people because of socio-economic causes. One of the possible ways to track the actual number of Ukrainian labour migrants in the EU is to explore residence permit statistics. However, it is necessary to consider that not all labour migrants are working with work permits. In 2014 number of this kind of permits for Ukrainians in the EU-28 increased by 4%. However there is no available information from 6 countries. In particular, more Ukrainians left for work in Poland for a short-term period (from 3 to 5 months) and in Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania and France for more than 12 months.



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According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in 2014 (until October) Ukrainians had received 331,000 simplified certificates allowing them to work in Poland legally (an increase of 50% compared to the previous year), as well as 26,000 work permits. It should be remembered that the actual number of Ukrainian citizens working in Poland is lower, because the certificates give their bearers the right to work for up to six months. Long-term migrants are those who have the residence permits in Poland; as of February this year, Ukrainians hold 48,000 valid residence permits. Interest in studying in Poland has also increased (both because of the scholarship programmes, and as an option for avoiding military service). Many citizens of Ukraine have however delayed their final decision to leave their home country; they decide to formally legalise their stay in Poland, while in fact they have not yet left Ukraine.

A new, disturbing phenomenon for the EU is the increased number of journeys undertaken by young men from western Ukraine to the EU countries bordering Ukraine in connection with the new wave of recruitment into the army announced at the end of January.

### **Irregular migrants**

Irregular migration (as measured by illegal border crossings) on the EU's borders with Ukraine has risen, but is still relatively low (a few thousand persons annually), and is not comparable with the situation in southern Europe (last year 230,000 people tried to enter the EU illegally via the Mediterranean Sea). Despite of recent annexation of Crimea and armed conflict in the Eastern Ukraine there is no marked changes in irregular migration movements towards the EU. For example, in the first quarter of 2015 [there were detected 32 % fewer](#) Ukrainians who illegally stayed in the EU compared to the previous quarter. [Frontex](#) experts reported that in 2014 detections for illegal border-crossing and document fraud remains insignificant along all green border section with Ukraine. The number of refusals of entry for Ukrainians in 2014 remained comparable to previous years.