

31 March 2023

IOM launched this study to better understand the profiles of those fleeing Ukraine to Montenegro, as well as their main needs and experiences of applying for temporary protection in Montenegro. IOM data collectors interviewed 173 persons who had left Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion in February 2022. Interviews took place between 3 March and 23 March 2023 in the Herceg Novi, Bar and Budva municipalities. IOM also conducted interviews with nine Key Informants (KIs) from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, representative from NGO “Građanska alijansa”, representative from the Ukrainian Embassy and four Ukrainian nationals residing in Montenegro. The objective of this study is to highlight the main needs as well as assist responders and decision-makers in addressing potential policy and programmatic gaps.

### BACKGROUND

On 13 March 2022, the Government of Montenegro introduced a Temporary Protection (TP) scheme to all persons fleeing Ukraine for a renewable one-year period. All citizens of Ukraine as well as stateless persons whose last place of residence was Ukraine and persons who were granted international protection in Ukraine and who cannot return to their country of origin, are entitled to temporary protection in Montenegro.

Under these provisions, these persons have a right to stay in Montenegro for a one-year renewable period, adequate accommodation, necessary help and means of living, health care, access to primary and secondary education, information about rights and obligations, labor market access, family reunification as well as the right to submit an application for international protection.

Since the start of the war, 101,388 Ukrainian nationals have entered Montenegro, of whom 94,978 have departed. According to the Montenegrin Ministry of Interior, around 8,000 persons have applied for temporary protection in Montenegro, out of which 7,500 have been resolved.

- Most of the sample (56.6%) were married, while 20.8 per cent were separated or divorces, 13.9 per cent were single and never married, 6.4 per cent widowed and 2.3 per cent were in a partnership or civil union.
- When asked about the highest level of completed education, almost half (47.4%) stated that they had completed a master’s degree, while 27.7 per cent said the highest level was a bachelor’s degree, 15.6 per cent said technical or vocational trainings, 1.2 per cent held doctoral degrees and 2.3 per cent did not provide answers.

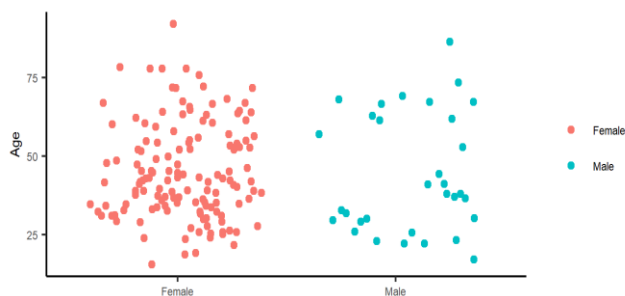


Figure 2: Age breakdown disaggregated by gender

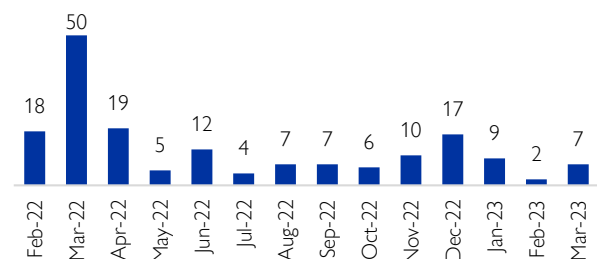


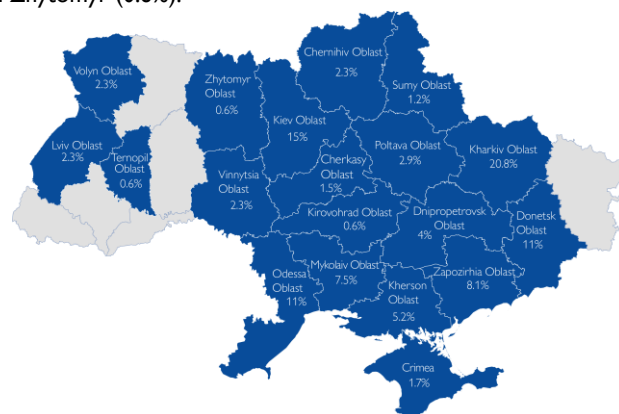
Figure 1: Month in which respondent left Ukraine

The Kharkiv oblast was the most frequently cited region of origin in Ukraine with 20.8 per cent of respondents stating that this is where they had come from. This was followed by Donetsk (11%), Odesa (11%), Zaporizhzhia (8.1%), Kyiv oblast (7.5%), Kyiv city (7.5%), Mykolaiv (7.5%), Kherson (5.2%), Dnipropetrovsk (4%), Poltava (2.9%), Chernihiv (2.3%), Lviv (2.3%), Vinnytsia (2.3%), Volyn (2.3%), Crimea (1.7%), Sumy (1.2%), Cherkasy (0.6%), Kirovohrad (0.6%), Ternopil (0.6%), and Zhytomyr (0.6%).

