



LABOUR MARKET ASSESSMENT ON UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN ROMANIA

A photograph of several people, likely Ukrainian refugees, in an outdoor setting. In the foreground, a young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a red beanie and a grey jacket, is looking towards the camera. She has a yellow backpack on. To her left, another person is wearing a light blue beanie and a dark jacket. In the background, a man is visible, and there are some tables and chairs. The image is slightly faded and has a blue overlay at the top.

Labour market assessment on Ukrainian refugees in Romania

ROMANIA 2023

CENTRUL PENTRU STUDIUL COMPARAT AL MIGRAȚIEI, CLUJ-NAPOCA

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Executive Summary

In 2022, Romania had a substantial foreign resident population, exceeding 286,000 individuals, as reported by INS[1] in 2023. However, this number had grown significantly by June 2023, after approximately 95,000[2] Ukrainian refugees settled in Romania as a result of the conflict that erupted in February 2022. This settlement brought a major demographic shift as Romania moved from being a more transient destination for refugees to becoming a long-term home for many Ukrainians. Romania's evolving role as a place of extended refuge and settlement for Ukrainian nationals is becoming increasingly apparent.

Despite residing in Romania for over a year and a half, these Ukrainian refugees continue to encounter substantial challenges in achieving stability and financial security. These include language barriers, insufficient training, a mismatch of skills with the local job market, and difficulties in navigating employment opportunities. Though they have lawful residency, their access to dignified livelihoods remains constrained. Various economic inclusion programmes have been implemented, however their outcomes have been mixed, highlighting the pressing need for comprehensive, long-term strategies to address the intricate issues surrounding the integration of Ukrainian refugees into the labour market and society at large. The evolution of Romania's role as a place of refuge has brought an imperative to provide robust support and opportunities for these refugees to build stable lives within the country.

As such, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the Center for Comparative Migration Studies (CSCM) commissioned a new labour market assessment to identify unexplored, new or adapted economic inclusion pathways for Ukrainian refugees in Bucharest, Constanta, Galati, and Braila. The assessment report is organised around seven parts, in addition to the introduction and objectives and methodology section:

Part I: Ukrainians refugees Population Profile

Part II: Overview of the labour market in Romania

Part II: Ukrainian refugees' access to employment in Romania

Part IV: Self-employment/ Entrepreneurship

Part V: Training and labour market skills

Part VI: Conclusions

Part VII: Recommendations

[1] INS. (2023). Populația rezidentă la 1 ianuarie 2023 și migrația internațională în anul 2022. <https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/popula%C5%A3ia-rezident%C4%83-la-1-ianuarie-2023-%C5%9Fi-migra%C5%A3ia-interna%C5%A3ional%C4%83-%C3%AEEn-anul-2022>.

[2] UNHCR DATA PORTAL. (2023). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/countries/>.

Ukrainian refugees' access to employment in Romania

A significant portion of the respondents included in the survey are presently without work, underscoring the hurdles faced by Ukrainian refugees when trying to secure employment in Romania. This is in stark contrast to the 3% of unemployment rate of the sample in Ukraine, indicating that transitioning to the Romanian labour market is a more difficult task. On a more optimistic note, 25% of the respondents are presently employed, contributing to their financial stability and lessening the burden on public institutions and NGOs that provide support. Employment not only brings in income but also promotes stability, self-sufficiency, and integration within the local community. Approximately 12% of respondents are still engaged in remote work for Ukrainian companies or clients while residing in Romania. This suggests that some refugees have managed to maintain their employment connections, providing them with income and flexibility. Around 8% of respondents have indicated that they are self-employed or own businesses. This might be a response to challenges in finding conventional employment or a result of prior entrepreneurial experience, highlighting their adaptability and resourcefulness.

A significant portion of economically active respondents (32%) work as specialists in various fields, showcasing their professional expertise. Service workers constitute 22% of the workforce, often in roles requiring direct customer interaction, while 16% are engaged in unskilled labor.

Social media and personal networks emerged as the most valuable resources for job hunting, with traditional methods like online platforms and labour agencies considered less important. This reliance on informal sources underscores the significance of digital platforms and personal connections in the job search process.

A significant number of respondents (52%) do not have formal labour contracts, potentially engaging in informal or undocumented work arrangements. This raises concerns about job security and employment rights. Nevertheless, 42% reported having labour contracts, affording them legal protection and associated benefits.

Barriers and limitations of employment

Respondents most frequently cited their inability to communicate effectively in Romanian as a significant impediment to securing employment (24%). A significant proportion of the surveyed individuals (12%) identified family responsibilities as a barrier to their entry into the Romanian labour market. Some respondents (9%) cited a lack of access to information on how to find employment as a hindrance to their economic activity in Romania.

A noteworthy number of participants (8%) regarded their legal status in Romania as an obstacle to securing employment. Challenges related to obtaining the necessary legal documentation and work permits restrict their access to job opportunities. Another group of participants (8%) highlighted the scarcity of employment opportunities in their specific field of expertise as a barrier to finding work in Romania. This underscores a disparity between their prior work experience in Ukraine and the current demand in the Romanian job market. Some respondents (7%) expressed concerns about not possessing the qualifications and skills required by the Romanian labour market. Their expertise and specialisation from Ukraine may not align with the specific prerequisites of available job positions in Romania.

Addressing these challenges may require a combination of language support, family support programmes, improved access to job information, streamlined legal processes, and initiatives to align qualifications and skills with market demands.

Perception of employers

Based on the responses from the surveyed employers, several challenges and opportunities related to refugees seeking work in the targeted cities in Romania have been identified.

Language and Communication: Within the surveyed companies, Romanian emerges as the primary language of communication, with an overwhelming 99% of respondents indicating its use. This is expected, given the context of operating in Romania. However, English is also widely used, with 60% of respondents indicating its usage. This suggests that English proficiency can be a valuable asset, particularly in positions or industries that involve international communication or dealings. Moreover, 35% of respondents mentioned that their companies use only Romanian as the language of communication with clients, underscoring the importance of effective communication in Romanian when interacting with customers or clients across various industries.

Diverse Language Requirements: In addition to Romanian and English, a smaller percentage of companies (11%) reported the usage of other languages such as French, Italian, and German. This indicates that proficiency in these languages can be advantageous for certain job opportunities within specific sectors or for companies with international connections.

Employment Arrangements: The survey highlights a diverse range of employment arrangements within the companies surveyed. Full-time staff account for 51% of responses, while part-time staff make up 22%. Furthermore, 15% of respondents mentioned employing temporary staff through temporary employment agencies. Temporary staff are typically hired for specific periods or to fulfill short-term needs, such as seasonal work or specific projects. This arrangement provides employers with flexibility in managing their workforce based on fluctuating demands. These findings suggest that there is flexibility in employment options for Ukrainian refugees in Romania, and they may find suitable positions based on their availability, skills, and preferences.

Workforce Diversity: The majority of surveyed companies (75%) reported that their main workforce comprises Romanian citizens. However, it is noteworthy that a smaller percentage of respondents (12%) mentioned having foreign citizens as part of their staff, indicating some level of diversity in the companies. Interestingly, only 7% of the respondents reported that their companies have hired Ukrainian citizens. Furthermore, when asked about their willingness to hire Ukrainians, only 6% of respondents expressed an intention to do so. These statistics suggest limited Ukrainian representation in the workforce, despite the presence of other foreign citizens.

Gender Disparity: The data indicates a gender disparity among employed Ukrainian refugees. Men account for 69% of the employed Ukrainian citizens, while women make up 29% of the employed individuals. Several factors could contribute to this imbalance, including specific job preferences and skill requirements. Additionally, 10% of respondents reported maternity leave, which might also affect the gender distribution in the workforce.

Occupational Diversity: Ukrainian refugees have found employment across various occupational categories. A majority (57%) work as specialists in various fields of activity, showcasing their diverse skills and expertise. Additionally, 37% are employed as unskilled workers, highlighting the availability of employment opportunities for individuals with varying levels of qualifications and experience. Moreover, 3% of Ukrainian refugees are employed as service workers, while another 3% work as plant and machine operators, or machine and equipment assemblers. This diversity in occupations demonstrates the adaptability of Ukrainian refugees in the Romanian labour market.

Challenges for Hiring Ukrainian Refugees: Employers provided insights into the challenges they face when hiring Ukrainian refugees. The most common reason cited for not hiring Ukrainian refugees is the lack of job requests or demand for their services, with 24% of employers stating this as the reason. Language barriers were the second most common obstacle, with 19% of employers noting that Ukrainian refugees do not speak Romanian proficiently. This language barrier can affect effective communication and integration into the workplace. Furthermore, 13% of employers stated that Ukrainian refugees lack the necessary qualifications required for the specific fields of operation in their companies. This suggests a potential mismatch between the skills and qualifications of Ukrainian refugees and the job requirements of certain industries or sectors. Other reasons mentioned by employers include a lack of vacancies (8%), perceived lack of professionalism among Ukrainian citizens (6%), lack of English or foreign language skills (5%), and company policies that do not prioritise hiring foreign citizens (5%).

Attitude Towards Hiring Ukrainians: The survey revealed a mixed attitude among employers regarding the employment of Ukrainian citizens. While 59% of employers reported that they are not open to hiring Ukrainians, 41% expressed their willingness to hire them. The varying attitudes may be influenced by factors such as language barriers, cultural differences, concerns about qualifications, or specific company policies.

Available Jobs: Employers reported a total of 107 job vacancies across various occupations. The highest number of vacancies (47%) is for unskilled workers, followed by vacancies for technicians and other technical specialists (24%). Other occupations, such as skilled and assimilated workers, service workers, specialists in various fields of activity, plant and machine operators, machine and equipment assemblers, and administrative officers, have a smaller number of vacancies available. This suggests that there are opportunities for Ukrainian citizens to find employment in Romania, particularly in the unskilled labour market and technical roles.

Integration Activities: Only 17% of employers reported organising activities aimed at facilitating the integration of Ukrainian refugees in the work environment. These activities include initiatives like team-building or mentoring programmes that can help foster a sense of belonging and support for refugees in their new work environment. However, the majority of employers, approximately 83%, do not allocate time and funding for such integration programmes. This indicates that a significant portion of employers may not have specific initiatives in place to assist Ukrainian refugees in adjusting to their new work environment and may not actively prioritise integration efforts.

The lack of dedicated integration activities could potentially pose challenges for Ukrainian refugees in their work environment, as they may face difficulties in adapting to the workplace culture and forming connections with their colleagues.

Training Opportunities: Despite the Romanian labour market's need for skilled workers, only a small percentage of employers (less than 10%) offer professional training for Ukrainian refugees, even though approximately 20% express availability. This suggests a gap in the utilisation of training opportunities to enhance the skills and qualifications of Ukrainian refugees, potentially limiting their access to certain job opportunities.

In conclusion, the survey of employers provides a detailed overview of the employment landscape for Ukrainian refugees in Romania. It highlights the importance of language skills, the diversity of available jobs, and the need for more comprehensive integration efforts to support Ukrainian refugees in their pursuit of employment and successful integration into the Romanian labour market. Additionally, there is an opportunity for employers to enhance their support for Ukrainian refugees through initiatives like integration activities and professional training programmes, which can contribute to the refugees' successful integration and long-term retention in the workforce.

Recommendations

The integration of refugees into the labour market of their host country is a multifaceted challenge, one that requires careful consideration of various factors and tailored solutions. This study approaches a range of recommendations aimed at facilitating this integration process, including early language instruction, professional training, childcare support, self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, and the fostering of business ties between Ukraine and Romania. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for more comprehensive research in this area, acknowledging the reluctance among Romanian employers to hire foreigners and the importance of addressing language barriers and administrative obstacles.

Language Skills: A Gateway to Integration

Language proficiency stands as a fundamental barrier to the successful integration of Ukrainian refugees into Romania's labour market. Without adequate communication skills in Romanian, refugees face difficulties in accessing job opportunities and essential services. To address this challenge effectively, a multi-faceted approach is recommended.

Early Language Instruction: Initiating language instruction within three months of refugees' arrival is pivotal. This early start enables refugees to access vital information needed for navigating their new lives in Romania. By attending language classes promptly, Ukrainian refugees can better prepare themselves for the job market.

Combining Language and Work: To expedite language acquisition and integration, language courses should be intertwined with work-oriented activities such as volunteering, internships, and apprenticeships. This approach not only enhances language skills but also provides practical work exposure, bridging the gap between linguistic competence and employability.

Competency Assessments: To tailor language training to individual needs, conducting initial competency evaluations is essential. NGOs and public institutions offering language classes should have established procedures for assessing refugees' language skills. This allows for the arrangement of language courses based on proficiency levels.

Prioritising Skilled Refugees: Skilled refugees possessing qualifications that can contribute to Romania's development should be prioritised for language courses. This approach facilitates their economic integration, enabling them to contribute to the host country's workforce more rapidly.

Minimum Language Proficiency Criteria: Establishing minimum language proficiency criteria based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) ensures that refugees can occupy jobs appropriate for their language level, enhancing their chances of integration.

Professional Training: A Path to Economic Independence

Professional training and retraining are essential components of refugee integration into Romania's labour market. The following recommendations offer a structured approach to address this aspect:

Early Skills Assessments: Assessing refugees' practical skills shortly after their arrival allows for quicker job matching based on their abilities. It also facilitates the customisation of training programmes to meet their specific needs.

Dedicated Skills Validation Facility: Establishing a facility for recognising and validating skills through interviews and practical assessments streamlines the process of identifying employment fields where refugees can be integrated rapidly.

Engagement with Field Experts: Collaboration with experts in various fields ensures a better evaluation of refugees' individual skills and simplifies the process of job matching. Expert insights are invaluable in aligning training with market demands.

Mentoring and Internships: Mentoring and internship programmes offer a quicker alternative to long-term training while providing refugees with financial independence. These programmes are adaptable to individual skills and ambitions, promoting suitable job placements.

Education on Opportunities: Disseminating information about available educational opportunities is crucial for long-term labour market integration. Establishing loan, grant, and scholarship programmes enables refugees to access education programmes that prepare them for careers in Romania.

Customisation for Diversity: Professional training programmes must consider the cultural, gender, age, and distinct requirements of Ukrainian refugees. This tailored approach ensures that beneficiaries are equipped to integrate successfully into the labour market post-graduation.

Facilitating Labour Market Entry

A holistic approach is recommended to facilitate Ukrainian refugees' swift entry into the Romanian labour market:

Childcare Support: Establishing or enhancing nurseries and childcare services removes a significant obstacle for refugee women, allowing them to seek employment without the burden of caregiving hindering their prospects.

Official Job Placement Channels: Promoting official channels for job placement, such as those provided by the National Agency for Employment (AJOFM), ensures that refugees access lawful employment opportunities, protecting them from exploitation.

Job Fairs and Workshops: Regularly organising job fairs and workshops on labour rights and duties provides consistent opportunities for refugees to access a wide range of job openings and be informed about their rights and responsibilities.

Language and Skill Development: Offering language training and job-related skill development enhances refugees' language proficiency and employability.

Collaboration with NGOs: Collaborating with NGOs and community organisations supporting refugees enhances the effectiveness of facilities and services. These partnerships offer insights into the unique needs and challenges faced by refugees.

Mentoring and Networking: Establishing mentoring programmes and networking opportunities helps refugees build professional connections and gain insights into the job market.

Recognition of Contributions: Acknowledging the contributions of refugee employees within the company and society promotes a culture of inclusivity and appreciation.

Promoting Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

Empowering Ukrainian refugees to become self-employed or start their own businesses presents a pathway to economic independence. Several recommendations can support this endeavour:

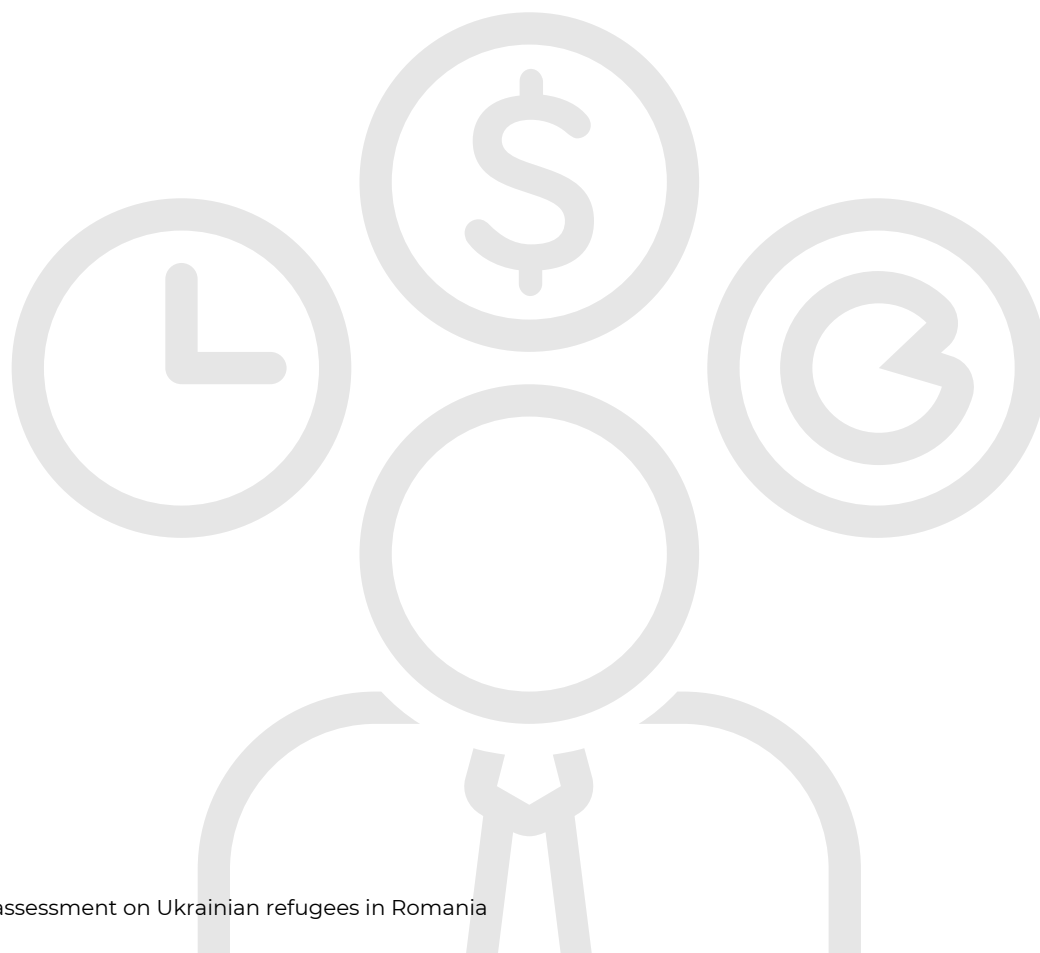
Education and Training: Offering language courses and workshops on starting and running a business equips refugees with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Local Entrepreneurship Mentorship: Establishing mentorship programmes with local entrepreneurs guides refugees in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Financial Support: Informing refugees about the possibility of obtaining loans and grants from the European Union, government, and other organisations encourages entrepreneurship.

Business Incubators: Promoting existing business incubators and support programmes, particularly in sectors like beauty services, catering, transportation, retail, construction, and education, facilitates business development.

Empowering Single Women: Recognising the advantages of business ownership for single women refugees, such as flexible working hours and financial independence, encourages entrepreneurship in this demographic.



Fostering Business Ties

Fostering business ties between Ukraine and Romania holds promise for creating more job opportunities for Ukrainians in Romania. Recommendations include:

Facilitating Exports and Imports: Simplifying and expediting customs clearance for goods and services encourages trade between the two countries.

Technology Exchange: Encouraging the transfer of technological knowledge and innovations between Ukrainian and Romanian companies promotes mutual growth and development.

Education and Training Support: Establishing exchange programmes for students and professionals between universities and educational institutions in both countries enhances knowledge sharing.

Transport Infrastructure Development: Enhancing transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways, and ports, facilitates the exchange of goods and streamlines logistics for businesses.

SME Support: Implementing support programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including concessional lending and advisory support, aids in expanding opportunities on both sides of the border.

Cultural and Linguistic Exchange: Promoting cultural and linguistic exchange fosters mutual understanding among citizens of both countries, strengthening ties.



Challenges and the Need for Further Research

Despite the comprehensive recommendations, refugee labour market integration remains a complex challenge. Current research, especially concerning Ukrainian refugees in Romania, is hindered by the lack of longitudinal statistical data that tracks refugees over time. Such data is crucial to understanding short- and long-term integration. Comparative research across different countries is also necessary to assess the effectiveness of integration policies.

Furthermore, there is reluctance among Romanian employers to hire foreigners, including refugees, despite labour shortages. Limited research and data exist regarding the specific challenges faced by refugees and migrants in Romania. Overcoming language barriers and addressing administrative hurdles is essential. The experiences of other European countries demonstrate that these obstacles can be overcome, highlighting the need for dedicated research to understand the situation better and inform public policy.

1. Introduction

The influx of Ukrainian refugees into Romania, resulting from the conflict that began in February 2022, has created an ongoing and relatively new situation. As of June 2023, there were approximately 95,000 refugees living in Romania, 136,000 of whom had been granted temporary protection status.[3] Many of these refugees are considering a long-term stay in the country and are seeking decent living conditions and financial independence. According to UNHCR data[4] (July 2023) around 20% of refugees declared that they were currently working in Romania.

However, Ukrainian refugees face significant challenges in accessing employment, both in the short- and long- term. Language skill deficiencies, lack of proper training, and difficulties in navigating the local labour market access process are the primary obstacles they encounter.

As the situation evolves and refugees transition from emergency assistance to longer-term settlement, it becomes crucial to develop strategies that address both the short- and long-term effects of the Ukrainian crisis. Since February 2022, the main focus of the response from NGOs and the government has been on social and humanitarian services, while economic inclusion has been somewhat overlooked. There is growing concern about the prospects of Ukrainian refugees, to access financial independence and decent living conditions in the coming months, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

To address these challenges and facilitate the integration of Ukrainian refugees into the labour market, a market assessment was conducted in specific cities: namely București, Constanța, Brăila, and Galați. This assessment provided valuable insights into the local context and needs of these refugees, allowing for targeted support and tailor-made solutions to address the unique challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees in each city. By understanding these challenges, NGOs, the government, and other stakeholders can develop more effective and impactful programmes to facilitate the economic inclusion and integration of Ukrainian refugees.

[3] UNHCR OPERATIONAL DATA PORTAL. (2023). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/countries/>.

[4] UNHCR OPERATIONAL DATA PORTAL. (2023). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/countries/>.

1.1 Ukrainian diaspora in Romania before 2022

Before the events of February 2022, a significant Ukrainian diaspora already resided in Romania. Due to the intertwined history and the geographic proximity of the two countries, especially in the border regions, Ukrainian groups formed local communities, with Ukrainians representing a historical minority in the Romanian population. After 1989, there began a considerable influx of Ukrainian citizens, including ethnic Romanians/Moldovans from Ukraine, to Romania. This migration comprised students, migrant workers, businesspeople, and refugees. As of 2019, Romania was home to a minimum of 18,000 individuals born in Ukraine, with the majority residing in major cities like București, Cluj-Napoca, and Timișoara[5]. This category of population included people having dual citizenship or people who originated from mixed families.

According to the Romanian 2021 census, 45,835 Ukrainians resided in Romania, making them the third largest ethnic minority in the country.[6] As explained, Ukrainians primarily inhabited regions that share a border with Ukraine. The Ukrainian ethnic minority in Romania is represented by two organisations: the Union of Ukrainians of Romania and the National Forum of Ukrainians of Romania. As of the end of 2021, over 2,200 Ukrainian citizens held residence permits in Romania. The top three locations where Ukrainians in Romania resided were Maramureș, București, and Suceava[7].

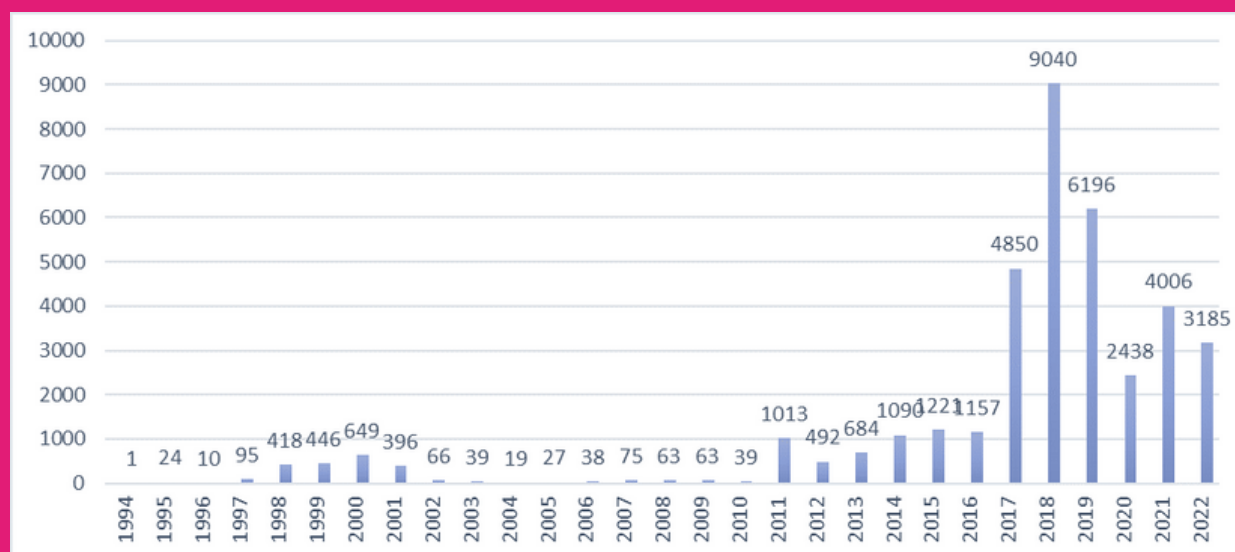


[5] Migration Policy Institute. (2023). Immigrant and Emigrant Populations by Country of Origin and Destination. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-and-emigrant-populations-country-origin-and-destination>.

[6] Institutul Național de Statistică. (2022). Primele date provizorii pentru Recensământul Populației și Locuințelor, runda 2021. https://web.archive.org/web/20221230125029/https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/cp-date-provizorii-rpl_2.pdf.

[7] European Union Agency for Asylum. Romania (2022). https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-07/Booklet_Romania_EN.pdf.

Graph 1: Ukrainian immigrants in Romania 1994-2022[8]



The graph (Graph 1) represents the evolution of registered Ukrainian immigrants in Romania from 1994 to 2022, totalling 37,840 individuals. The data shows a consistent upward trend in registrations, with a peak of over 9,000 people in 2018. However, there has been a relative decrease in registrations to just above 3,000 people in 2022.

This decline in registrations can be attributed to the special conditions provided to Ukrainians under the Temporary Protection Directive, which allows them to benefit from specific protections and support without the need for formal registration as migrants. As a result, many Ukrainian refugees may choose not to officially register as immigrants, hence the decrease in registered numbers after 2022.

Overall, the graph provides a clear picture of the significant influx of Ukrainian immigrants into Romania over the years, and the recent changes in registrations highlight the impact of the Temporary Protection Directive on the registration figures.

In addition to this, the previous situation of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Romania before February 24, 2022 is important in understanding where most Ukrainians are settled, and can be an indicator towards their future intentions. As it will be further explained, the biggest concentrations of Ukrainian refugees are close to the border and in the major cities, where they can have easier access to work opportunities, public services, and so on.

[8] Data available from the Romanian national institute of statistics, retrieved July 2023, and compiled by the authors.

2. Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Overall objective

This labour market assessment aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the available labour market opportunities, as well as to identify the gaps and barriers that Ukrainian refugees encounter in the four target cities. The assessment involves three key categories of actors: Ukrainian refugees themselves, representatives from NGOs working with refugees, and employers operating in the target cities. The selection of București, Constanța, Galați, and Brăila as the target cities for this labour market assessment was based on the coverage and activities of HIAS Romania. These cities likely have a significant presence of Ukrainian refugees and a strong support network provided by HIAS Romania, which made them suitable locations for gathering data and insights related to the employment and business prospects of Ukrainian refugees. By focusing on these cities, the assessment could obtain a comprehensive understanding of the labour market dynamics, training opportunities, and barriers to employment faced by Ukrainian refugees in Romania, as well as the support provided by NGOs and local companies in these specific areas.

By engaging with Ukrainian refugees, this assessment seeks to understand their experiences, skills, and aspirations regarding employment and entrepreneurship. This direct interaction allows for gathering valuable insights into the challenges they face, their specific needs, and their perspectives on the labour market.

Additionally, representatives from NGOs that work closely with refugees are included in the assessment. Their expertise and knowledge of the local context, as well as their interactions with Ukrainian refugees, can provide important information on the existing support services, initiatives, and gaps in addressing the labour market needs of refugees.

Furthermore, engaging with employers in the target cities is crucial to understanding their perspectives on hiring Ukrainian refugees, their requirements, and any existing barriers or challenges they perceive. This dialogue allows for identifying potential opportunities for collaboration and devising strategies to enhance the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in the labour market.

By bringing together these three categories of actors, the labour market assessment aims to gather a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape, identify the existing opportunities and challenges, and propose sustainable recommendations to ensure the creation of viable and lasting labour and entrepreneurship opportunities for Ukrainian refugees in the four target cities.

2.2 Methodology

This labour market assessment employs a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Focus group discussions were conducted to gather detailed data and insights related to the research questions, while questionnaires were used to obtain a general overview of the targeted cities. Additionally, ANOFM was selected due to its comprehensive mapping of available jobs, including those listed on platforms like Jobs for Ukraine or other similar platforms that may offer a different range of opportunities. This choice was made to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the job market, as ANOFM's platform covers a wide spectrum of job offerings, potentially capturing positions that might not be encountered solely on other platforms.

By combining various data collection methods and involving multiple stakeholders, this labour market assessment seeks to provide a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

Furthermore, by comparing the perspectives and experiences of Ukrainian refugees with those of NGOs and employers, the assessment aims to identify both potential areas of alignment and discrepancies. For example, the data may reveal if there are specific training needs or skills gaps that both refugees and employers recognise as important for successful integration into the labour market. It may also highlight any disparities in perceptions or expectations between the three groups.

Based on the methodology mentioned above, this study included:

(a) For Ukrainian refugees living in București, Constanța, Galați, and Brăila, the assessment includes 378 surveys and three focus group discussions. The surveys provide a general overview of the targeted cities and help identify relevant areas of training, market characteristics within the refugees' profile, financial inclusion gaps, and opportunities. On the other hand, focus group discussions allow for more detailed data and insights to be gathered from the refugees, providing a deeper understanding of their specific needs, barriers, and aspirations regarding employment.

(b) NGOs working in Romania, particularly in the targeted cities, are also part of the study. The assessment includes 52 surveys and five focus group discussions with these NGOs. This helps map the existing NGOs that support Ukrainian refugees in becoming financially independent, identify capacity building opportunities available for refugees, and understand the need and the opportunities available, as well as the barriers they face in entering the labour market.

c) To gain insights from the perspective of local companies, 80 surveys were conducted with companies from București, Constanța, Galați, and Brăila. The survey data aims to identify the jobs available on the market for refugees, understand the profile of refugees hired or barriers in hiring them, and explore the support that companies provide to Ukrainian personnel.

(d) In addition to primary data collection, the assessment includes a review of secondary sources, research reports, assessments, and data from public institutions and NGOs. This helps complement the primary data with existing information and insights on the profile of Ukrainian refugees living in Romania, their employability, and their potential for starting businesses in the country.

2.3 Participants in the study

The following section examines information about the main participants of the study. It relies on the experiences and perspectives shared by 434 Ukrainian citizens who currently live in Romania through surveys and focus group discussions. The survey participants were purposely selected among adult Ukrainians who have lived in Romania for at least three months and arrived in Romania after February 24, 2022.

A prerequisite for candidates was to live in one of the four target cities (București, Constanța, Brăila, and Galați). From the general number of 434 distributed questionnaires 164 were filled out completely. After processing the results, 378 questionnaires were identified as containing relevant information and were used in the report. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted with Ukrainians living in target cities. In total 14 people participated in the focus group: six in București, four in Constanța, six in Galați, and two in Brăila.

One of the key pieces of information is the opinion of representatives of non-governmental organisations who work directly with Ukrainian refugees in Romania. In total, 164 non-governmental organisations were invited to the study. In total, 52 valid questionnaires were received from NGO representatives. Focus group discussions were used to supplement and obtain the necessary information. The focus groups involved 16 representatives of non-governmental organisations. București was represented by eight people, Constanța by two, Galați by three employees, and Brăila by one employee.

A general overview of the potential employers, who represent the third category of participants, was made based on information from AJOFM online database. There were 51 potential employers in București, 69 in Constanța, 77 in Galați, and 51 in Brăila. It was planned to involve around 20 potential employers from each city or 80 employers overall. In total, 119 questionnaires were processed from potential employers located in București, Constanța, Galați, and Brăila, of which 80 were completed and used for analysis. No potential employers agreed to take part in a focus group.

Table 1: Information regarding participants of the survey

Category of participants	Total number of distributed questionnaires	Number of valid questionnaires	Number of fully completed questionnaires*	Distribution by the cities
Ukrainian refugees	434	378	164	București - 34% Constanța - 9% Galați - 20% Brăila - 10% City not declared - 26% Other - 1%
NGOs	164	52	25	București - 37% Constanța - 13% Galați - 17% Brăila - 8% City not declared - 25%
Employers	119	80	80	București - 25% Constanța - 23% Galați - 18% Brăila - 30% City not declared - 4%

*none of the questions were mandatory

2.4 Limitations

A number of limitations emerge from the research design and context. First, the Ukrainian refugee community has demonstrated some fatigue and general frustration with the repeated assessments and data collection that have been conducted over the past year, which they say have not necessarily led to concrete measures and improvements in their situation. Relatively often, the refusal to answer the questionnaire was due to the fact that something similar had already been conducted by other organisations. During the preliminary invitation, potential respondents were given a detailed explanation of the ultimate goal of the study and the benefits it would have for the Ukrainian community in Romania. The survey participants were informed that the main purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the labour market dynamics, training needs, gaps, and potential opportunities for Ukrainian refugees in Galați, Constanța, Brăila, and București.

Second, the results of the survey, conducted with refugees do not represent the entire population of Ukrainian refugees in Romania (or in the analysed cities). This means that the results cannot be generalised. This is because the selection of potential respondents was not random but developed for specific purposes. A number of strata/categories were developed (e.g., gender, age, time of arrival, place of residence in Romania etc.) based on the existing official statistics. Respondents were surveyed from all these strata/categories in as diverse settings as possible (collective sites, private accommodations, informational points, social media groups, etc.).

Focus groups for refugees were held in each target city. However, another significant limiting factor is the low attendance of Ukrainian refugees at the focus groups in the target cities. The limited number of participants in the focus groups means that the qualitative results are not sufficiently informative.

Second, combining data collected via quantitative and qualitative tools using a sequential complementary research design brings additional limitations. For instance, connecting findings from the qualitative assessment with those in the quantitative is challenging and limits the findings which can be reported. To tackle this limitation a set of semi-structured interview guides were developed which contained the topics covered in the survey and tried to focus the conversations around these topics.

The low level of response from potential employers and non-governmental organisations was a further problem. Two attempts to invite employers to participate in the focus group were unsuccessful. They justified their refusal by the high level of involvement in current affairs and lack of interest in the key issue of employment of Ukrainians.

Those who had confirmed their consent to participate in the focus group in advance did not show up to the events. Therefore, the main conclusions on and key aspects of the employers' point of view on the subject of this research have been based only on the survey results.

Non-governmental organisations have not demonstrated a high level of interest towards the issues studied in this report. Only 15% of the invited NGO representatives responded to the survey. They noted that their resources had been significantly stretched over the last year due to the unforeseen circumstances and influx of Ukrainian refugees. Therefore, they mainly chose to focus their efforts and time on solving urgent problems related to the basic needs of refugees from different countries, the majority of whom are Ukrainians.

3. Ukrainian Refugee Population profile

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 forced millions of Ukrainians to leave their country and search for safety abroad. In addition, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes and move within Ukraine. All of them need different types of help and support. It should be highlighted that since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, required assistance has mainly included food, basic necessities, transport support, and accommodation. But one and a half years later, the focus of assistance has shifted to job search and employment, vocational training etc., as main instruments in applying medium and long-term integration strategies.

At the beginning of July 2023, according to the official information,[9] 5,967,100 refugees from Ukraine were recorded globally, with 5,967,100 recorded in Europe, and 364,000 recorded beyond Europe.

The demographic composition of the group of refugees from Ukraine distinguishes it from other refugee influxes. Due to the implementation of martial law, the majority of men within the conscription age range (18 to 60 years) are unable to leave the country. Consequently, in nearly all host countries, at least 70% of adult refugees are women, and over a third of the total refugee population consists of children. Some countries even exhibit higher percentages.

[9] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Ukraine Refugee Situation. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

. In Poland, for example, women account for 84% of all adults, and children make up 41% of the refugee population. Furthermore, a notable portion of approximately 4-6%^[10] of the refugee population comprises individuals aged 65 and above, as evident from available data.

The family composition of Ukrainian refugees presents a significant challenge to their integration into the labour market, primarily because a large number of them are mothers who fled their home country with their children. The absence of their partners and the exposure of their children to various stressors in the new environment amplify their caregiving responsibilities, making it challenging to balance family duties with work obligations. Those actively seeking employment may prioritise part-time jobs until they secure access to suitable childcare services. The presence of elderly dependents, albeit in limited numbers, can further hinder working-age individuals from entering the workforce. Conversely, if elderly family members are in good health and able to assist with childcare responsibilities, their presence could enhance the labour market participation of single mothers.

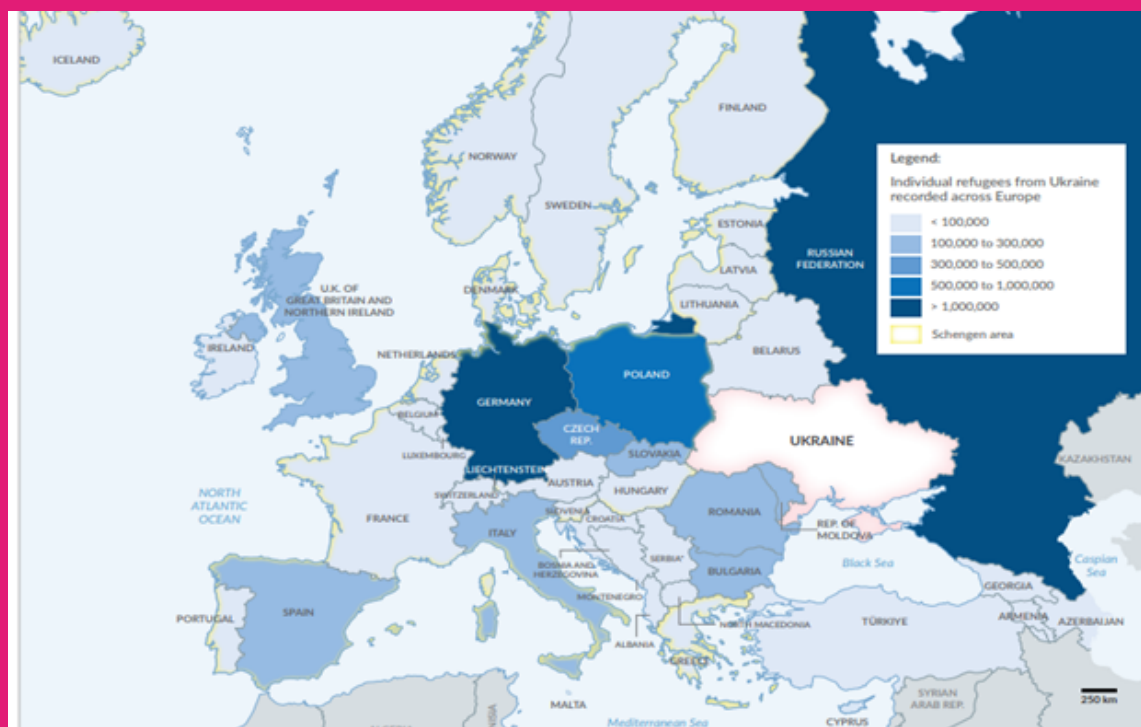
In this context, the European Union (EU) developed an institutional framework and enforced mechanisms meant to address the refugee influx and their specific needs under the common policy for migration and asylum.^[11] Thus, EU members implemented the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which guaranteed access to accommodation, welfare, and healthcare to refugees from Ukraine. People fleeing the war had a right to receive a residence permit in the EU, enter the labour market, and enrol children in educational institutions. This protection was granted for one year from the start of the war in February 2022, but it could be and was extended for a longer period of time depending on the situation in the country. In September 2023, Poland, Germany, and Czechia had the highest numbers of refugees registered for temporary protection in the EU.^[12]

[10] OECD. (2023). What we know about the skills and early labour market outcomes of refugees from Ukraine. <https://www.oecd.org/ukraine-hub/policy-responses/what-we-know-about-the-skills-and-early-labour-market-outcomes-of-refugees-from-ukraine-c7e694aa/>.

[11] Porumbescu, A. (2018). The European institutional actors in handling migration, *Sociology and Social work review*, 1/2018, pp. 41-48, [The-European-institutional-actors-in-handling-migration.pdf](https://globalresearchpublishing.com/The-European-institutional-actors-in-handling-migration.pdf) (globalresearchpublishing.com).

[12] Statista. (2023). Estimated number of refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe and Asia since February 2022 as of September 12, 2023, by selected country. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312584/ukrainian-refugees-by-country/>.

Graph 2: Refugees from Ukraine across Europe (June 2023)[13]



As a neighbouring country to Ukraine, Romania was directly impacted by the events that unfolded on February 24, 2022. Consequently, it became a primary destination for a significant wave of refugees escaping the conflict, leading to one of the most substantial immigration flows in Romania's recent history.

3.1 The profile of Ukrainian refugees in Romania

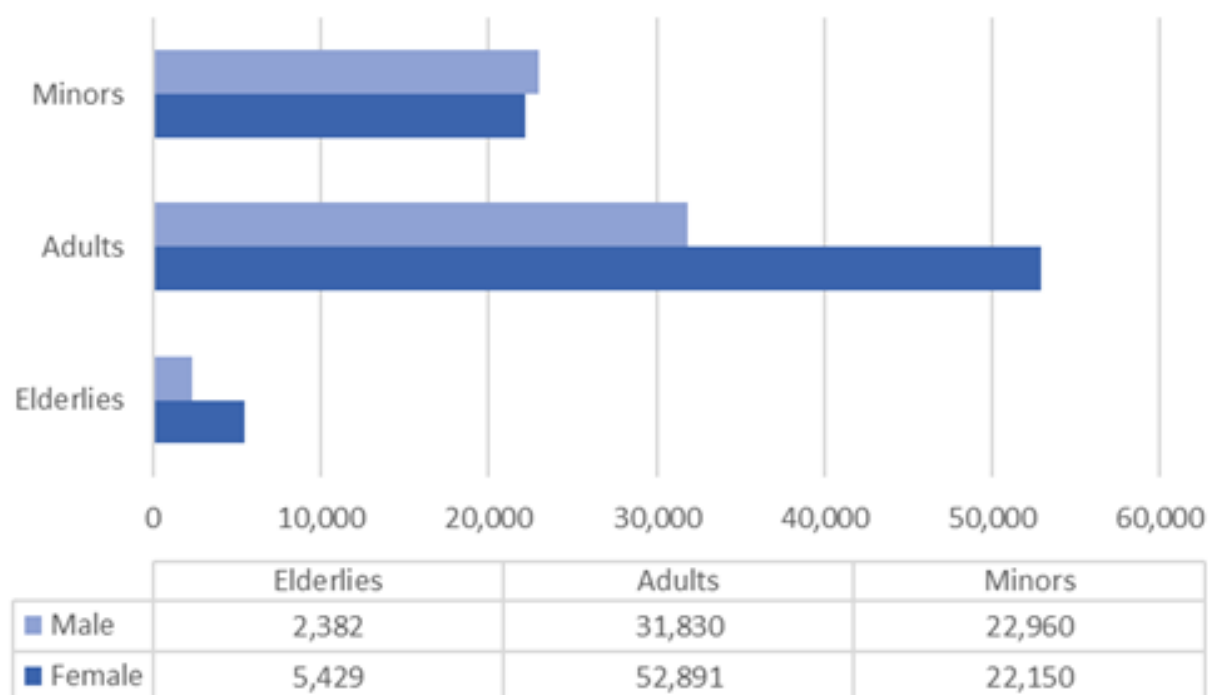
Romania had recorded 137,108 Ukrainian refugees by July 2023. Out of these, 136,956 had registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes,[14] and 96,512 persons remained in Romania at this point. The counties with the highest number of temporary protection permits issued are Bucureşti (44,826), followed by Constanţa (15,126), Maramures (13,189), Galaţi (12,197), Suceava (7,323), Brasov (5,829), Sibiu (3,037), Iaşi (2,969), Cluj (2,782), and Timiş (2,603)[15].

[13] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Ukraine Refugee Situation. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

[14] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Ukraine Refugee Situation. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

[15] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Ukraine Refugee Situation. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

Graph 3: Age and gender breakdown of Ukrainian temporary protection holders[16]



The gender breakdown of the entire group of people registered for temporary protection reveals that 58% of them are female and 42% are male. Adults represent the most significant portion (84,721),[17] meaning people of working age who need to be included in the Romanian labour market. According to the information provided by the Romanian Prime Minister's Office, as of January 2023 there were 5,007 refugees from Ukraine legally employed in Romania,[18] though updated information is not available. The UNHCR has released regional monitoring and profiling data on the profile of the Ukrainian refugees in Romania.[19] Among other issues, the monitoring focuses on the type of activities refugees have been involved in Ukraine, their educational background, and their language proficiency.

[16] Data from [Romania: Overview of Temporary Protection Directive \(unhcr.org\)](#), compiled by the authors.

[17]

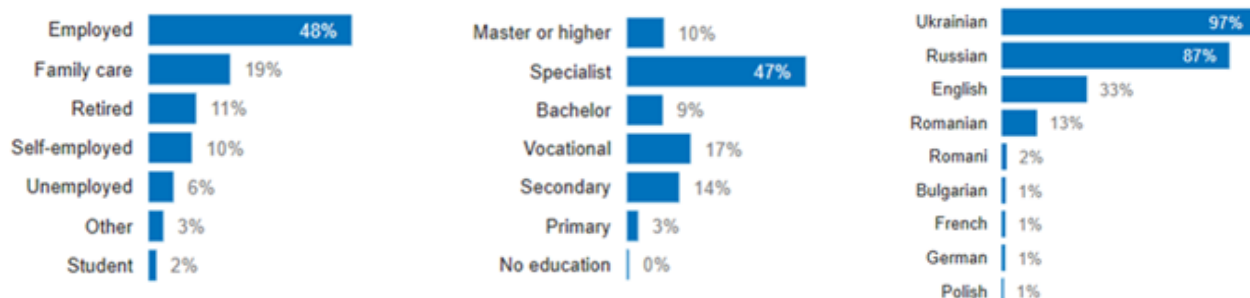
[18] Cancelaria Prim-ministrului (2023). Romania's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, p. 22. Available online at protectieucraina.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ANNUAL-STATUS-REPORT-ROMANIA-DEC-2022-2-1-1.pdf.

[19]

Graph 4: Main activity in Ukraine[20]

Graph 5: Education level[21]

Graph 6: Top languages[22] spoken



As can be observed in the graphs presented above, almost half of the Ukrainian refugees were employed before leaving their country of origin, and about 10% were self-employed. Furthermore, two in three respondents (66%) had completed higher education – either bachelor or master's degrees, and were specialists in their field of work. None of the profiled refugees reported not having completed any form of education. All in all, despite the tragic conditions of their arrival in Romania, the Ukrainian refugees, as a group, possess the characteristics to be considered a valuable resource for the Romanian labour market, which is currently facing severe shortages in terms of workforce, which will be further explored in chapter 4 of this report. In this context, it is important to note the fact that the most significant labour shortages are registered in occupations such as unskilled workers (assembly workers, construction workers, ready-made-garment industry, etc.), commercial workers, truck/heavy-duty vehicle drivers, or security guards. All these types of jobs are difficult to match with the high level of education reported for the analysed group, thus impeding the Ukrainian refugees from finding suitable employment for their qualifications. On the other hand, only about a third of the group listed English as a spoken language and only 13% have Romanian language skills. This being an issue in relation to their integration into the Romanian labour market, language training interventions will be important.

[20] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine. Regional Protection Profiling & Monitoring (Oct 2022 onwards) (unhcr.org).

[21] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine. Regional Protection Profiling & Monitoring (Oct 2022 onwards) (unhcr.org).

[22] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine. Regional Protection Profiling & Monitoring (Oct 2022 onwards) (unhcr.org).

3.2 Refugee protection framework[23]

Romania's obligation as an EU member state is to follow the European acquis and incorporate common norms into national legislation. Council Directive 2001/55/EC was incorporated into Romanian law through Law no. 122/2006 on Asylum, setting standards for providing temporary protection and distributing responsibilities among member states. The Romanian Government adopted Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, recognising a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine. This decision was incorporated into Romanian law through Emergency Ordinance (GEO) no. 15/2022, aiming to provide humanitarian support to those affected by the Ukraine conflict. An amendment, GEO no. 20/2022, and Government Decision no. 367/2022 introduced further measures for support and humanitarian assistance in the context of temporary protection.

3.2.1 Temporary protection process

By registering for temporary protection in Romania, Ukrainian individuals who have fled the conflict are granted the right to reside in Romania for one year, access the labour market, receive free healthcare, and enrol in the education system under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. However, it is important to note that, despite the legal provisions that grant Ukrainian refugees a wide spectrum of rights and freedoms, in agreement with the EU legislation, in certain situations restriction to the access to various services that they were entitled to have been reported, or, in other cases, a lack of information contributes to the appearance that this is the case.

According to Chapter IX of Law 122/2006 on asylum in Romania, the categories of eligible individuals for temporary protection include Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, stateless individuals and nationals of third countries (excluding Ukraine) with protection history in Ukraine before the same date, along with their families. Paragraph 2 adds that the category encompasses stateless individuals and nationals of third countries (excluding Ukraine) with evidence of legal residency in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, based on valid permanent residence permits issued under Ukrainian law, and who can't safely return home. Article 2, Paragraph 3 of Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 also includes individuals present in Romania before February 24, 2022, from the above categories and their family members.

[23] Eur Lex. (2001). Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/55/oj>.

Acknowledgment by the Romanian government is necessary for these individuals. Close relatives living together during the massive influx events can also be included if they were dependent on the main beneficiary.

Temporary protection lasts one year from Decision (EU) 2022/382 issuance date, and it can be extended for successive six-month periods for up to a year if the original circumstances persist. In Romania, temporary protection's initial term was set until March 4, 2023, renewable twice for six months each (up to March 4, 2024), with the possibility of an additional year based on Ukraine's situation. Temporary protection might be terminated before specified terms via a Council of the European Union decision, under conditions defined by law.

The Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration provides residence permits for beneficiaries of temporary protection without charge. Beneficiaries are assigned personal numerical codes. Facial images and relevant data are captured for permits and stored in the Informatic Systems for Foreigners' Management (SIMS). SIMS data related to these permits is automatically deleted within 12 months of Decision (EU) 2022/382's cessation unless certain conditions apply. Beneficiaries do not need to submit an application; their intention is considered as manifested by expressing willingness for data processing. They receive personal numerical codes similar to asylum seekers. Comprehensive details on temporary protection are available on the General Inspectorate for Immigration website in Ukrainian, Romanian, and English.

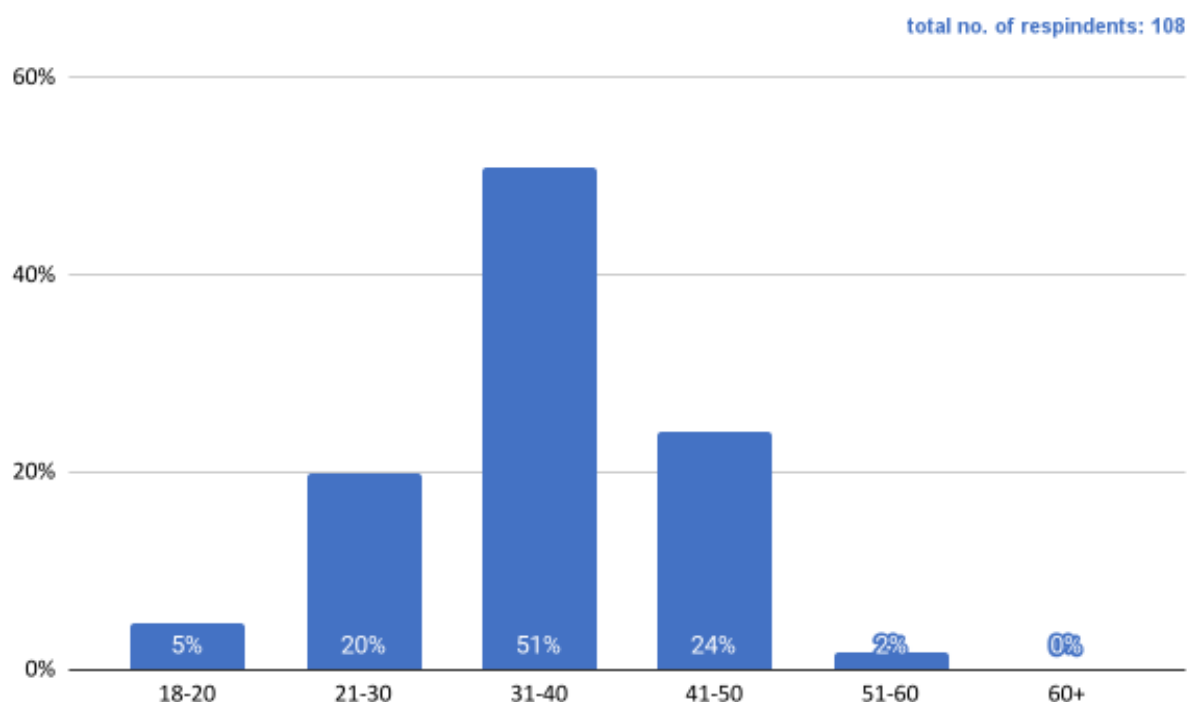
3.3 Profile of refugees targeted in the study (socio-demographic)

A total of 434 questionnaires were distributed in the process of the survey. The main socio-demographic characteristics of the survey participants were compiled in the course of processing the results.

The average age of Ukrainian refugees targeted in the study is 36 and 84 % of the respondents are women. The percentage is higher than that of women in the total Ukrainian refugee population (58%),^[24] due to the availability of the participants in the study. As of February 24, 2022, 22% of the respondents were on maternity leave, whereas currently, only 10% of the respondents are on maternity leave. Approximately 2% of the respondents are retired. The Graph 6 below represents the age break-down of the group of participants in the study. As previously explained, only people of working age have been selected to participate in the survey. The highest share of respondents is represented by people aged 31-40, about 50%, while the least significant group is that of people aged 51-60. The 41-50 age group also makes up about one quarter of the respondents.

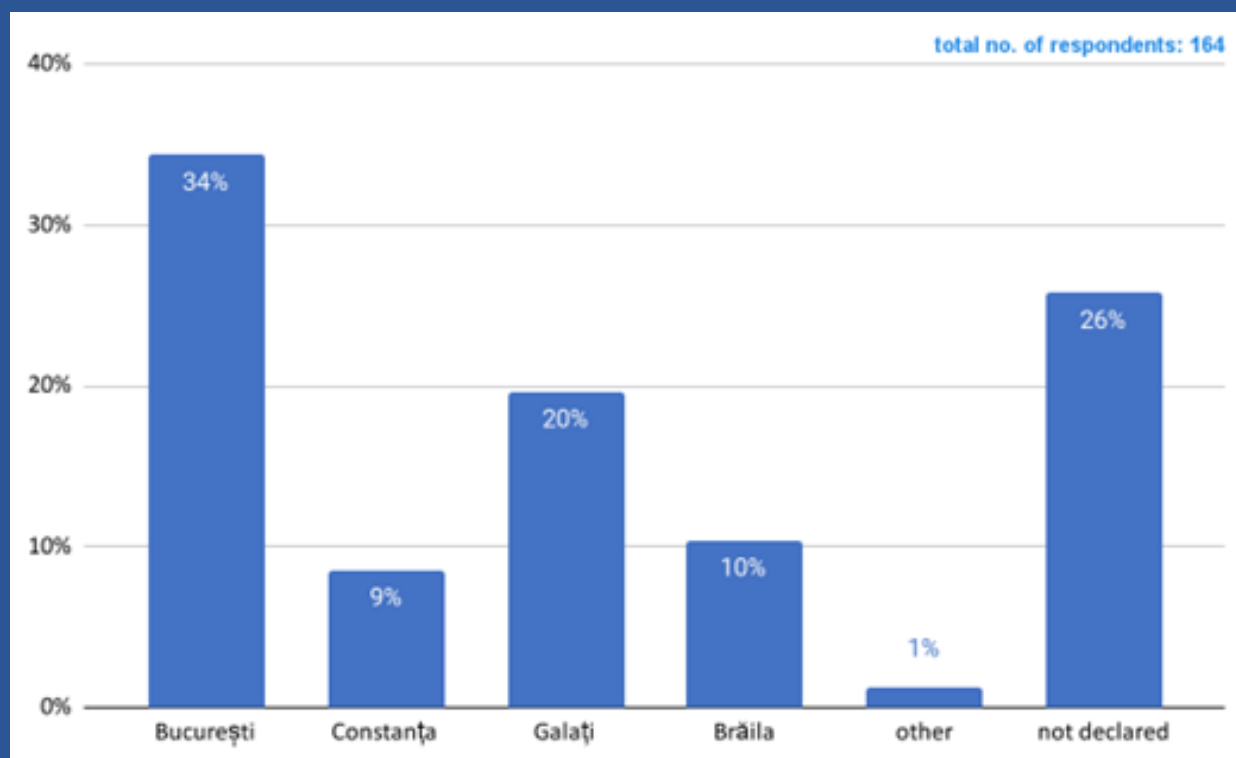
[24] Operational Data Portal. (2023). Ukrainian Situation. Romania: Overview of Temporary Protection Directive. [Romania: Overview of Temporary Protection Directive \(unhcr.org\)](https://odp.unhcr.org/ro/ukraine-overview-of-temporary-protection-directive).

Graph 6: Age of respondents



In terms of location, the greatest share of respondents, representing about one third of the total group, were located in the capital city of Romania, București, while the second largest group, almost 20%, were in Galați. The other cities where the survey was conducted are Constanța and Brăila, with 8% and 10% of the respondents, respectively. These are the areas in Romania where the highest number of Ukrainian refugees are concentrated, as previously explained in section 3.1. The capital, București, is now home to almost half of the refugees. Thus, the selected group of participants represents the general geographical distribution of Ukrainians in Romania. It is important to mention that 43 respondents (representing 26 % of the total group) chose not to disclose their place of residence in Romania, while another two stated that they lived in the different cities (from the ones targeted in the study) at the time of the interview.

Graph 7: City of residence of respondents



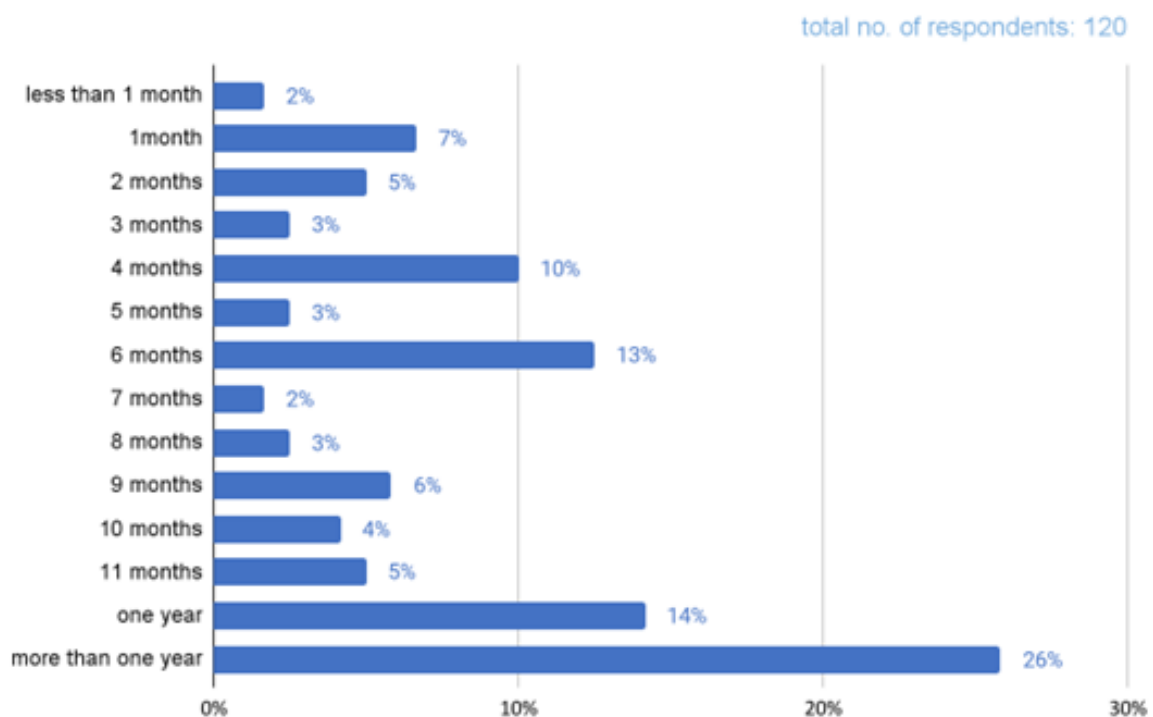
Graph 8, depicting the amount of time that had passed since the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Romania, provides valuable information about their settlement duration in the country:

One year or more: The largest share of participants (40%) had already been in Romania for one year or more at the time they responded to the questionnaire. This group represents those who have had sufficient time to acquire experience, adapt to the local environment, and navigate the Romanian system. With one year or more of experience, these individuals may have had the opportunity to explore various aspects of life in Romania, including employment prospects and cultural integration.

More than Six Months: Over 30% of respondents had been in Romania for more than six months but less than one year. This group also had a significant amount of time to settle and familiarise themselves with the Romanian context. While their experience might be slightly shorter compared to the previous group, it still provides a reasonable timeframe for adaptation and exploration.

Less than Six Months: Approximately 29% of respondents declared having been in Romania for less than six months. This group represents those who are relatively new arrivals and may still be in the process of adjusting to their new environment. With less time since their arrival, these individuals might still be navigating the initial stages of settlement, which can include finding suitable housing, exploring employment opportunities, and acclimatising to the cultural differences.

Graph 8: Period of time since arrival in Romania



The distribution of respondents across these timeframes highlights the diverse experiences and challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees in different phases of their settlement journey in Romania. For those who have been in the country for an extended period, the focus may be on longer-term integration and seeking opportunities for stability and growth. On the other hand, newcomers might be concentrating on immediate needs and acclimation.

Understanding the settlement duration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania will help to tailor support and assistance to address the unique needs of each group. It can also help stakeholders in understanding the evolving dynamics of refugee integration over time, ultimately contributing to more effective and targeted interventions to support their economic and social inclusion.

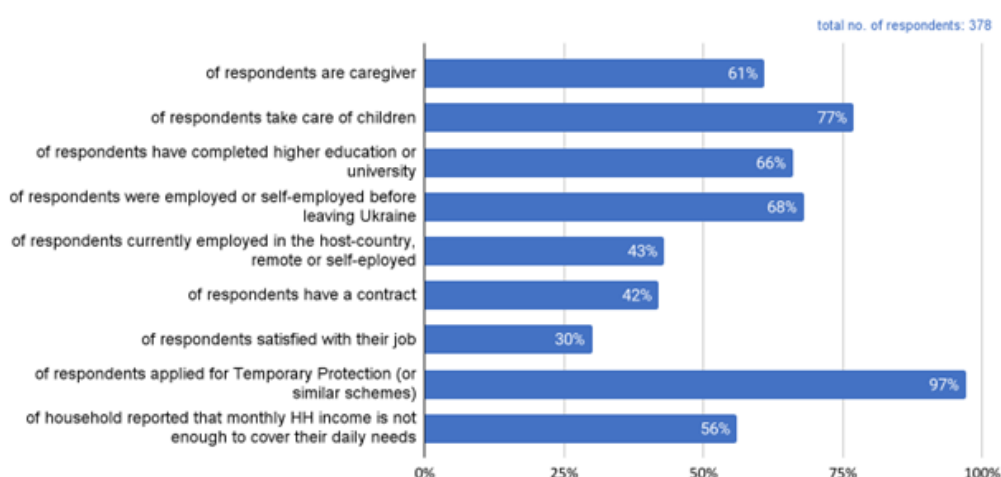
Graph 9 below illustrates the livelihoods of Ukrainian refugees participating in the survey. The findings illustrate that almost all the respondents applied for temporary protection or other similar forms of international protection, and more than 60% of them are caregivers. Additionally, the data shows that about two thirds of the participants have completed higher education, which would normally allow them to access qualified and better paid jobs. However, only 30% of the respondents are in fact satisfied with their job, which includes working conditions, professional status, salary etc. The larger portion are not satisfied with their job. The difference may result from the low level of access refugees have to highly skilled jobs.

Despite the fact that they are well trained and do not report issues related to the diploma recognition process, refugees experience a low level of access to jobs matching their education. As further explained throughout the report, apart from the professional training, Ukrainian refugees also need to demonstrate good language skills (either Romanian or at least English) in order to occupy a professional status that matches their experience, training, and expectations.

The concerning aspect is further represented by the fact that 68% of the surveyed group declared that they were employed or self-employed before leaving Ukraine, but only 43% are currently employed, work remotely or are self-employed. Out of them, 12% reported that they worked remotely for companies located in Ukraine.

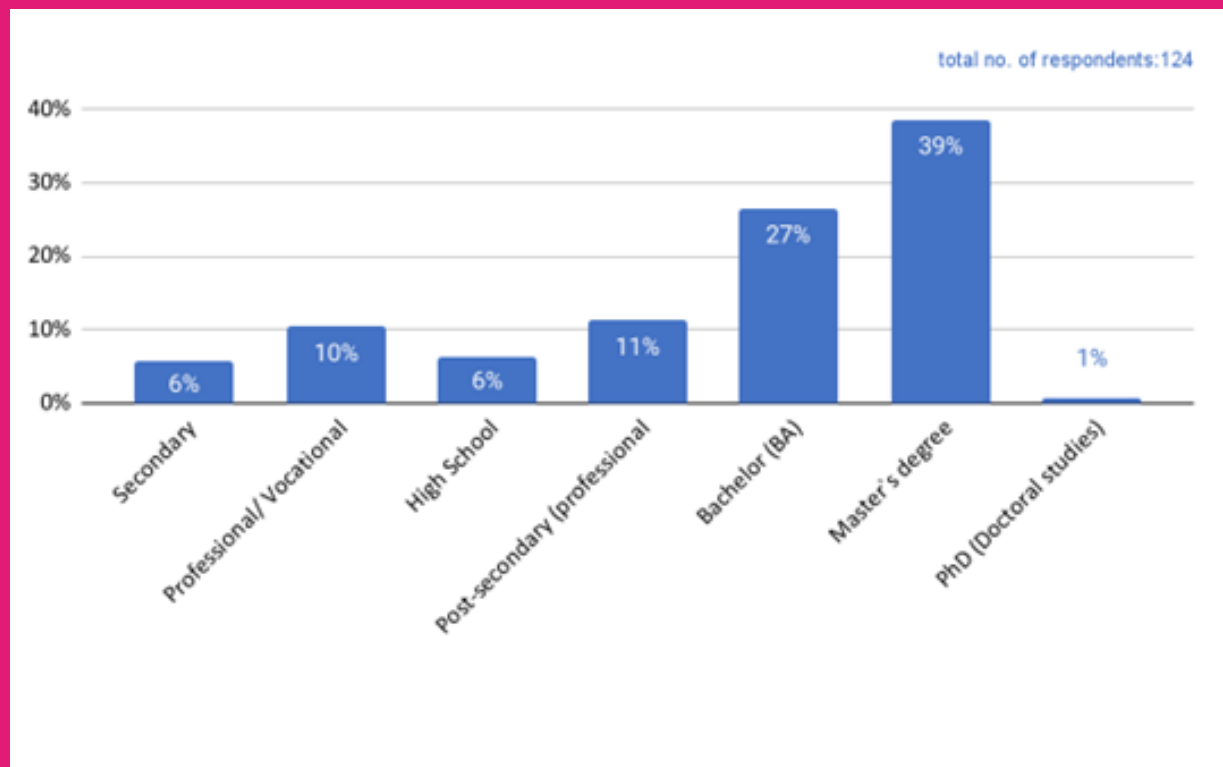
The study will further explore these findings and detail the implications on the situation of Ukrainian refugees within the context of the Romanian labour market.

Graph 9: Livelihoods of respondents



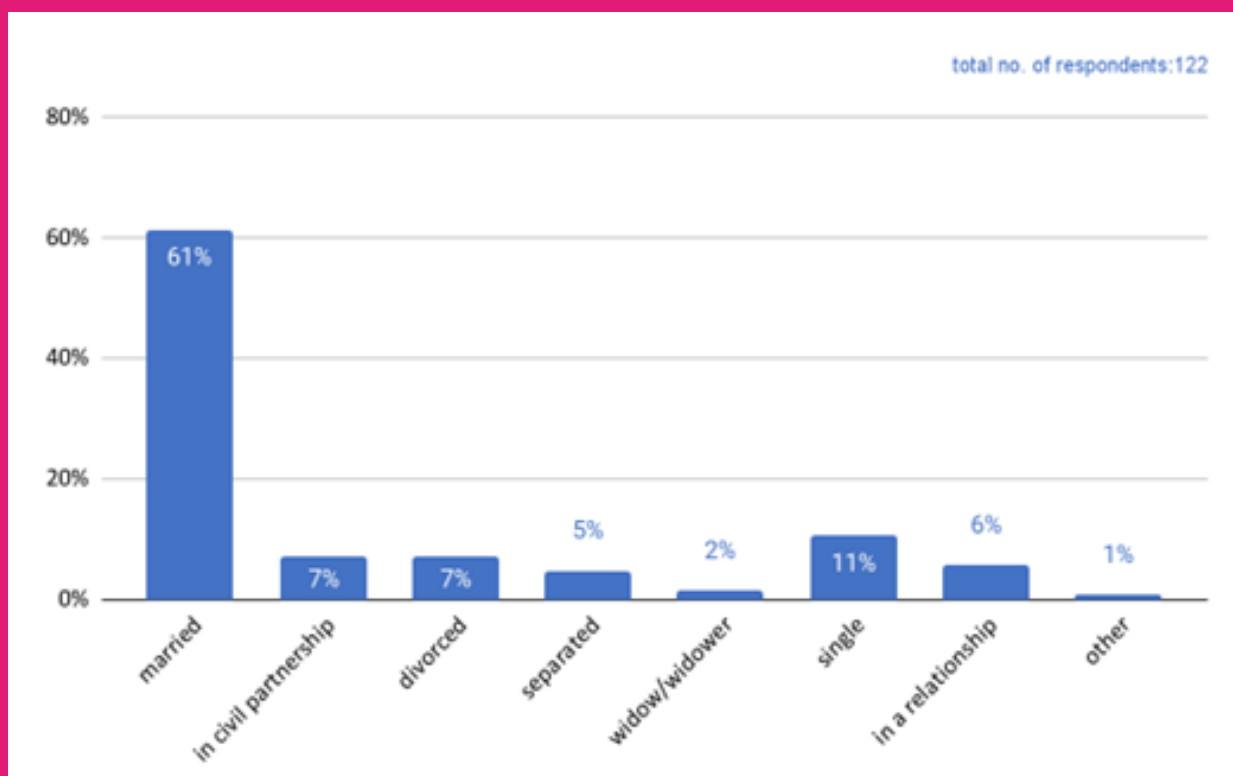
The biggest share of the participants in the survey have graduated higher education: almost 40% with a master's degree and 27% with a bachelor degree. As expressed in their responses, very few reported issues with the diploma recognition process, without clear specification on whether gaining recognition proved unnecessary or whether they did gain recognition and the process was easy. Only 5% of the respondents answered affirmatively the question "Did you need to recognise your diplomas in order to get a job?", while 82% declared they did not need to do so. Respondents who graduated professional/vocational education make up 10% of the group, while those with post-secondary professional education represent 11% of the respondents. This finding is also reflected in the general Ukrainian refugee population profile, where about two thirds of the total group were specialists with higher education (see section 3.1.).

Graph 10: Highest level of education completed by respondents



Another significant aspect to consider when analysing the socio-demographic profile of the respondents is their relationship status. As previously explained, many of the Ukrainian refugees are women with children or elderly, but the overview of marital status in the group indicates that more than 60% are in fact married. In most situations, their husbands remained in the country of origin, due to internal measures that prevent men from leaving the country. The total percentage of women who do not benefit from the support of a partner – divorced, single, widows or separated – represents almost a quarter of the group. Being part of separated families indicates little predictability in relation to their future intentions of remaining in Romania or returning to Ukraine.

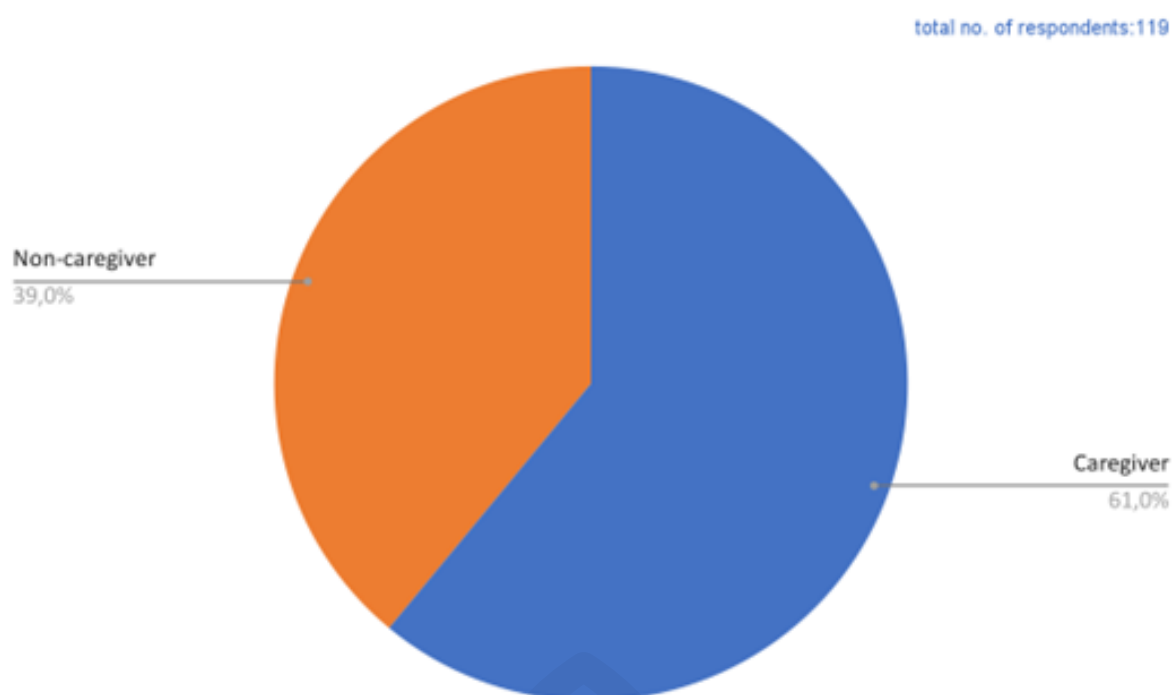
Graph 11: Marital status of respondents



Graph 12 below, depicting that more than half of the respondents are caregivers, responsible for either children or elderly people, highlights an additional layer of responsibility and financial burden faced by a significant portion of the Ukrainian refugees in Romania. As caregivers, they have the responsibility to provide essential items, food, housing, education, and other necessities for their dependents, which can further strain their financial situation and resources. This burden is exacerbated for single female-headed households.

Combined with the data presented earlier, it can be observed that about one quarter of the surveyed group lacks support from a partner. These individuals face significant challenges and are in severe need of assistance. Given these findings, it is clear that this group of single caregivers requires targeted support, both financially, and in terms of time management and organisation. Financial assistance programmes, access to resources for essential items and services, and support for education and healthcare for their dependents could significantly alleviate their financial strain. Moreover, providing support to help them manage their time effectively and strike a balance between caregiving and income-generating activities or skill development opportunities is crucial.

Graph 12: Share of respondents who are caregivers

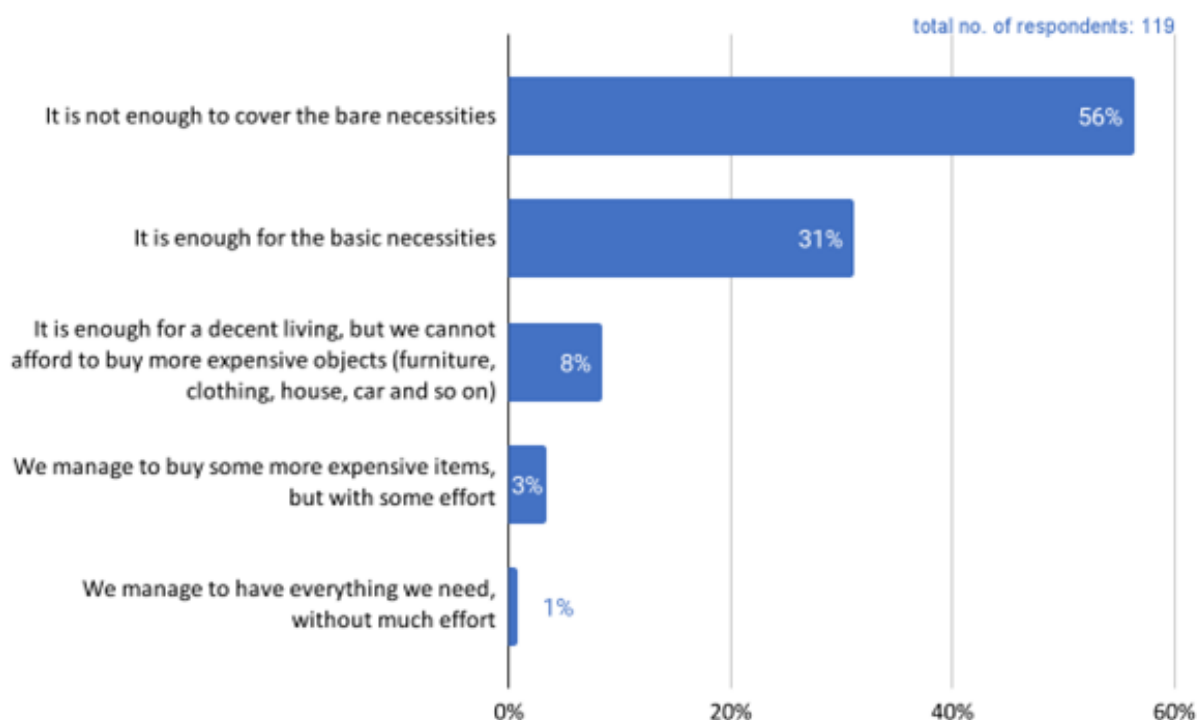


Graph 13 below provides a clear picture of the respondents' personal assessment of their income situation based on their needs as Ukrainian refugees in Romania. It shows that more than half of the respondents (56%) find that their income is insufficient to adequately cover their basic needs. This finding highlights the financial challenges faced by a significant portion of the surveyed refugee population.

On the other hand, a very small percentage of respondents, less than 1%, state that they manage to have everything they need without much effort, indicating a relatively comfortable financial situation for this small group. Another 3% of respondents reported being able to buy some more expensive items, but with some effort, suggesting a moderate level of financial comfort for this category.

Graph 13 also reveals that approximately 40% of the total surveyed group believes their current income is enough to cover their basic needs and make a decent living. This group represents those who are better off financially and can meet their essential requirements without significant difficulty.

Graph 13: Self-assessment of respondents' income in relation to their needs



Overall, the data underscores the economic disparities among Ukrainian refugees in Romania, with a significant proportion facing financial challenges in meeting their basic needs, while a smaller percentage enjoys more comfortable financial circumstances. This information highlights the importance of addressing the financial needs and vulnerabilities of the refugee population to ensure their successful integration and well-being in the host country. Additionally, it emphasises the significance of targeted support and assistance programmes to address the financial disparities and improve the overall economic situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

4. Overview of labour market in Romania

4.1 National overview

The democratic transition in Romania was accompanied by a complex economic and social reorganisation, including the restructuring of the entire industrial sector. From the 1990s, Romania experienced periods of strong growth and was considered one of the few European economies that developed rapidly.[25] However, this growth track has been volatile with several setbacks due to inconsistent reforms and recessions of the global economy. Overall, GDP per capita rose from 30% of the EU average in 1995 to 74% in 2021, with particularly fast growth since 2015, not least due to a burgeoning IT sector and growth in electronics and automotive manufacturing. Recently, the country moved from middle-high to high-income status.[26]

The Romanian economy faced a recession in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing a 4% decline in GDP, while the EU-27 average was -5.6%. However, it displayed a robust recovery, achieving a 5.8% growth rate in 2021 and 4.7% in 2022, primarily driven by strong private consumption and increased investments. Romania did face significant inflation, reaching 4.1% in 2021 and a substantial 12.0% in 2022, which could pose challenges to future growth.

Labour market indicators were adversely affected in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Romania. In April 2020, both indicators hit their lowest year-on-year growth rates. However, by November 2022, these indicators started to rebound, with net wages showing an impressive nearly 14% year-on-year increase. Overall, the Romanian labour market largely benefited from strong economic growth in the years before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Various start-ups made a significant contribution to the growth of economic indicators in 2022. According to some sources, 100,000 vacancies opened between January and August that year.[27] The numbers are the same as in 2019 and about 20% higher than in the previous two years. Due to the city distribution București, Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, and Iași had the highest number of start-ups aiming to boost their number of employees.[28]

[25] International Labour Organisation. (2023). The ILO and Romania. <https://www.ilo.org/budapest/countries-covered/romania/lang--en/index.htm>.

[26] International Labour Organisation. (2023). The ILO and Romania. <https://www.ilo.org/budapest/countries-covered/romania/lang--en/index.htm>.

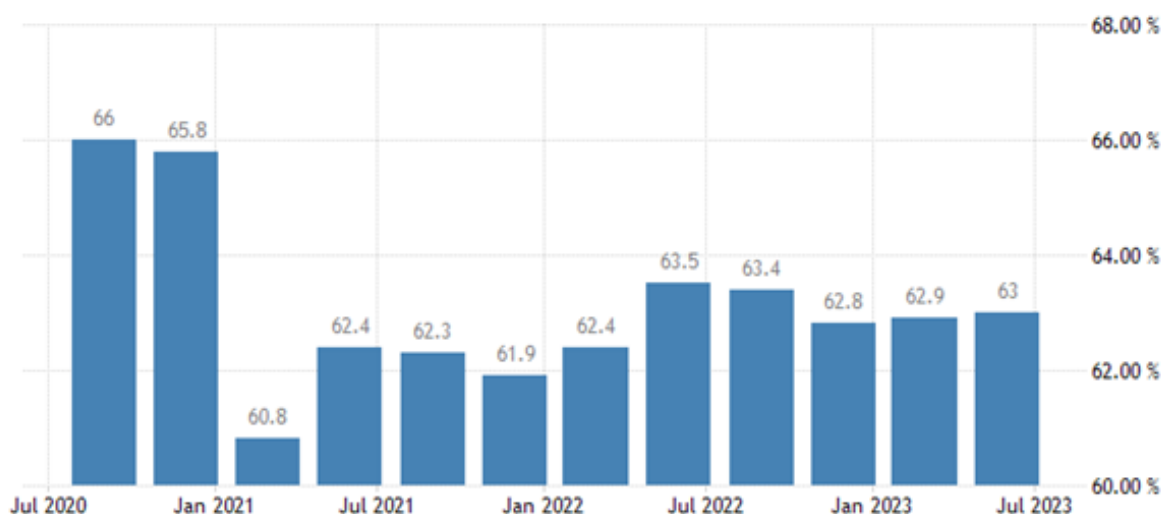
[27] Romania Insider. (2022). 2022 marks strong recovery for Romanian labor market. <https://www.romania-insider.com/2022-strong-recovery-romanian-labor-market>.

[28] Romania Insider. (2022). 2022 marks strong recovery for Romanian labor market. <https://www.romania-insider.com/2022-strong-recovery-romanian-labor-market>.

The employment rate in Romania increased to 63% in the second quarter of 2023 from 62.90% in the first quarter of 2023.[29]

Romania's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate saw a slight decrease, dropping to 5.4% in August 2023 after experiencing a marginal increase to 5.5% in the preceding month. This reduction marked the lowest unemployment rate recorded since September 2021. The number of unemployed individuals also decreased by 8,800 compared to the previous month, totalling 446,600.[30]

Graph 14: Variations in Romanian unemployment rate 2020-2023[31]



In general, the job sectors with the highest demand included retail, services, IT, telecommunications, advertising, marketing, PR, and call centres. These first four sectors collectively received half of all job applications. Conversely, the transportation sector, while ranking third in terms of the number of employees, received the fewest job applications.

[29] Trading Economics. (2023). Romania Employment Rate. <https://tradingeconomics.com/romania/employment-rate>.

[30] Trading Economics. (2023). Romania Employment Rate. <https://tradingeconomics.com/romania/unemployment-rate>.

[31] Trading Economics. (2023). Romania Employment Rate. <https://tradingeconomics.com/romania/employment-rate>.

Graph 15: Year-on-year growth rate of labour market indicators in Romania from February 2020 to November 2022[32]



Regarding the difference in employment rates of different age and gender categories, youth unemployment in Romania is higher than 20% and might reach 22.8% in 2022. The level of inactivity in Romania is one of the highest in the EU, especially for women (female inactivity rate of 41% vs. EU average of 32 percent, 2020). There can be several factors contributing to this situation, including occupational segregation, family responsibilities, wage disparities, discrimination, economic influences, political factors, and labour market dynamics.

It is essential to acknowledge that these factors may exhibit variations over time and in different regions across Romania. Effectively addressing gender-based unemployment disparities typically necessitates a comprehensive strategy, encompassing initiatives to promote equal access to education and employment, combat gender-based discrimination, and implement supportive policies for families in the workforce. The employment rate for the active population in 2021 was 69.1%, with a higher rate for men (72.2%) compared to women (65.6%).[33]The gender employment gap stands at over 19%, one of the highest in the EU.

A key medium- and long-term challenge for social policy is inequality, which is among the highest in the EU (Gini coefficient was 34.3% compared to 30.1% in the EU-27 in 2021), while the redistributive effect of taxes and social benefits is below the EU average.

[32] Statista. (2023). Year-over-year growth rate of labor market indicators in Romania from February 2020 to November 2022. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1119871/romania-labor-market-indicators>

[33] International Labour Organisation. (2023). Growth is becoming more volatile and key social policy challenges remain. https://www.ilo.org/budapest/countries-covered/romania/WCMS_650156/lang--en/index.htm.

Romania also still has a high proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion (34.5% compared to the EU-27: 21.7% in 2021) concentrated in rural areas. Continued negative population growth and external labour migration also leads to a significant labour shortage[34].

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics, Romania had a population of 19.2 million as of January 1, 2021. The active civilian population was 8.4 million, with 5.4 million individuals employed. The services sector employed the highest number of people (3.4 million), followed by the industrial and construction sectors (1.8 million). The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector employed 0.1 million individuals. In terms of economic growth, the National Commission for Strategy and Prognosis estimated a growth rate of 2.9% for 2022, taking into account factors such as the energy crisis, disruptions in supply chains, and international price increases for energy and agri-food products[35].

According to the European Commission (EC) country-specific recommendations, part of the European Semester Spring 2022 Package, some important Romanian industries, such as automotive, machinery, and construction are particularly vulnerable to energy imports, energy price movements, and raw material needs.

The raw materials under risk are rubber, steel, iron, lumber, and phosphates, which are the main raw materials for fertilizer and chemical production. However, the Commission believes that the direct negative effects of the invasion are likely to be limited due to Romania's small overall trade ties with Russia and Ukraine.

Romania produces most of its gas internally, but imports almost 20% of its total gas intake, which is largely dependent on the Russian pipeline that runs through Ukraine.[36]

Romania is divided into eight administrative regions, each with specific economic characteristics. The South-West and North-East regions had the highest rates of registered unemployment at the end of March 2022 (4.3% and 3.7%, respectively), while Bucureşti (0.8%) and the West region (2%) had the lowest rates.[37]

[34] International Labour Organisation. (2023). Growth is becoming more volatile and key social policy challenges remain. https://www.ilo.org/budapest/countries-covered/romania/WCMS_650156/lang--en/index.htm.

[35] European Commission. (2023). Labour market information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en.

[36] See News. (2022). Russian war on Ukraine to negatively affect Romania's economy.

<https://seenews.com/news/russian-war-on-ukraine-to-negatively-affect-romaniias-economy-ec-785639>

[37] European Commission. (2023). Labour market information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en.

The main types of businesses on the labour market in Romania include companies (limited liability companies, joint-stock companies, partnerships), sole traders, individual businesses, and family businesses. The main categories of employers are multinational companies, profit/non-profit state-owned companies, private companies, and NGOs.

In March 2022, the largest employers in Romania based on the number of employees were: PROFI ROM FOOD SRL (supermarket retailer), SC AUTOMOBILE DACIA SA (car manufacturer), SC DEDEMAN SRL (retailer of building materials and home and garden design products), Oltenia Energy Complex (a network of coal mines and power plants), SC LIDL DISCOUNT SRL (supermarket retailer), SC AUTOLIV ROMANIA SRL (automotive safety supplier), BANCA TRANSILVANIA SA (banking institution), SC CONTINENTAL AUTOMOTIVE ROMANIA (manufacturer of electrical and electronic equipment for motor vehicles), FORD ROMANIA SRL (automobile manufacturing), DELGAZ GRID SA (gas transmission and distribution), SNGN ROMGAZ SA (oil and gas company that explores, produces and supplies natural gas), and SCHAEFFLER ROMANIA SRL (producer of components for the automotive industry and car manufacturers, as well as for the wind industry).

Main occupations available

The main types of employment contracts in Romania are fixed-term or permanent individual employment contracts, with full-time or part-time working hours. This situation directly affects the employment opportunities for Ukrainian refugees, particularly because the majority of them are women who are caregivers and often face challenges in securing full-time employment.

The table below presents the most available positions in the national labour market in Romania and the occupation registered with the highest number of unemployed persons according to ANOFM data. The most commonly available job openings are typically those that do not necessitate specialised knowledge or skills. These positions often include roles like unskilled assembly workers, unskilled construction workers, and unskilled labour positions within the ready-made garment industry. Additionally, there are job opportunities that require individuals to possess the ability to drive a vehicle and hold a driver's license of a specific category. It's worth noting that these same positions are also frequently listed among the professions with the highest number of individuals who are unemployed.

It can be assumed that employees with specialised knowledge for a particular job refuse to work in their specialisations. This may be due to the low level of salaries in these sectors or occupational segregation in some particular sectors.

Table 2: Categorisation of the most available jobs and occupations with a high number of unemployment based on the sector of activity

Categories of activity	The most available jobs in Romania labour market	Occupations registered with highest number of unemployed persons
Chief executives, senior officials and legislators	-	-
Specialists in various fields of activity	-	Personal assistants for severely disabled persons;
Technicians and other technical specialists	Salespersons;	Salespersons;
Administrative officers	-	-
Service workers	Commercial workers;	-
Skilled workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing	-	Farmers;
Skilled and assimilated workers	-	Locksmiths; Agricultural mechanics;
Plant and machine operators, machine and equipment assembler	Truck/heavy-duty vehicle drivers; Car and van drivers;	Freight handlers;
Unskilled workers	Unskilled assembly workers; Unskilled construction workers; Unskilled workers in the ready-made-garment industry; Security guards; Manual packers; Cargo handlers;	Unskilled agricultural workers; Unskilled packers of solid and semi-solid products; Unskilled workers for building demolition, wall linings, mosaic, wall and floor tiling, parquet flooring; Unskilled workers for road, highway, bridge, and dam maintenance; Loaders/unloaders;

The occupations mentioned above represent areas with high labour demand, and there are open vacancies in these sectors. It is important to note that the availability of vacancies may change over time and may be influenced by factors such as economic conditions, industry trends, and regional dynamics. According to the National Employment Agency, in March 2022, the occupations presented in the second column of Table 2 were those in which the largest number of unemployed people were registered. These occupations have a larger pool of unemployed job seekers. It is worth noting that the availability of jobs in these occupations may be more limited compared to the occupations with more vacancies mentioned above.

4.2 București overview

According to the provided information from the National Institute of Statistics and the National Employment Agency, here are some key points about the București-Ilfov region:[38]

- **Population:** As of January 2021, the region had a population of 2.33 million inhabitants, with București accounting for the majority of the population with 2.16 million inhabitants. Ilfov County, which is part of the region, has a smaller population.

- **Employment Rate:** As of January 2021, the region had 1.4 million persons in civilian employment, representing 89.4% of the region's labour resources.

- **Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate in the Bucharest-Ilfov region was 0.8% as of March 2022, the lowest at the national level. This indicates a low level of unemployment and a highly competitive job market in the region.

- **Economic Dominance:** The Bucharest-Ilfov region is the most developed region in Romania, with the highest GDP per capita in the country. The capital city of București plays a significant role in driving the economy and provides ample opportunities for employment.

- **The services sector plays a prominent role in the regional employment landscape.** This sector encompasses various industries such as Retail, Hospitality and Tourism, Financial Services, Healthcare, Education, Professional Services, Information Technology (IT) and Software Services, Transportation and Logistics, Entertainment and Media, Real Estate, and more. This sector accounts for the majority of civilian employment, constituting approximately 72% of the workforce. The industry and construction sectors together contribute to 26.1% of employment, while agriculture has a comparatively smaller share, making up only 1.9% of the employment landscape.

[38] European Commission. (2023). Labourmarket information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en.

● **Industrial Presence:** The region is home to various industries and serves as the main industrial agglomeration in the country. All industrial branches are represented in the region, reflecting its importance in industrial activities.

● **Transportation Hub:** Bucharest-Ilfov is a major national and international transportation hub, with well-developed road, rail, and air transport infrastructure. Henri Coandă International Airport, located in the region, is the largest international airport in the country.

● **Attractive Economic Environment:** The region's economic environment is attractive due to factors such as direct investments, a well-established institutional structure, a skilled workforce, and advanced communication systems, compared to other regions in Romania.

● **Major Employers:** According to ANOFM's statistical data as of March 2022, some of the region's largest employers in terms of employee count include: Michelin România (tire manufacturer), SC Sensiblu SRL 9 (pharmacy retail), SC Altex Romania SRL (electronic products retailer), Artima SA (Leather goods manufacturer), SSG Select Solutions SRL (investigation and security Services), SC Makita EU SRL (machinery manufacturer), Compania de paza R.O. SRL (security services), Yusen Logistics SR (delivery services), SC COCA-COLA HBC ROMANIA SRL (beverage manufacturer), and SC Flanco Retail SA (electronic products retailer).

Main occupations available

According to the ANOFM data, the highest number of registered vacancies in the Bucharest-Ilfov region are in the following occupations:

- Security guards
- Customer service agents
- Foster carers
- Personal assistants for severely disabled persons
- Cashiers
- Commercial workers
- Goods handlers
- Guards
- Salespersons

Main occupation vacancies

According to the data from the National Employment Agency, the highest number of unemployed persons in the Bucharest-Ilfov region in March 2022 were registered in the following occupations:

- Unskilled packers of solid and semi-solid products
- Manual packers
- Commercial workers
- Personal assistants for severely disabled persons
- Landscapers
- Unskilled workers for building demolition, wall linings, mosaic, wall and floor tiling, parquet flooring
- Cleaners
- Unskilled workers for the assembly and installation of parts[39]

4.3 South-East counties overview (Constanța, Brăila, Galați)

The South-East region of Romania, comprising the counties of Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea, and Vrancea, has several notable characteristics in terms of population, employment, and economic activities. Here are some key points:

- Population: As of January 2021, the resident population of the South-East region was 2.35 million inhabitants. The region is known for its high level of ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, with various communities such as Russian, Greek, Turkish, Tatar, and more.
- Employment: According to the Labour Force Ledger data from January 2021, around 948,000 individuals were in civilian employment in the South-East region, representing approximately 64.6% of the region's labour resources.
- Unemployment: The registered unemployment rate as of March 2022 was 3.6%, with approximately 35,600 unemployed persons in the region.
- Economic Activities: The region exhibits a diverse economic landscape, with a mix of agriculture, industry, construction, and services.
- Agriculture: The South-East region has a significant presence in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, accounting for 24.3% of civilian employment. The region boasts the largest area of vineyards in the country and has a longstanding tradition in fisheries and aquaculture.

[39] European Commission. (2023). Labourmarket information. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en.

● **Industry:** The region hosts a range of industries, including petrochemicals, metallurgy, machinery manufacturing, building materials, food processing, and textiles. Key industrial centres include steel and petrochemical plants, pulp and paper mills, bakeries, the Năvodari petrochemical plant, and the Cernavodă nuclear power plant. The shipbuilding sector is also prominent, with shipyards located in Brăila, Galați, Tulcea, Mangalia, and Constanța.

● **Services:** The services sector plays a significant role in the South-East region, representing a predominant share of civilian employment at 45.4%. The region's major service centres are located in Constanța and Galați.

● **Largest Employers:** According to ANOFM's statistical data from March 2022, the region's largest employers in terms of employee count include SC Liberty Galați SA (iron and steel producer), County Clinical Emergency Hospital of Constanța (healthcare facilities), SC Vard Tulcea SA (ship repairing yards), Arabesque SRL (lumber and other construction materials retailer), DGRFP Galați (public finance agency), Emergency County Hospital Brăila (healthcare facilities), Damen Shipyards Mangalia (shipbuilding and ship repairing), Raja SA (water supply and irrigation systems), and SC Aaylex One SRL (food manufacturing).[40]

The South-East region of Romania exhibits a mix of industrial hubs, tourist areas (such as the Black Sea coast and the Danube Delta), and extensive agricultural regions. The specific economic activities and employment rates vary across counties within the region, with some counties showing higher rates of employment in industry and construction (Brăila, Galați, Constanța, Năvodari), while others have higher rates of employment in agriculture (Buzău, Vrancea) or the services sector (Constanța, Galați).

Main occupations available

According to ANOFM data, the South-East region of Romania had the highest number of vacancies in various occupations. The occupations with the most registered vacancies in the region include:

- Security guards
- Bakers
- Carpenters
- Blacksmiths
- Kitchen workers
- Commercial workers
- Goods handlers
- Unskilled workers in the ready-made-garment industry
- Unskilled workers for the assembly and installation of parts
- Unskilled workers in construction[41]

[40] European Commission. (2023). Labour market information. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en.

[41] European Commission. (2023). Labourmarket information. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en.

Main occupation vacancies

According to data from the National Employment Agency, the South-East region of Romania had a significant number of unemployed persons in various occupations. The occupations with the highest number of registered unemployed persons in the region include:

- Unskilled agricultural workers
- Unskilled workers for packing solid and semi-solid products
- Loaders/unloaders
- Unskilled workers for building demolition, wall linings, mosaic, wall and floor tiling, parquet flooring
- Unskilled workers for road, highway, bridge, and dam maintenance
- Agricultural mechanics
- Salespersons
- Locksmiths
- Commercial workers
- Hotel chambermaid

4.4 Economic profile of Ukrainian refugees in Romania

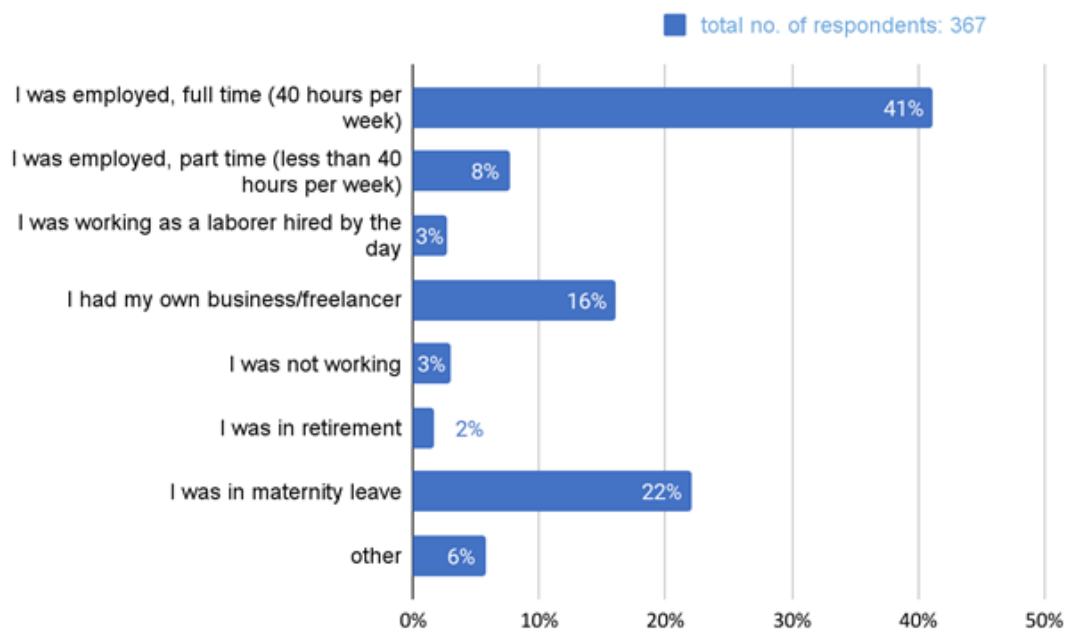
Ukrainian citizens can work in Romania on the basis of an individual full-time employment contract without the need to obtain a work permit and without observing the nine-month period during the year to conclude an employment contract, as provided for by the usual rules, according to Dentons Romania, one of the largest law firms in Romania and the world, as well as a founding member of the Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Diversity. This is due to Government Emergency Ordinance no. 20/2022 ("GEO 20").^[42]

In addition, the right to stay for work purposes has been extended without the need to obtain a long-term work visa. Citizens of Ukraine from the armed conflict zone in Ukraine who do not have documents confirming their professional qualifications or work experience required for the job may be employed for a period of 12 months with the possibility of extending this period for semi-annual periods of up to one year on the basis of (i) a sworn statement that they meet the professional qualifications and work experience required for the job they intend to be employed in, and (ii) they do not have a criminal record incompatible with the activity they intend to carry out in Romania. The affidavit does not apply to certain professions, such as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, paramedics, midwives, veterinarians, architects, etc.

^[42] Romanian Diversity Chamber of Commerce. (2023). How Ukrainian refugees can access the Romanian job market. <https://www.rdcc.ro/romanian-job-market-ukrainian-refugees/>.

In order to understand the opportunities for finding a job in Romania, it is necessary to analyse refugees' previous work experience and occupational status in Ukraine.

Graph 16: Refugees' occupational status in Ukraine



According to the survey responses (Graph 15), approximately 41% of the respondents had full-time jobs in Ukraine that required 40 hours of work per week. Around 28% were employed under contracts that required less than 40 working hours per week. A small percentage, about 3%, worked as labourers hired on a daily basis, and an additional 16% had their own businesses or worked as freelancers.

This data suggests that more than half of the respondents were employed under some form of contract or had their own business, indicating a relatively high level of employment during their time in Ukraine. The fact that only 3% of the respondents were unemployed further supports the idea that these individuals are employable and can contribute to the Romanian labour market.

It is also important to note that a significant portion of respondents (22%) were on maternity leave and not working in Ukraine during that time. This illustrates that they were temporarily out of the workforce due to family responsibilities. Considering this, it can be inferred that these individuals have the potential to re-enter the labour market in Romania, further adding to the pool of potential workers.

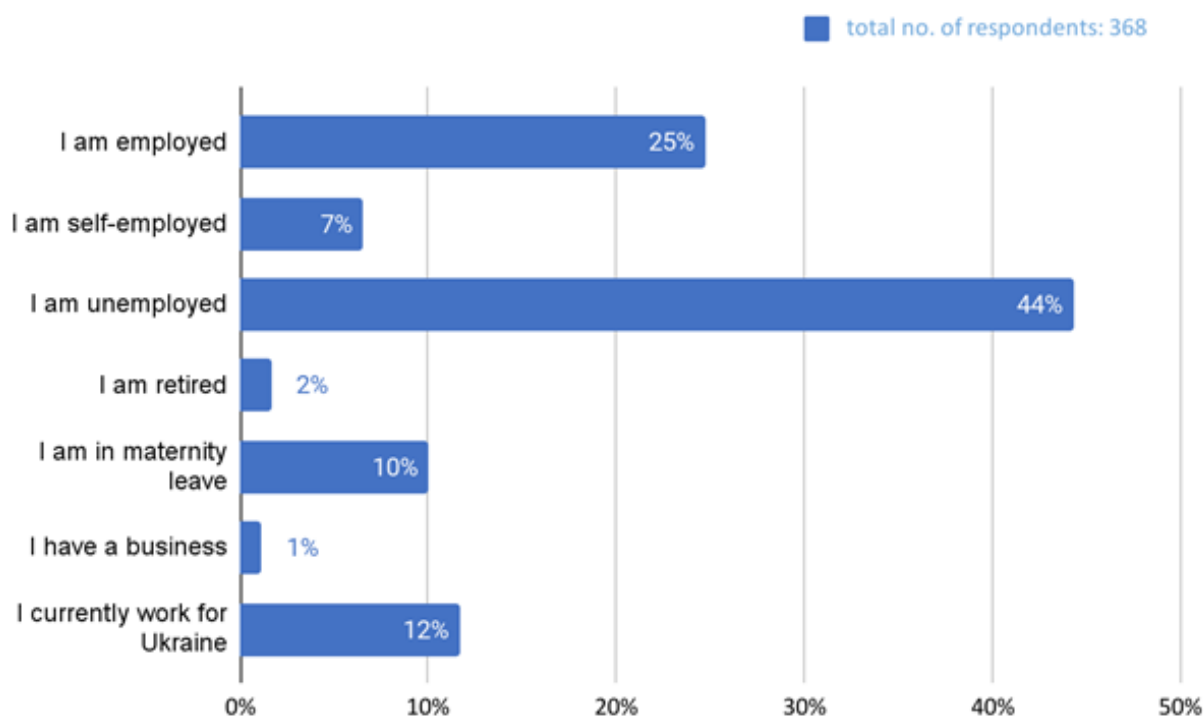
Overall, this suggests that the majority of Ukrainian refugees have had prior work experience and are employable, which could be valuable for the Romanian labour market.

5. Ukrainian refugees' access to employment in Romania

5.1 Employment profile of Ukrainian refugees

5.1.1 Ukrainian refugees' perspectives

Graph 18: Refugees' occupational status in Romania



Graph 18 above shows that a significant portion of the surveyed respondents are currently unemployed. This highlights the challenges and difficulties that Ukrainian refugees face in finding employment in Romania. The rate of unemployment among the respondents compared to their occupational status in Ukraine (3% - Graph 15) suggests that the transition to the labour market in Romania is more difficult for these individuals.

On the other hand, 25% of the respondents stated that they are currently employed, indicating that a significant portion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania has been able to secure employment. This is a positive indicator for their financial stability, which reduces the burden on public institutions and NGOs that provide support to them.

Having employment not only provides individuals with a source of income but also enhances their sense of stability, self-sufficiency, and integration into the local community.

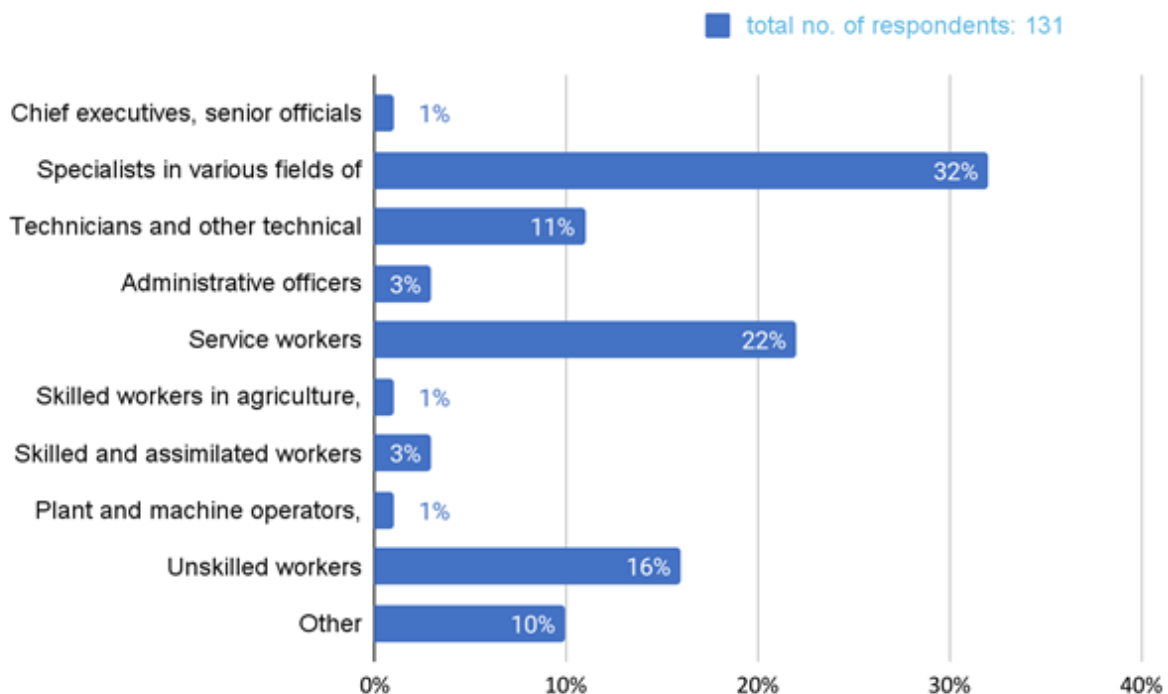
Interestingly, 12% of the respondents continue to work remotely from Ukraine. This suggests that some refugees have been able to maintain their employment ties with Ukrainian companies or clients while residing in Romania. Remote work can provide flexibility and continuity in income for those who have established connections and skills that can be utilised remotely.

Additionally, almost 8% of the respondents reported being self-employed or owning a business. This can be interpreted in two ways.

First, it is possible that some of the respondents had prior experience as entrepreneurs or business owners in Ukraine. They may have chosen to continue their entrepreneurial pursuits in Romania, leveraging their previous knowledge, skills, and networks to establish their own businesses.

Second, the difficulties faced by Ukrainian refugees in finding employment opportunities in Romania may have led some respondents to explore alternative pathways to achieve financial independence. Unable to secure traditional employment, they may have chosen to requalify themselves or acquire new skills to start their own businesses.

Graph 19: Refugees' occupation in Romania



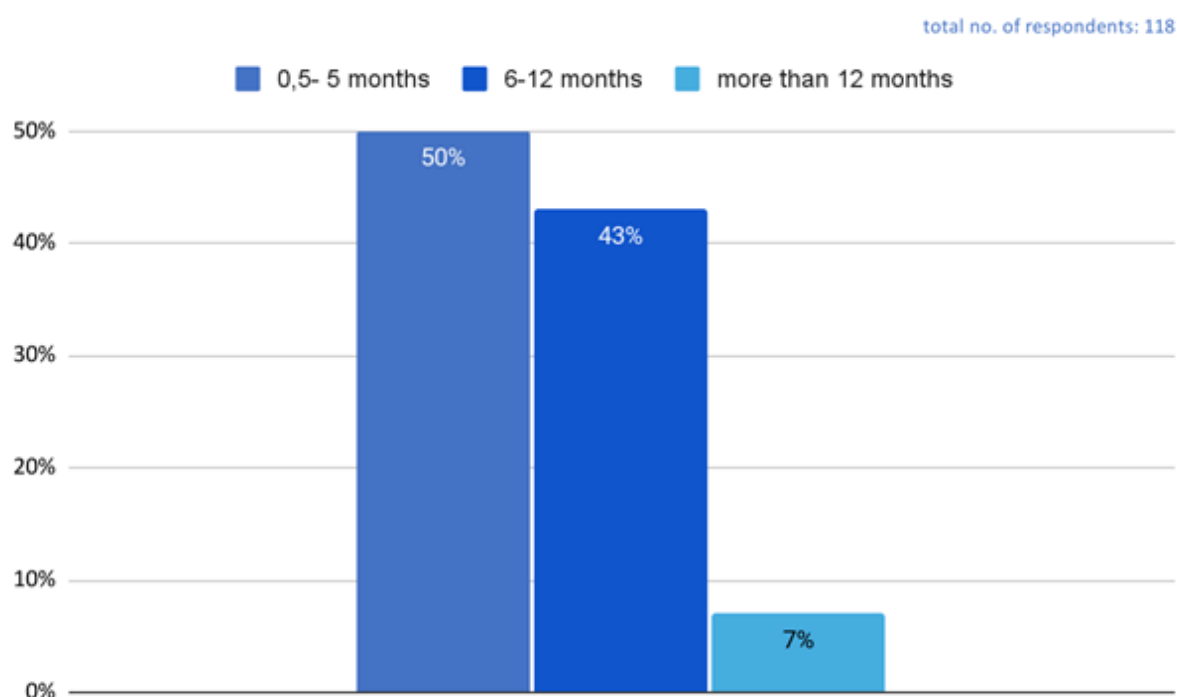
Among the economically active respondents who specified their occupations (Graph 19), 32% work as specialists in various fields. This shows that a significant portion of the respondents have professional expertise and are employed in specialised roles that require specific knowledge and skills. Additionally, 22% of the economically active respondents work as service workers. Service occupations encompass a wide range of roles in sectors such as hospitality, retail, customer service, and personal care. These jobs often involve direct interaction with customers or clients. Furthermore, 16% of the economically active respondents reported working as unskilled workers. Unskilled jobs typically require minimal training or qualifications and may involve tasks that are more manual labour intensive. It is worth noting that 10% of economically active respondents did not specify their occupation in Romania. This lack of specification could indicate various possibilities, such as respondents who are currently in between jobs, seeking employment, engaged in informal work arrangements or working as entrepreneurs.

Graph 20: Refugees' occupation in Ukraine vs occupation in Romania



Graph 20 illustrates that a notable proportion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania have managed to continue working in the same occupations they held in Ukraine. This success can be attributed to two potential factors. First, the transferability of their skills within the Romanian job market may be due to resemblances between the two countries in terms of industries, job prerequisites, or vocational norms. Second, the demand from employers in the Romanian job market for particular skills and expertise possessed by these Ukrainian refugees could play a significant role. If there is a scarcity of certain skills, employers might readily hire individuals with pertinent experience, irrespective of their refugee status. However, it is vital to acknowledge that while this pattern is encouraging, challenges remain. Some individuals might struggle to secure jobs in their previous roles due to varying industry needs, language fluency prerequisites, the absence of recognition for foreign qualifications or being caregivers. Notably, a significant number of Ukrainian refugee respondents have managed to secure employment as unskilled workers, surpassing the count of those who held unskilled jobs in Ukraine. This trend might underscore the adaptability of these refugees and the diverse employment opportunities they've sought in their host country, Romania, possibly due to distinct job market dynamics or availability of unskilled positions.

Graph 21: Length of time between obtaining refugee status/temporary protection and finding employment Romania



Out of the 118 respondents to this specific question, half of them (50%) took between two weeks and five months to secure employment in Romania. This suggests a relatively quick job search process for a significant portion of the respondents.

Furthermore, 43% of the respondents reported spending between six and 12 months in finding a job. This indicates a longer job search period for a considerable portion of the respondents, possibly due to various factors such as competition in the job market, language barriers, or specific requirements in their chosen fields.

It is notable that only a small percentage of the respondents (7%) reported spending more than a year to find a job. This suggests that a majority of the employed respondents were able to secure employment within a relatively reasonable timeframe.

Overall, the data shows that a significant number of respondents found employment within the first five months, while a considerable portion required a longer period of six to 12 months. The relatively low percentage of employed respondents spending over a year in finding a job suggests that the majority were successful in securing employment within a year or less.

Table 3: Sources for finding a job

Statement	1 not helpful at all	2	3	4	5 very helpful	Overall
online platforms for searching jobs (e.g. ejobs, best jobs, etc.)	22	22	55	33	25	157
social media (e.g. Telegram, Facebook, etc.)	10	16	45	41	52	164
personal network (e.g. friends, family, neighbors)	10	13	37	44	56	160
public local labor agencies (AJOFM)	22	19	65	31	21	158
companies websites	18	28	56	32	22	156
newspapers and platforms for announcements (e.g. OLX)	27	35	40	29	23	154
other	31	20	50	16	14	131

The respondents were asked to rate from one to five the helpfulness of a list of possible sources in finding a job. The majority of Ukrainian refugees surveyed reported that the main support sources they relied on for finding a job were social media and personal networks. This finding aligns with the broader trend of using social media as a versatile tool for various needs among Ukrainian refugees. Surprisingly, traditional job search methods commonly used in Romania, such as online specialised platforms, local labour agencies, company websites, newspapers, and announcement platforms, were considered the least helpful in the job search process. Despite public institutions and NGOs organizing job fairs, it appears that Ukrainian refugees prefer to rely on more informal sources for finding employment. This finding was only identified during the focus groups discussion, where some participants argued that they found the job via personal connections and knew other Ukrainians that did the same.

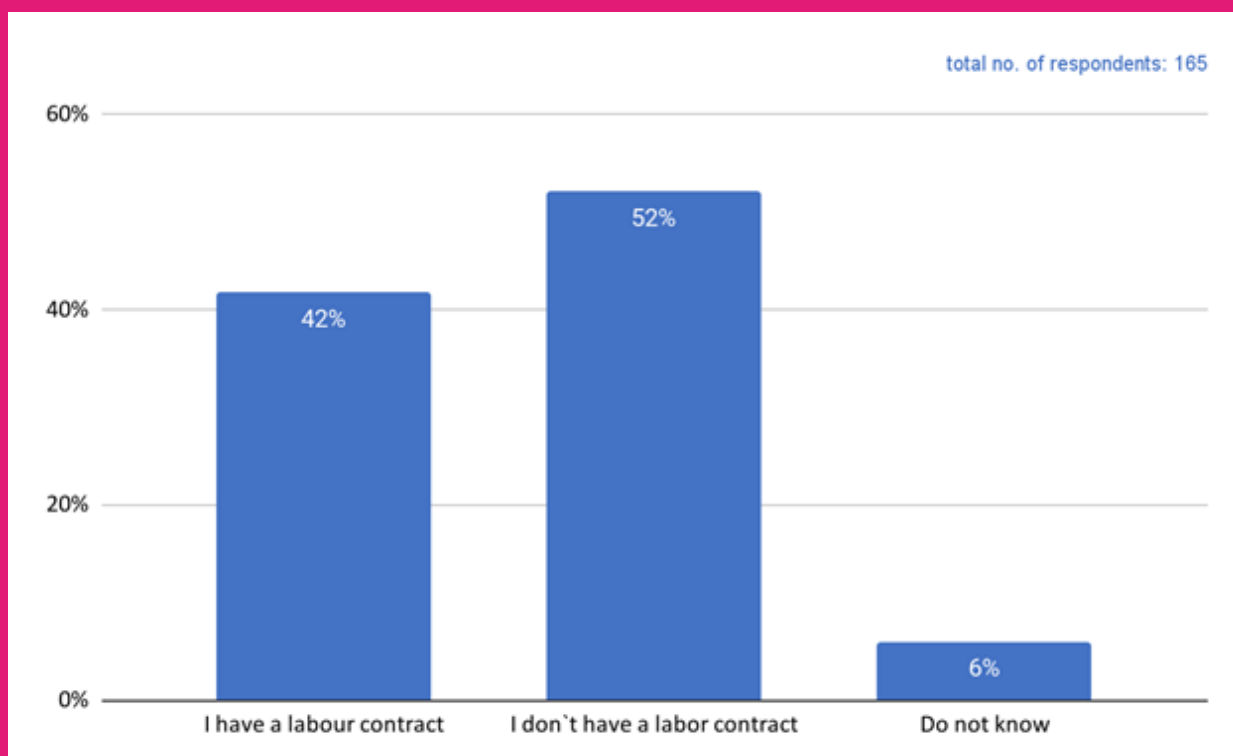
Social media platforms were highly valued by respondents due to their wide reach, networking opportunities, and the ability to connect with potential employers and job leads. Leveraging personal networks, including friends, family, and acquaintances, was also recognised as a valuable resource for accessing job opportunities and receiving referrals.

On the other hand, online specialised platforms and local labour agencies, typically utilised in Romania for job placement and assistance, were not considered significant by the respondents. Company websites and newspapers, which are traditional channels for job announcements, were also mentioned as less helpful support sources.

This preference for social media and personal networks among Ukrainian refugees highlights the importance of digital platforms and social connections in their job search process. It suggests that Ukrainian refugees have alternative methods or resources they rely on more heavily in their job search.



Graph 22: Form of employment according to the presence of a contract

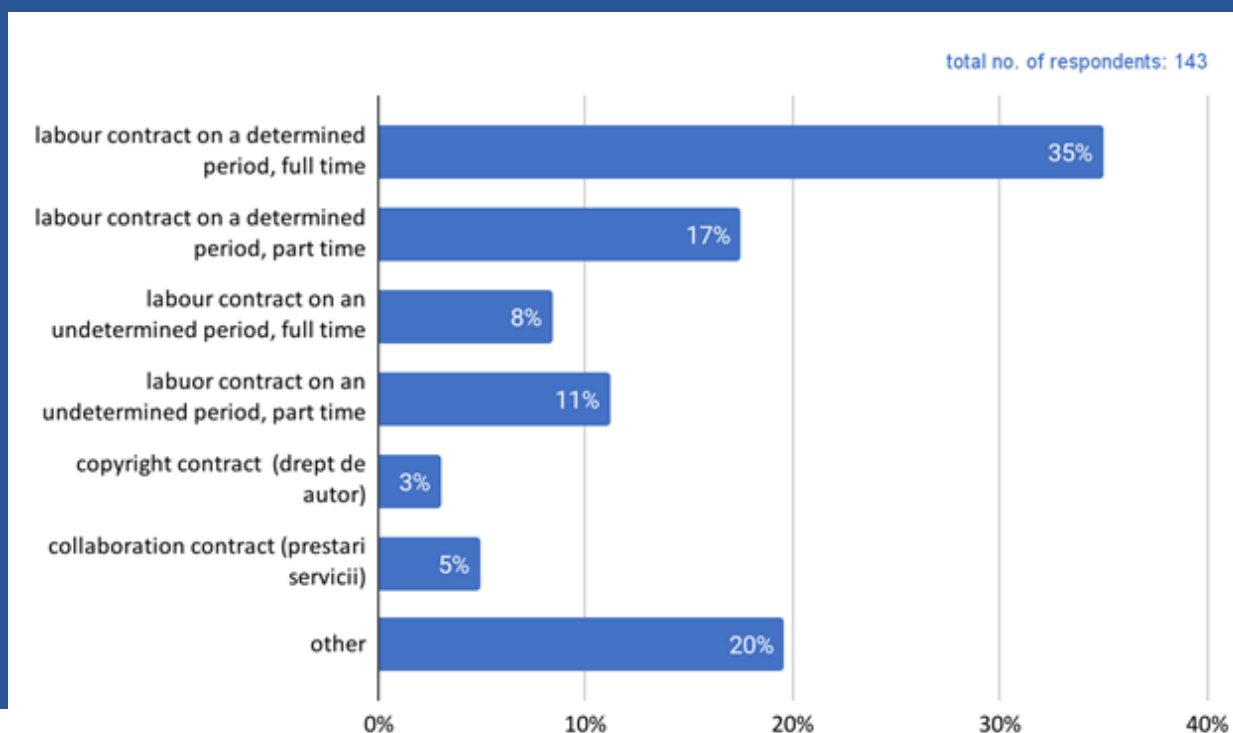


In response to the question about whether their labour is based on a working contract, 52% of respondents indicated that they do not have a contract to attest their employment. This suggests that a significant portion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania are engaged in informal or undocumented work arrangements, or that they have other forms of contracts that are not considered as labour contracts (collaboration, copyright, etc.). This finding that a significant proportion of respondents do not have a labour contract highlights potential challenges and vulnerabilities in their employment situations. Without a formal contract, workers may face difficulties in asserting their rights, ensuring fair treatment, and accessing social protections. It also raises concerns about job security and stability.

On the other hand, a slightly smaller number of respondents (42%) stated that their labour is based on a contract. This implies that there is indeed a portion of respondents who have managed to secure formal employment with a contractual agreement, which provides them with legal protection and benefits.

It is worth noting that a small percentage of respondents (6%) expressed uncertainty about whether they have a labour contract or not. This result suggests that some respondents may not be fully aware of the legislation and how their work can be secured via a contract. Another possible explanation is that although there is a form of contract, the respondents are not aware of its specifics or may have limited understanding of the terms.

Graph 23: Types of contracts among employed refugees



Among respondents who reported having a labour contract, the majority stated that their contracts were full-time and for a determined period, accounting for 35% of the total. This indicates that a significant number of Ukrainian refugees in Romania have secured full-time employment for a specified duration, potentially offering more stability and consistent working hours.

The second most common type of contract reported by respondents is part-time on a determined period, comprising 17% of the total. This finding aligns with the representation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania, particularly among women who often have family responsibilities, including childcare. Part-time employment could allow for a more flexible work schedule that can accommodate their caregiving duties or cover informal labour arrangements.

Additionally, a notable portion of respondents (11%) reported having part-time contracts for an undetermined period. This suggests that they have ongoing employment but with fewer working hours, which may be suitable for individuals seeking more flexibility or balancing multiple responsibilities while having the advantage of ongoing job security and fewer working hours.

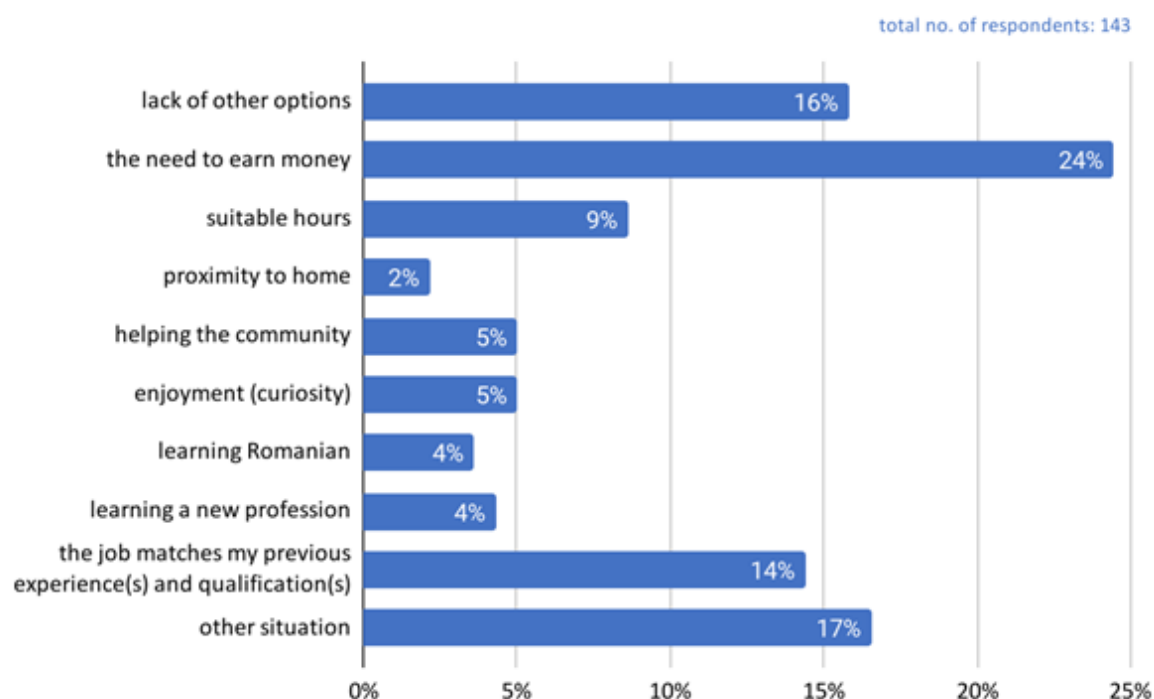
Furthermore, approximately 8% of respondents mentioned having full-time contracts for an undetermined period, indicating a long-term commitment to their employment without a specified end date. This type of contract offers greater job security and potential career development opportunities, especially in specific fields that require high expertise or specialisation.

Around 5% of respondents identified themselves as service providers. This category refers to individuals who work independently or have their own businesses, providing services rather than being employed by a specific company.

The last most common category refers to copyright contracts (3%), a type of contract used for specific fields such as art, research, publicity, etc. These contracts are designed to protect the intellectual property rights of the creators and ensure that they receive appropriate compensation for their work. Copyright contracts are essential in creative industries and research fields, as they define the terms and conditions under which the work can be used, distributed, and monetised.

Importantly, nearly 20% of respondents indicated having other forms of contracts. This ambiguous category may include individuals who are not employed under a formal labour contract, potentially engaging in informal work arrangements or lacking legal documentation for their employment.

Graph 24: Refugees' reasons for choosing their job in Romania



Respondents were presented with a list of statements and asked to select the one that best describes why they chose their job. Among the respondents, approximately 25% chose their current job primarily based on the need to earn money. This suggests that financial considerations play a significant role in their job selection process. Additionally, about 16% of respondents mentioned that they were unable to find better job options, indicating that their current employment may not align with their ideal preferences.

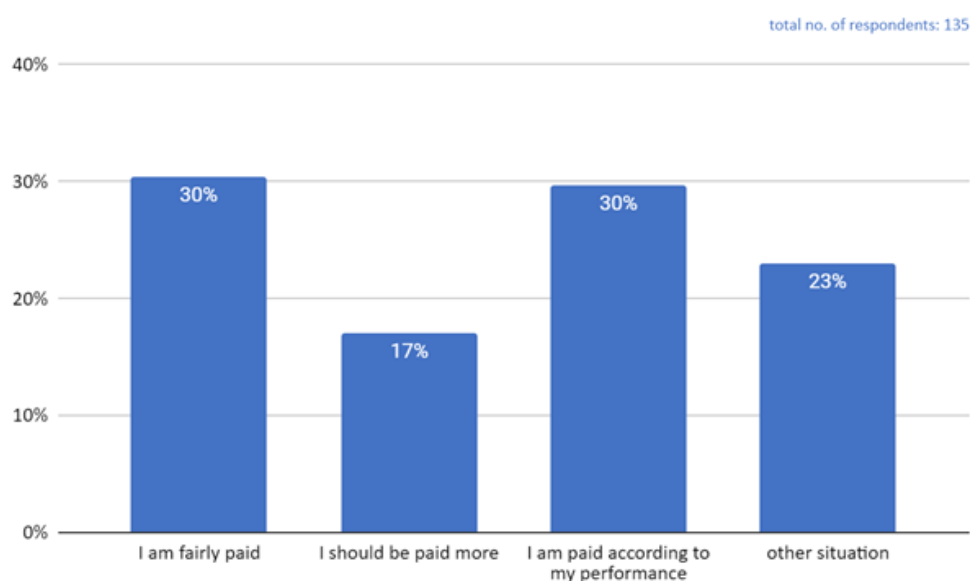
Furthermore, around 9% of respondents mentioned that they chose their job because it offers suitable working hours. This finding is particularly relevant for individuals, especially women with childcare responsibilities, who seek flexibility in their work schedules.

Importantly, 14% of respondents reported choosing their job based on its alignment with their previous experiences and qualifications. This illustrates that a notable portion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania have been able to secure employment that utilises their skills and expertise. This outcome highlights that despite the challenges and barriers they may face, some Ukrainian refugees have successfully navigated the local job market and found opportunities that match their qualifications.

On the other hand, a smaller percentage of respondents mentioned reasons such as helping the community (5%), enjoyment (5%), learning a new profession (4%), learning Romanian (3%), and proximity to home (2%). These factors, although less commonly cited, still play a role in the job selection process for some individuals.

It is worth noting that 17% of respondents mentioned other reasons not specified in the options provided, indicating the presence of diverse motivations and circumstances among the respondents.

Graph 25: Levels of satisfaction with salary among employed refugees



Respondents were asked if they are satisfied with the salary that they receive. It is interesting to note that the majority of respondents (60%) consider themselves fairly paid considering their job position and performance. This indicates a level of satisfaction with their current salary, suggesting that they believe their compensation aligns with the expectations and requirements of their roles.

Only 17% of respondents expressed a desire to be paid more for the work they are performing. This suggests that a smaller percentage of individuals feel that their current salary does not adequately reflect the value they bring to their jobs or the effort they put into their work.

Additionally, 23% of respondents mentioned other situations regarding their salary satisfaction, without providing further details. These situations could vary widely and may include factors such as specific job circumstances, personal financial considerations, or other unique factors influencing their perceptions of salary satisfaction.

5.1.2 NGO perspectives

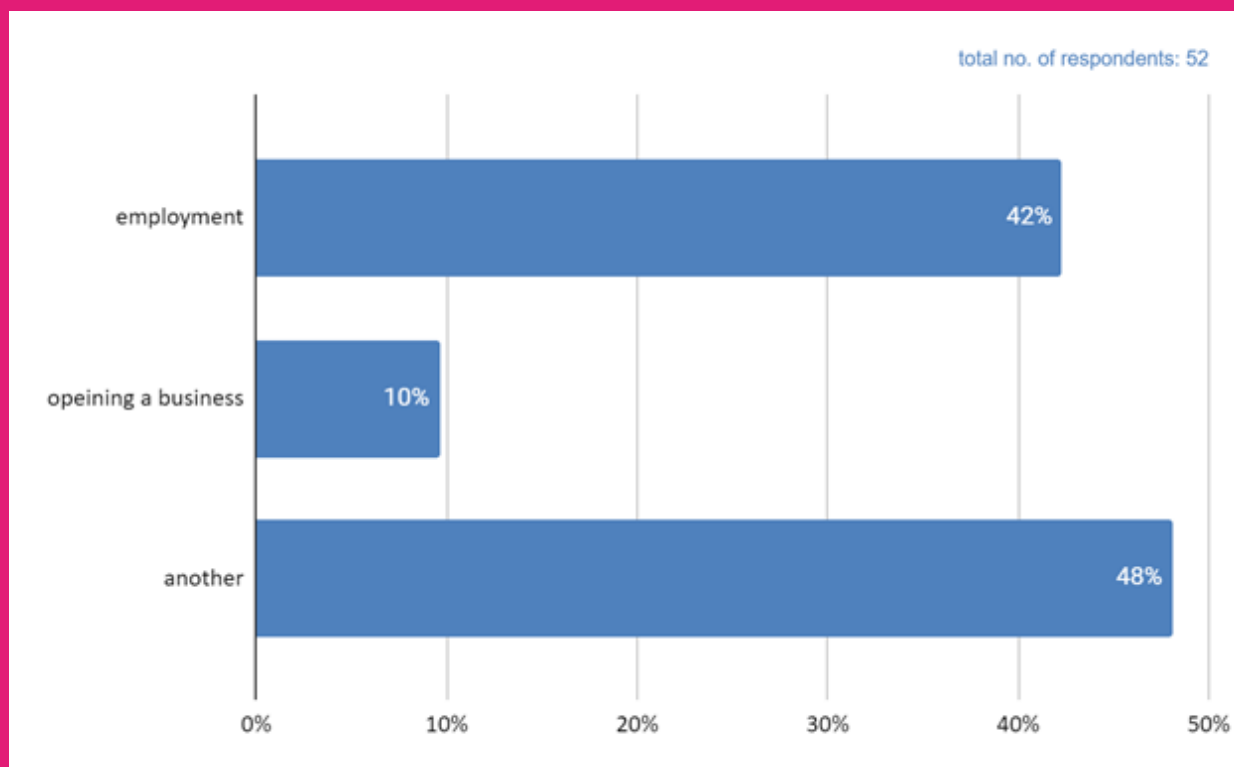
Respondents were asked if they provided counseling or organised activities to support Ukrainian refugees in finding a job (Graph 25) and how many refugees received support in this matter.

The survey results indicate that a significant proportion of respondents (42%) from the NGOs actively organise activities to support Ukrainian refugees in finding employment. This demonstrates the recognition within these organisations of the importance of assisting refugees in their job search. These NGOs provide valuable resources and programmes to help refugees secure employment opportunities, indicating a commitment to supporting their integration.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that 10% of respondents mentioned that their NGOs specifically organise activities aimed at helping refugees open businesses. This highlights recognition of the entrepreneurial potential among Ukrainian refugees and a dedication to supporting their entrepreneurial endeavours. By offering assistance and guidance in starting businesses, these NGOs contribute to the economic empowerment and self-sufficiency of refugees.

The majority of NGO representatives (48%) reported that their organisations provide support in areas beyond financial independence. This suggests that NGOs offer a range of services and assistance that go beyond employment and entrepreneurship. These additional forms of support could include social integration programmes, access to healthcare services, and other essential aspects of refugee support.

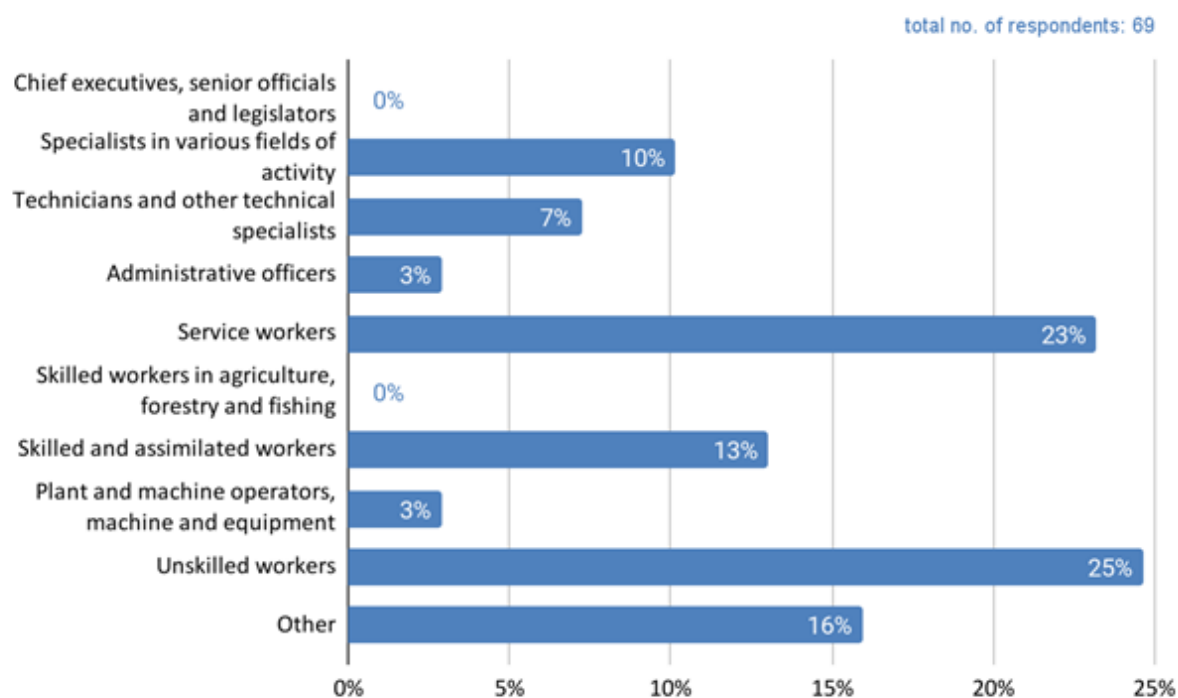
Graph 26: NGOs' activities in supporting Ukrainian refugees to become financially independent



Regarding the number of Ukrainian refugees entering the labour market, most of the NGO respondents declared that they do not track this kind of information. While the respondents themselves might not track the exact number of Ukrainian refugees entering the labour market, it can be inferred from the information provided that a significant number of refugees have indeed found employment with the assistance of NGOs. According to the information provided by NGO representatives it is reasonable to assume that several thousands have been able to secure jobs through these efforts.

While the exact number of Ukrainian refugees who have found employment may not be available, the active involvement of NGOs in supporting refugees in their job search is a positive indicator of the significant impact they have had in facilitating employment opportunities for these individuals.

Graph 27: Occupations found by Ukrainian refugees in Romania (NGOs)



It can be observed that, according to the survey respondents from NGOs, among Ukrainian refugees who have found employment in Romania, the majority have secured jobs as unskilled workers (25%) and in the services sector (23%). This shows that there might be a significant demand for labour in these areas, and Ukrainian refugees are able to find opportunities in such roles.

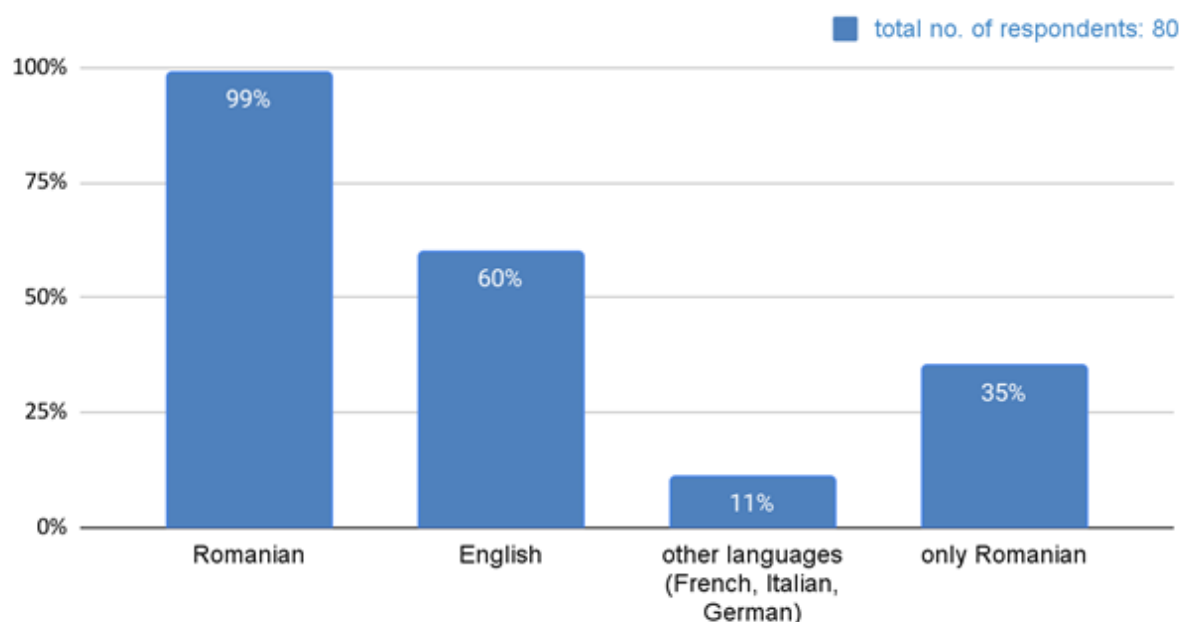
The third most common category of employment for Ukrainian refugees is skilled and assimilated workers (13%). This suggests that a portion of refugees have managed to utilise their existing skills and qualifications in the Romanian labour market, which can lead to more favourable employment conditions.

Furthermore, approximately 10% of respondents reported that Ukrainian refugees have found employment as specialists in various fields. This highlights that some refugees possess specialised expertise that allows them to secure more specialised positions in their respective industries.

It is worth noting that around 16% of respondents indicated that Ukrainian refugees have found employment in other occupations not specifically mentioned in the survey options. This implies that there is a diverse range of job opportunities available to Ukrainian refugees, and they are able to explore various sectors and roles.

5.1.3 Employers' perspectives

Graph 28: Language of communication with company clients (employers)



The employers participating in the survey were asked to provide information about the main languages used with clients by the companies they represent with the purpose of gaining insight into the linguistic diversity and requirements of businesses in their interactions with customers or clients.

According to the employer respondents, the main language of communication used by the companies they represent is Romanian, which is expected given the context of operating in Romania. A significant majority (99%) indicated that Romanian is the primary language used within their organisations.

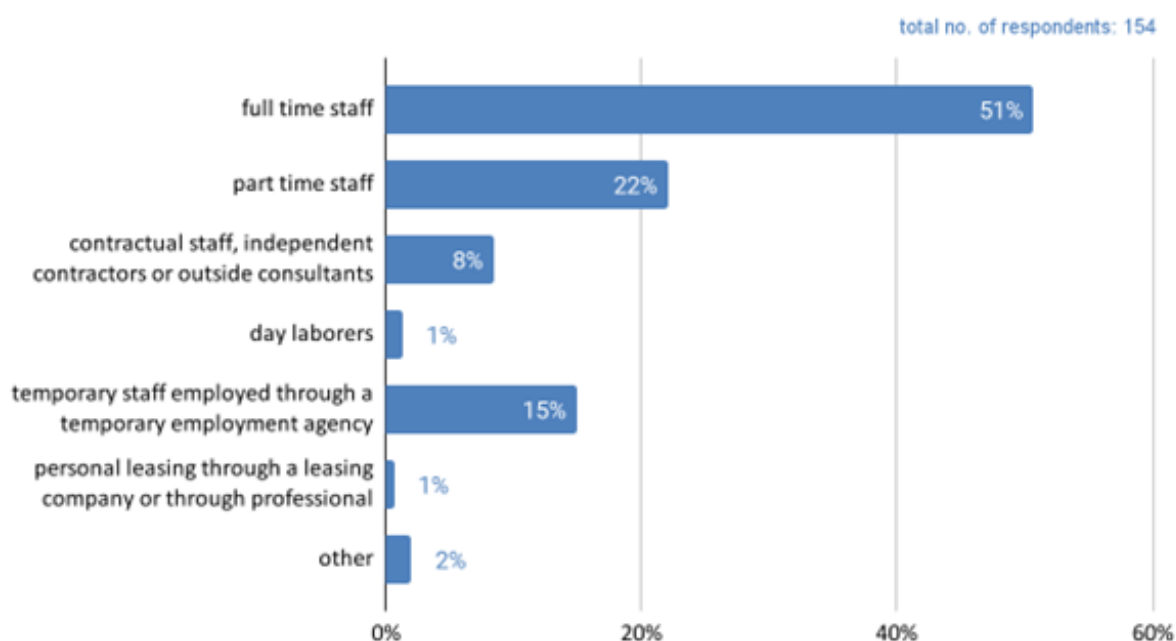
English is also widely used in the companies surveyed, with 60% of respondents indicating its usage. This suggests that English proficiency can be valuable for job seekers in certain positions or industries that have international communication or dealings.

Furthermore, 35% of respondents mentioned that their companies use only Romanian as the language of communication with clients. This underscores the significance of being able to effectively communicate in Romanian when interacting with customers or clients in various industries.

In addition to Romanian and English, a smaller percentage of companies (11%) reported using other languages such as French, Italian, and German. This indicates that proficiency in these languages can be advantageous for certain job opportunities within specific sectors or for companies with international connections.

Overall, the survey results emphasise the importance of language skills, particularly in Romanian and English, for Ukrainian refugees seeking employment in Romania. Being proficient in these languages can enhance their prospects of securing job opportunities and effectively communicating within the workplace and with clients or customers. Investing in language training and development can be highly beneficial for improving their language proficiency and increasing their chances of securing desirable job opportunities.

Graph 29: Categories of employees found in the company (employer)

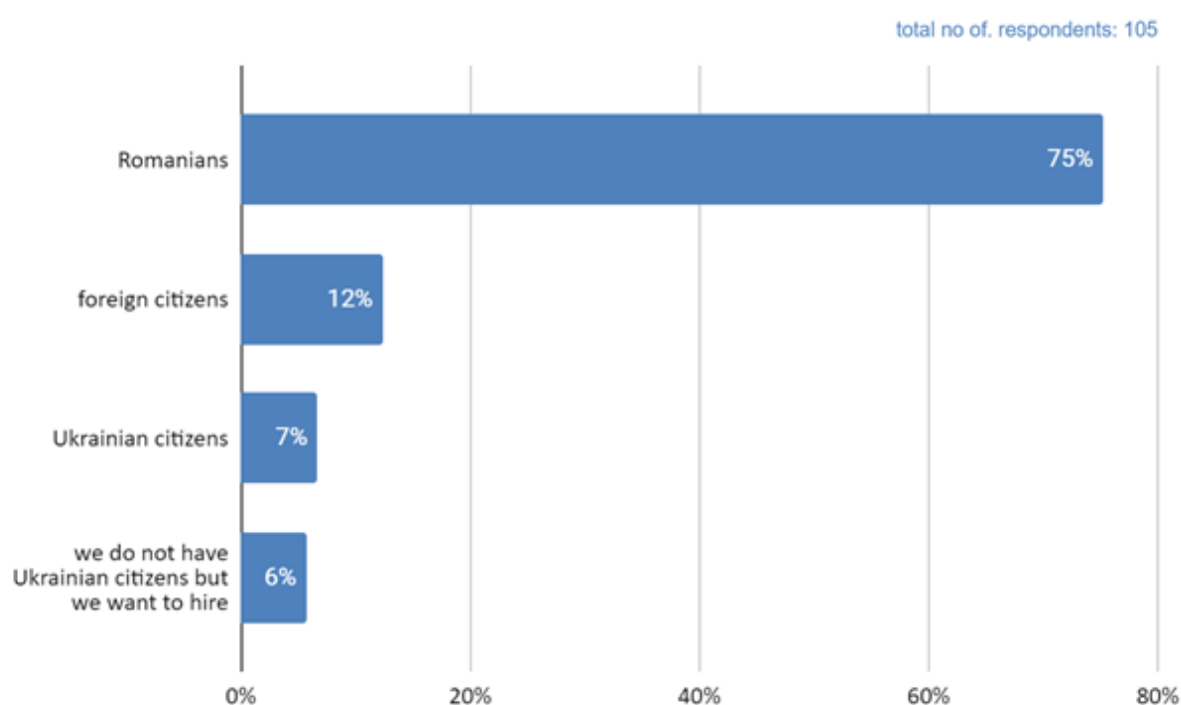


The employer respondents were asked to provide information about the staff categories found in the companies they represent. According to the employer respondents, the majority of companies they represent have full-time staff, accounting for 51% of the responses. This illustrates that a significant number of employers rely on a permanent workforce for their operations. Additionally, 22% of employers reported having part-time staff.

Furthermore, 15% of respondents mentioned employing temporary staff through a temporary employment agency. Temporary staff are typically hired for a specific period or to fulfill short-term needs, such as seasonal work or specific projects. This arrangement provides employers with flexibility in managing their workforce based on fluctuating demands.

These findings suggest that there is a diverse range of employment arrangements in the companies surveyed, including full-time, part-time, and temporary staff. This offers potential opportunities for Ukrainian refugees seeking employment, as they may find suitable positions based on their availability, skills, and preferences.

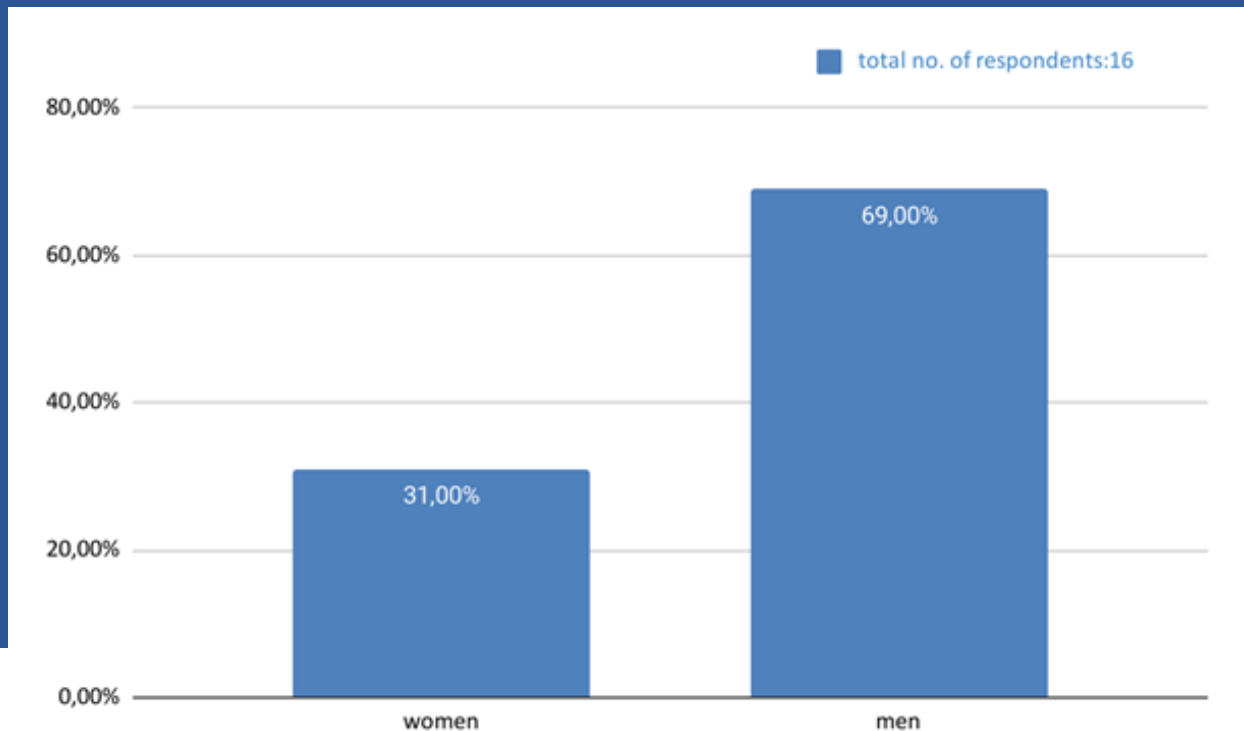
Graph 30: Categories of employees hired by citizenship



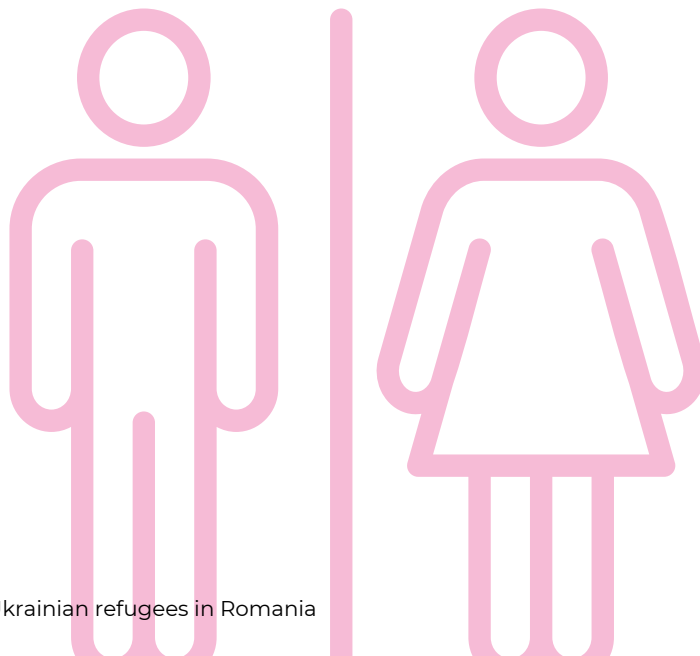
According to the employer respondents, the majority (75%) reported that in the companies they represent the main workforce is represented by Romanians. However, it's worth noting that a smaller percentage of respondents (12%) mentioned having foreign citizens as part of their staff, indicating some level of diversity in the companies.

Interestingly, only 7% of the respondents reported that the companies that they work at have also hired Ukrainian citizens. Furthermore, when asked about their willingness to hire Ukrainians, only 6% of respondents expressed an intention to do so.

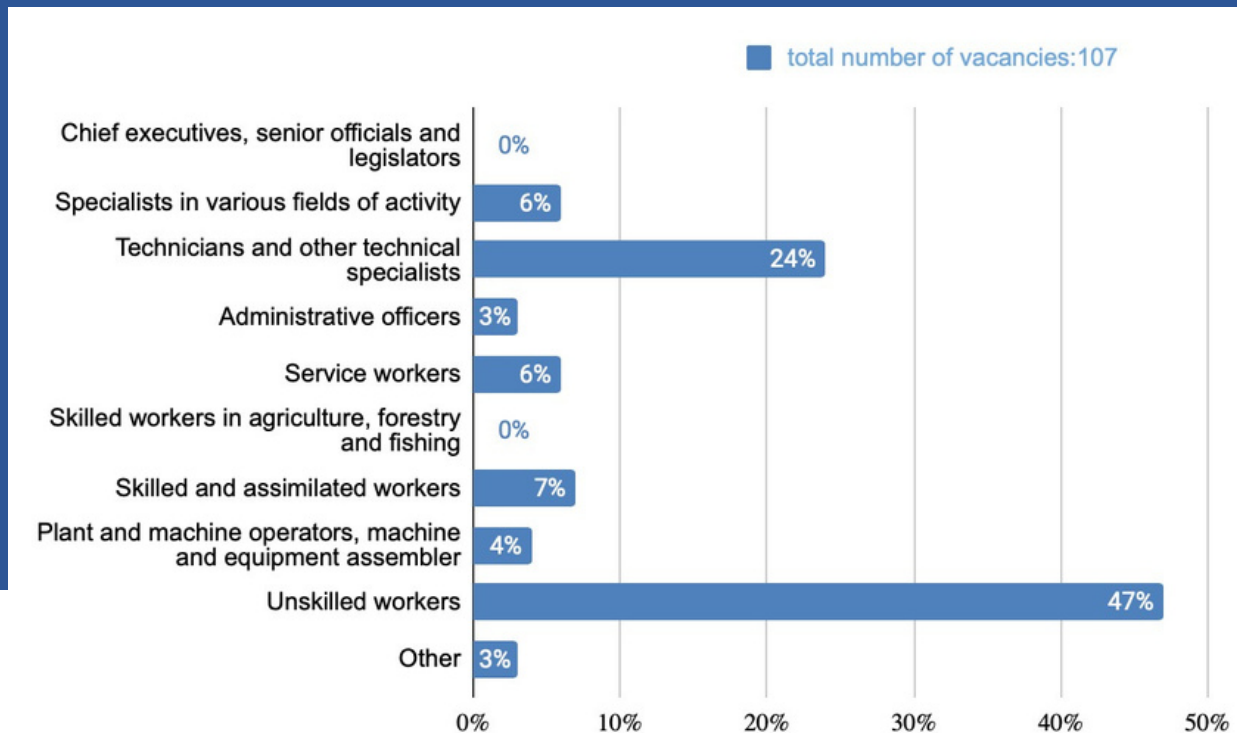
Graph 31: Ukrainian citizens employed according to gender



Based on the data provided by the respondents from companies, it appears that there is a higher representation of male Ukrainian refugees in the workforce compared to their female counterparts. Men account for 69% of the employed Ukrainian citizens, while women make up 29% of the employed individuals. This gender disparity in employment could have various underlying factors, such as specific job preferences and required skills, or the maternity leave that was reported by 10% of respondents. Addressing these disparities and ensuring equal opportunities for both male and female Ukrainian refugees in the labour market may be crucial for promoting their successful integration and financial independence in Romania.



Graph 32: Occupation performed by the employed Ukrainians (top nine according to the results)



According to the seven employers who reported hiring Ukrainian citizens in their companies, the majority of Ukrainian refugees they employed (57%) work as specialists in various fields of activity. This illustrates that Ukrainian refugees bring diverse skills and expertise to the companies that have hired them.

Additionally, there were 37% Ukrainian refugees employed as unskilled workers, highlighting the availability of employment opportunities for individuals with varying levels of qualifications and experience. Moreover, there were 3% Ukrainian refugees employed as service workers and another 3% employed as plant and machine operators, machine, and equipment assemblers.

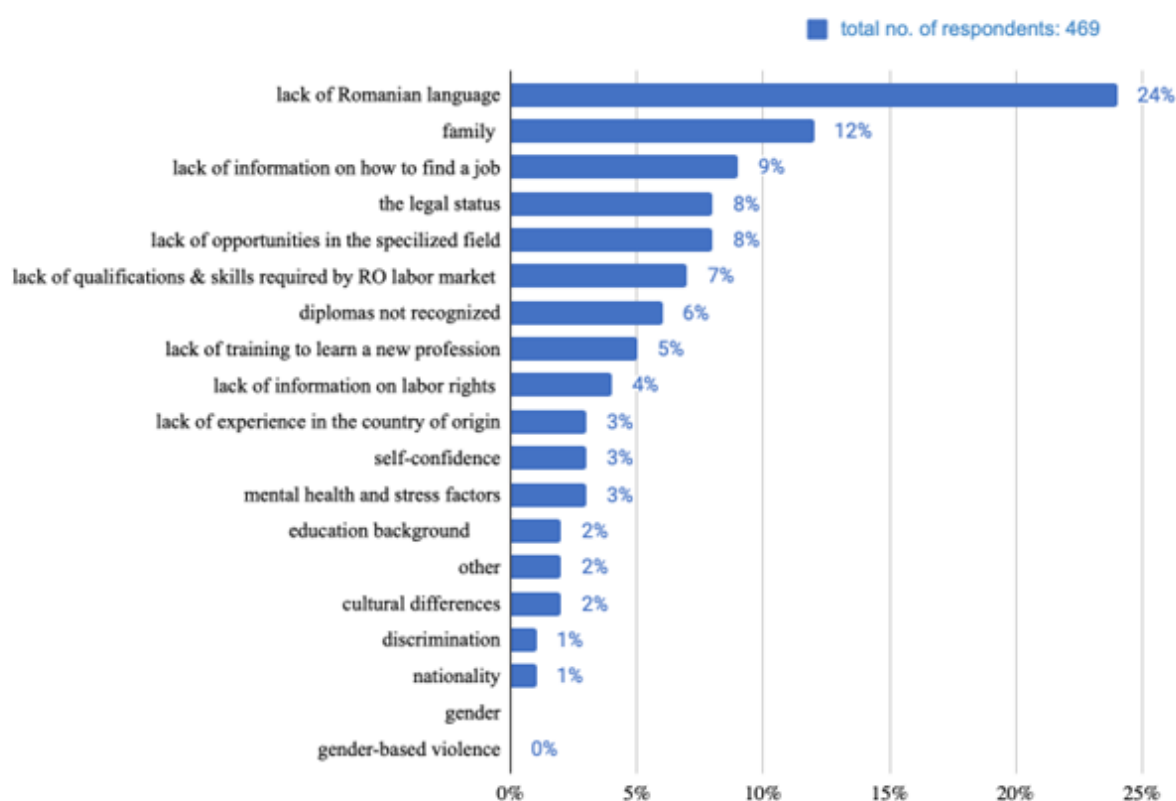
Overall, the seven companies participating in the study have employed a total of 71 Ukrainian refugees. It is encouraging to see that Ukrainian refugees have been able to find employment in various occupational categories, demonstrating their diverse skill sets and adaptability in the Romanian labour market.

5.2 Ukrainian refugees' employment barriers

5.2.1 Ukrainian refugees' perspectives

The survey respondents were asked if they met any impediments in the process of finding a job. Out of the 160 respondents, almost 70% reported that they felt hindered, or that they were not aware of impediments, while 31% mentioned that they did not feel hindered.

Graph 33: Impediments to finding a job (refugees)



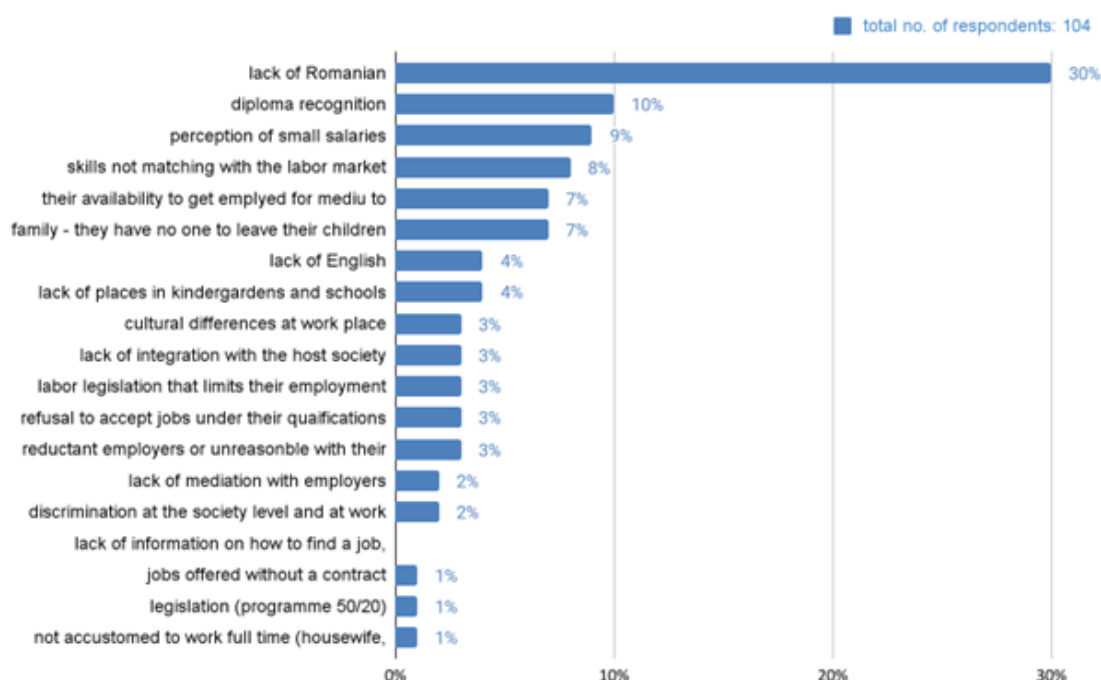
Furthermore, the respondents were asked to choose the five main impediments in finding a job. According to the data reported, the common obstacles faced by the respondents are: lack of Romanian proficiency, family, lack of information on how to find a job, their legal status, lack of qualification and skills required in the Romanian market, and the limited job opportunities matching their previous experiences.

- **Language Barrier:** A plurality of respondents (24%) cited the inability to speak Romanian as a significant challenge in finding employment. Language proficiency is crucial for effective communication and job performance in the Romanian labour market.
- **Family Responsibilities:** A notable percentage of respondents (12%) identified family responsibilities as a barrier to entering the Romanian labour market. Balancing work and family obligations can be demanding, especially for those with dependents requiring care.
- **Lack of Information:** Some respondents (9%) mentioned a lack of information on how to find a job as an obstacle to their economic activity in Romania. Access to comprehensive and accessible information about job search strategies and resources can enhance their job search effectiveness.
- **Legal Status:** A significant number of respondents (8%) considered their legal status in Romania as an impediment to finding employment. Challenges related to obtaining necessary legal documentation and work permits can restrict their ability to access job opportunities.
- **Limited Job Opportunities:** Another group of respondents (8%) highlighted the lack of labour opportunities in their specialised field as a hindrance to finding employment in Romania. This indicates a mismatch between their previous work experience in Ukraine and the job market demand in Romania.
- **Qualifications and Skills Mismatch:** Some respondents (7%) expressed concerns about not possessing the qualifications and skills required by the Romanian labour market. Their expertise and specialisation from Ukraine may not align with the specific requirements of available job positions.



5.2.2 NGOs' perspectives

Graph 34: Impediments to finding a job (NGOs)



NGO respondents were asked what they consider to be the main five impediments for Ukrainian refugees in finding a job.

The survey results indicate that language proficiency is the most significant barrier faced by Ukrainian refugees when seeking employment, with 30% of respondents highlighting it as a major challenge. This aligns with the earlier finding that a significant number of refugees mentioned not speaking Romanian as a reason for not finding a job.

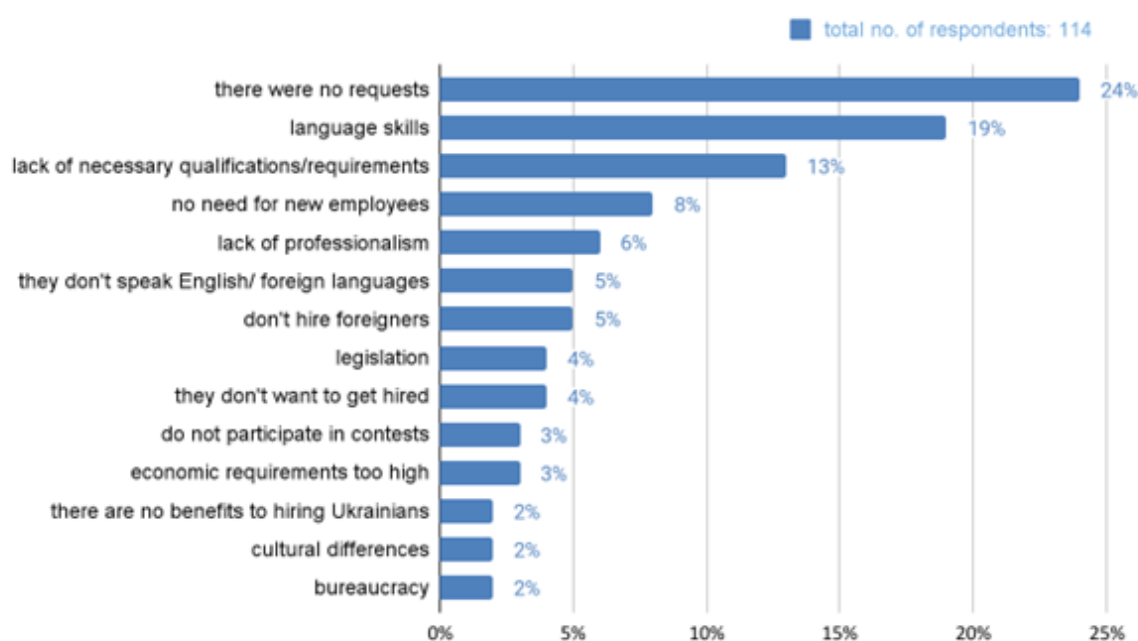
The second most common barrier reported is the recognition of diplomas, with 10% of respondents noting this as an obstacle. This suggests that many Ukrainian refugees face difficulties in having their qualifications recognised in the Romanian labour market, which may limit their opportunities for employment in their respective fields such as psychology, law, etc. Issues in diploma recognition have also been reported by a significant number of Ukrainian refugees.

Another notable barrier mentioned by respondents is the perception of small salaries, with 9% expressing this concern. This suggests that some refugees may find it challenging to secure employment that offers adequate remuneration based on their skills and qualifications. It is important to note that the perception of small salaries was identified only by NGO representatives. On the contrary, the Ukrainian refugees participating in the focus group in București declared that they are satisfied with their salaries, and some of them even consider them to be higher than what they could have earned in Ukraine.

Additionally, 8% of respondents mentioned that the skills and qualifications possessed by Ukrainian refugees do not match the labour market demand. This highlights the importance of aligning refugees' skills and qualifications with the needs of the Romanian job market to improve their employability. The survey also reveals that the responsibilities of caring for children without supervision (7%) and the lack of interest among Ukrainian refugees in obtaining medium- to long-term employment (7%) are perceived as barriers to finding jobs. These factors may affect the ability of refugees, particularly women with childcare responsibilities, to actively engage in the labour market. Similar findings have been reported by a large number of Ukrainian refugees.

5.2.3 Employers' perspectives

Graph 35: Impediments to hiring Ukrainian citizens (employers)



The employer respondents were asked to name the five main reasons for not hiring Ukrainian refugees so far. The main reason employers cited for not hiring Ukrainian refugees is the lack of job requests or demand for their services, with 24% of employers stating this as the reason. This shows that there may be limited opportunities or specific job market conditions that do not align with the skills and qualifications of Ukrainian refugees.

The second most common reason reported is the language barrier, with 19% of employers noting that Ukrainian refugees do not speak Romanian proficiently. This language barrier may affect effective communication and integration into the workplace. As noted above, similar findings have been reported by both refugees and NGO respondents.

Furthermore, 13% of employers stated that Ukrainian refugees lack the necessary qualifications required for the specific fields of operation in their companies. This suggests that there may be a mismatch between the skills and qualifications of Ukrainian refugees and the job requirements of certain industries or sectors. Compared to the results from refugee and NGO respondents, it can be argued that the mismatch is one of the possible reasons why Ukrainian refugees are not able to find employment.

Other reasons mentioned by employers include a lack of vacancies (8%), the perception of a lack of professionalism among Ukrainian citizens (6%), lack of English or foreign language skills (5%), and company policies that do not prioritise hiring foreign citizens (5%).

Furthermore, according to the respondents (total no. of respondents: 75), 59% of the employers stated that they are not open to hiring Ukrainian citizens, while 41% expressed their willingness to hire Ukrainians. This indicates a mixed attitude among employers regarding the employment of Ukrainian citizens.

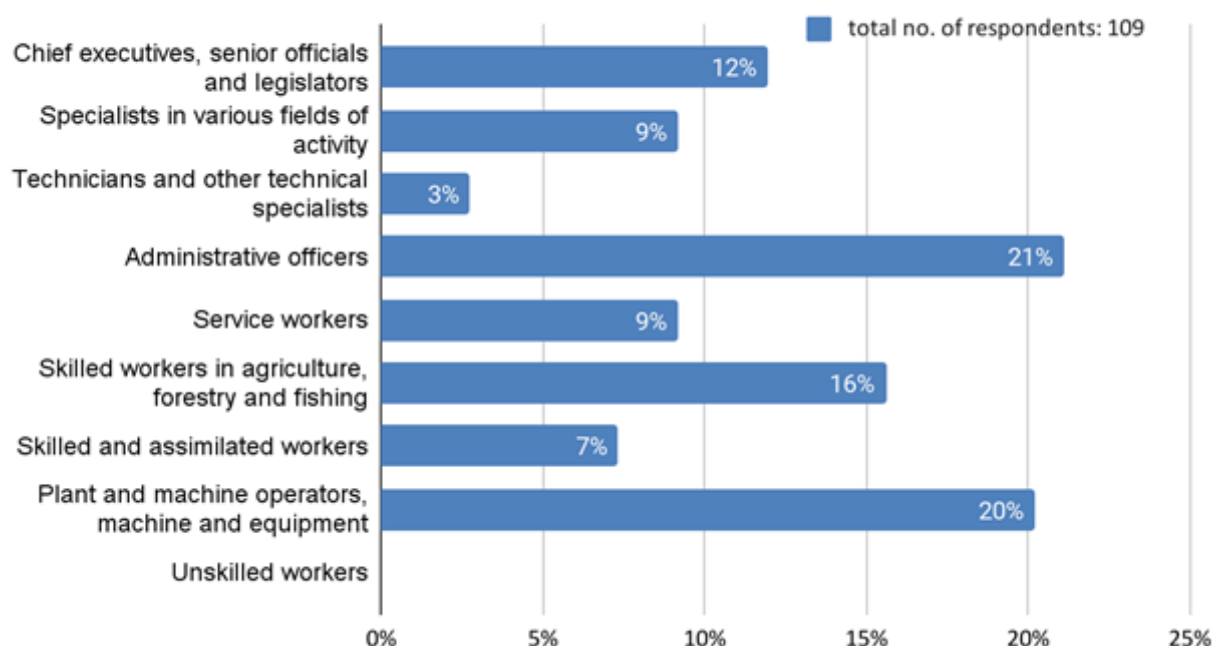
As observed above (Graph 34), the reasons for not wanting to hire Ukrainians may vary and could be influenced by factors such as language barriers, cultural differences, concerns about qualifications, or specific company policies.



5.3 Opportunities in target cities

5.3.1 NGOs' perspectives

Graph 36: Occupations in demand in the Romanian labour market

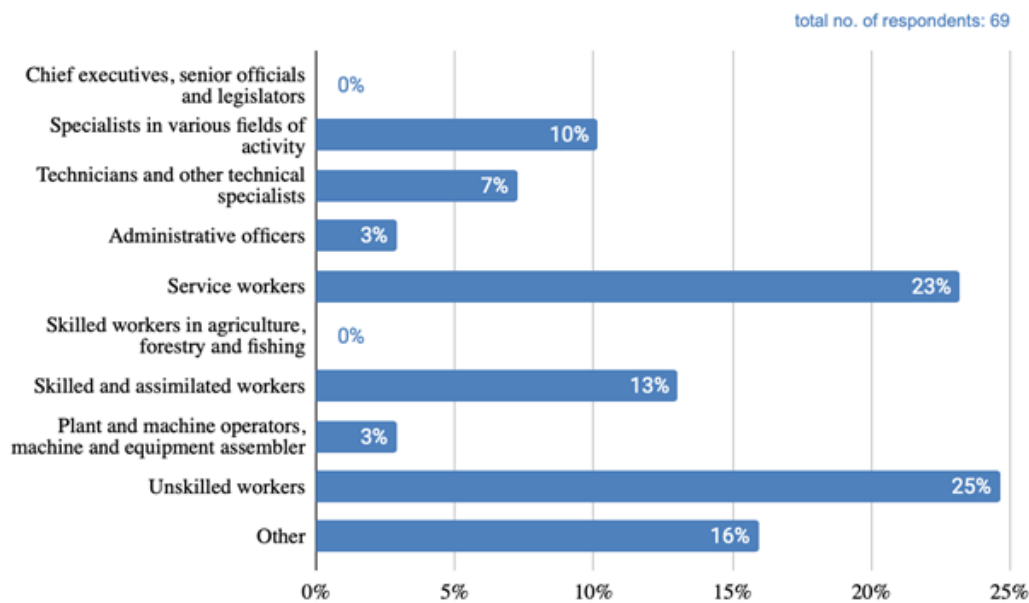


The representatives from NGOs were asked about demand in the Romanian labour market. According to the responses from the NGO representatives, it appears that there is a consistent need for certain occupations. The survey results indicate that unskilled workers (20%) and positions in the services sector (21%) are in high demand. This suggests that there is a continuous need for individuals to fill roles that do not require specialised skills or qualifications, such as manual labour and service-oriented positions.

The third most common category of occupations in demand is skilled and assimilated workers (16%). This implies that there is also a demand for individuals with specific skills and expertise, who are able to integrate into the local labour market and contribute to various industries.

Furthermore, the survey illustrates that specialists in various fields (12%) are also sought after in the Romanian labour market. This suggests that there is a need for professionals who possess specialised knowledge and qualifications in specific areas of expertise, knowledge and qualifications that might not match with the one of the Ukrainian citizens.

Graph 37: Occupations found by the Ukrainian refugees counselled by NGOs



Additionally, when experts from NGOs were questioned about the occupations that the refugees whom they counselled managed to secure, they indicated that 25% of them found employment as unskilled workers, while 23% found jobs in the service sector. These findings closely parallel the occupations reported by the refugee respondents themselves, indicating a consistency between the types of jobs that refugees are finding and the types of jobs available for them.

5.3.2 Employers' perspectives

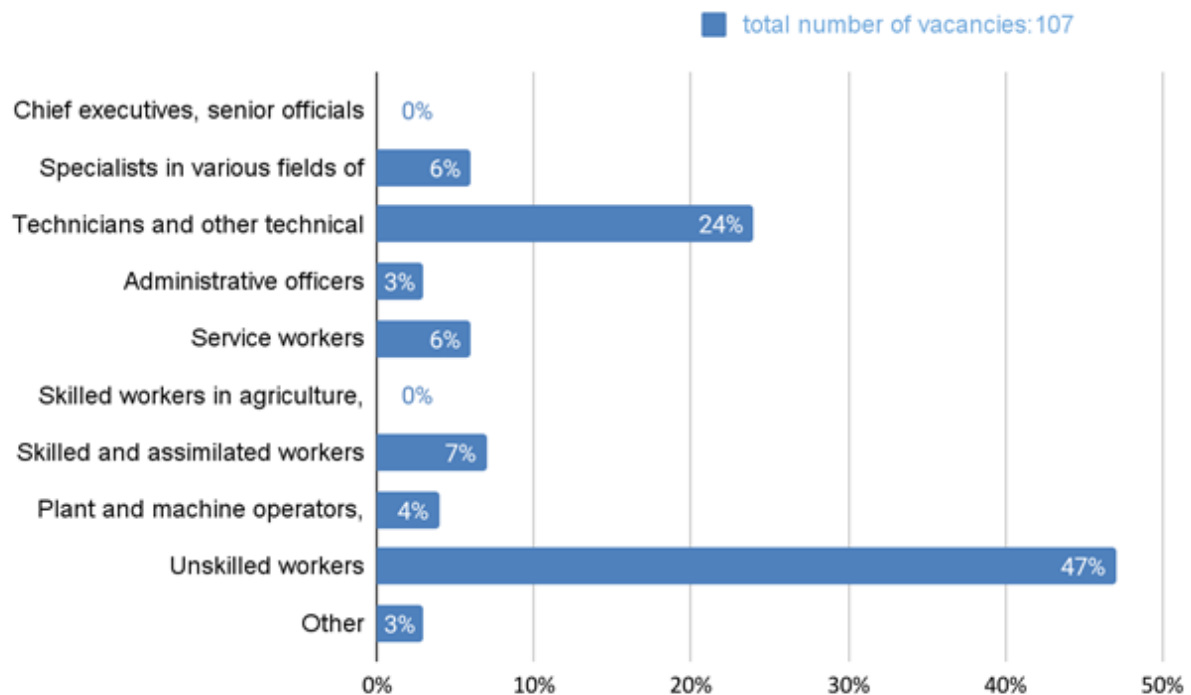
The respondents were asked if there are available jobs for Ukrainian citizens in the companies that they represent.

Based on the 19 employer respondents, a total of 107 vacancies across various occupations were reported. The highest number of vacancies (47%) are for unskilled workers. This is followed by vacancies for technicians and other technical specialists (24%).

Other occupations such as skilled and assimilated workers, service workers, specialists in various fields of activity, plant and machine operators, machine and equipment assemblers, and administrative officers have a smaller number of vacancies available.

The findings from the survey indicate that there are indeed some opportunities for Ukrainian citizens to find employment in Romania, particularly in the unskilled labour market and technical roles. However, it's essential to note that the survey had a limited number of respondents, and therefore, the results may not represent the entire general population accurately.

Graph 38: Number of vacancies in the companies

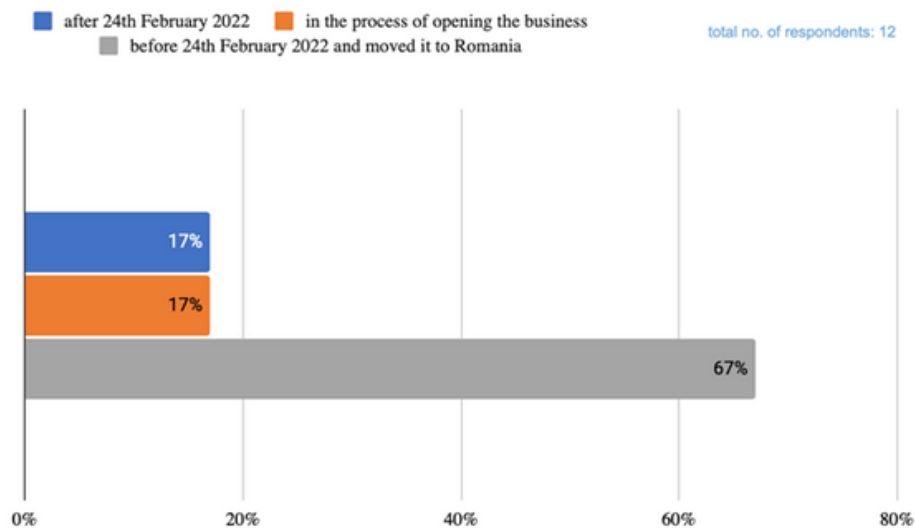


6. Self-employment/ Entrepreneurship

6.1 Ukrainian refugees' self-employment

Regarding the distribution of responses related to business ownership (Graph 39) in Romania, 17% of the respondents reported being in the process of opening their own business in the country, indicating a proactive approach towards entrepreneurship in their new location. Additionally, another 17% of respondents had already successfully set up their business in Romania, suggesting that a significant portion of Ukrainian refugees are actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

Graph 39: Time of business opening

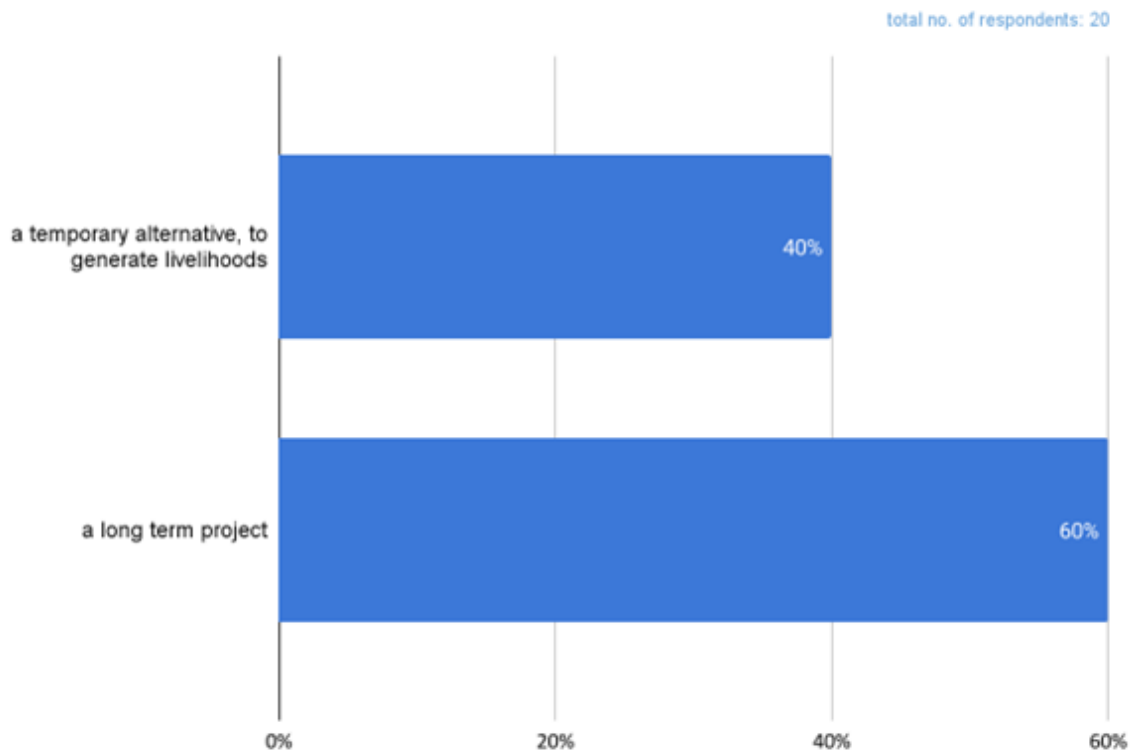


The majority of respondents (67%) mentioned that they have moved their existing business from Ukraine or other countries to Romania. This finding suggests that a considerable number of Ukrainian refugees have taken the opportunity to continue their entrepreneurial ventures in their host country. These entrepreneurs have likely seen potential opportunities and advantages in the Romanian market and have decided to relocate their businesses accordingly.

While the survey provides insights into the percentage of respondents engaged in entrepreneurship, it also highlights an interesting observation regarding the lack of specific information about the types of businesses operated by these individuals. Most respondents did not specify the nature or sector of their businesses, simply referring to a form of private entrepreneurship. Only a small number of respondents provided more detailed information about their business activities in Ukraine or their plans for entrepreneurship in Romania (i.e., psychologist practice). This lack of specific information could be attributed to various reasons, such as privacy concerns or the transitional nature of their business ventures. It also suggests that further research and support may be needed to better understand the types of businesses established or planned by Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

In conclusion, the survey results indicate that a notable portion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania have experience as business owners or