### BASELINE PROFILE

In total, IOM interviewed 173 people who left Ukraine because of the Russian invasion in February 2022. Of the total sample, 98.3 per cent were Ukrainian nationals while the remaining 1.7 per cent were nationals of the Russian Federation but holders of permanent residency in Ukraine.

- The majority of the sample (81.5%) were female while the remaining 18.5 per cent were male.
- The median age of the sample was 42 years, while the oldest was 92 and the youngest was 16.<sup>1</sup>
- Just over half (50.3%) of the respondents in this sample left Ukraine in February, March and April of 2022.



Map 1: Region in Ukraine from which respondent arrived (Crimea refers to Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation)

1. IOM requires informed consent of the parent or legal guardian of any minors interviewed for its surveys. The two underage respondents in this survey were interviewed in the presence of their parents, who provided informed consent.

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### APPLYING FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTION

- The majority of the respondents in the sample (93.1%) had applied for temporary protections. The 6.9 per cent who hadn't applied all stated that they were planning on applying.
- On average, people waited 45 days before they obtained official recognition of temporary protection status. One quarter of the respondents waited between 60 and 120 days before they obtained temporary protection status.
- Almost all respondents (95.1%) stated that they had not submitted a request for international protection.
- Most respondents (76.4%) stated that they had not tried to seek temporary protection status elsewhere in Europe.
- There seems to be no link between date of arrival in Montenegro and whether the respondent applied for temporary protection status

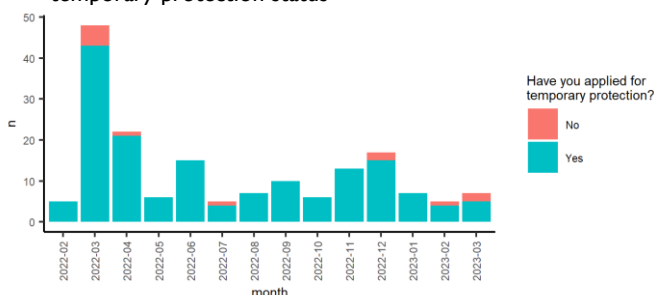


Figure 3: Application for temporary protection disaggregated by date of arrival in Montenegro

### ACCESS TO RIGHTS IN MONTENEGRO

#### Right to accommodation, necessary help and means of living

All of those who have been granted temporary protection status have a right to accommodation, necessary help and means of living. However, as temporary protection is not granted automatically, many people have to wait months before having access to this.

Under the auspices of the temporary protection scheme, the government of Montenegro has provided accommodation to 80 persons, of whom 25 were children.

These accommodation units were located in a hotel in the coastal town of Sutomore. Most of those who have been housed here are vulnerable persons (older persons as well as mothers with young children). According to a previous [IOM assessment in Montenegro](#), Ukrainian refugees are paying on average close to 500 Euros per month in rent.

#### Right to work

As is shown in Figure 4, the Ukrainian nationals, which were surveyed have particularly high levels of educational attainment with over three-quarters having attended university, almost half of whom have Master's degrees.

Despite these high levels of educational attainment, key informants explained that in their experience some employers were hesitant to hire Ukrainian nationals on the basis of temporary protection status. Almost three-quarters (72.2%) of the survey respondents stated that they were not working in Montenegro. One of the key problems they encountered were around diploma recognition. Depending on the profession, this can require a submission to and membership of a professional body or Chamber.

In the experience of key informants, this process is administratively challenging to complete, especially without knowledge of the local language.

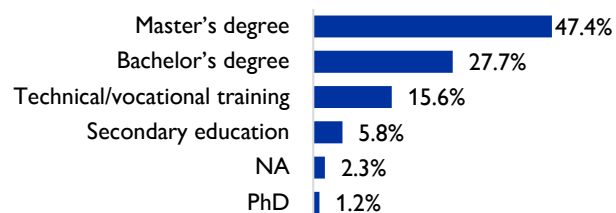


Figure 4: Highest completed level of education

#### Right to education

Children below the age of six are allowed to enroll in kindergartens. According to the Ministry of Education, around 213 Ukrainian children are in schooling. Public kindergartens are overbooked, and private kindergartens can be prohibitively expensive. Children are also allowed to attend schools in Montenegro.

One of the key challenges is that there tends to be little specialized support for Ukrainian children to integrate in the classes although some schools have organized language classes for Ukrainian children. Just over two-thirds (66.4%) said that they had not attempted to gain access to primary and/or secondary education in Montenegro.



Picture 1: IOM enumerator with Ukrainian refugee

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### Right to health

When an application for temporary protection is submitted, the applicant receives an identity number. This identity number is recognized under the Health Care Act, but it is not recognized under the Insurance Act. People with temporary protection status have relatively easy access to primary health care (such as general practitioners).

However, the medical professional must write prescriptions manually because these cannot be registered in the system as their identity numbers are not valid under the Insurance Act.

The Ministry of Health has issued instructions to all state-owned pharmacies to allow them to dispense medicines to all persons with these handwritten prescription notes. In practice, however, respondents and key informants told IOM that many people are not aware of their rights to receive medication with these handwritten prescriptions.

Part of the issue stems from the fact that temporary protection does not offer Ukrainians health cards – only a social contribution-paying job offers that – many Ukrainians therefore do not know the extent of their health care entitlements, which is exacerbated by the language barrier.

When asked if the respondents had attempted to access health care services, 64.8 per cent confirmed that they had while 35.2 per cent said they had not. Of those who accessed health care, only 10 per cent reported having problems, and these were all related to the identity number, the language barrier and/or misunderstanding entitlements.

### Other rights

- When asked if they had obtained information about their rights and obligations, 62 per cent said no.
- The vast majority of respondents (92.4%) stated that they had not attempted family reunification. Of those who had attempted, 77.8 per cent stated that they had not faced problems in exercising this right while 22.2 per cent did. The problems faced were related to waiting long periods of time for a decision.
- Opening up a bank account also remains one of the key challenges for Ukrainians in Montenegro. At the beginning, Ukrainians could open bank accounts with relative ease. However, as many people departed Montenegro and left unattended accounts, banks began introducing more stringent criteria for opening accounts. Banks now request, among other documentation, notary declarations or rental agreements, which can be challenging to acquire. Furthermore, Ukrainians cannot open foreign currency accounts based on temporary protection status, which makes it challenging to receive payments from abroad.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Data collection methods

This assessment used a multi-source and multi-method approach to obtain qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of stakeholders. IOM enumerators conducted interviews with key informants: officials from the Ministry of Interior, officials from the Ministry of Health, representative from NGO “*Gradanska alijansa*”, a representative from the Ukrainian Embassy, and four Ukrainian nationals who are well connected to and informed about the Ukrainian nationals residing in Montenegro. In addition to this, a short survey was administered to persons who had fled Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion in February 2022 and were presently resident in Montenegro. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: baseline profile, and whether they had availed themselves of their rights to which they are entitled under the Temporary Protection Law.

#### Data collection period and geographical coverage

The data was collected from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2023. The interviews took place in Herceg Novi, Bar and Budva, which are all areas known for their presence of Ukrainian refugees.

#### Target population

Ukrainian and third-country nationals who left Ukraine as a result of the outbreak of war in February 2022 and are currently residing in Montenegro.

#### Enumerators

IOM deployed four enumerators (all female) with language skills in English, Ukrainian, Russian and Montenegrin.

#### Limitations and constraints

IOM used a convenience procedure for this survey sample. The results of this survey should therefore not be generalized to the total population of Ukrainian nationals in Montenegro.

#### Ethics and consent

No personal information was collected during the data collection exercise. IOM informs all respondents of the voluntary nature and anonymity of the information collected. Respondents were verbally asked to give their consent to IOM's use of the information. All interviews were conducted in a safe environment.

### SUPPORTED BY:



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Population, Refugees, and Migration  
U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy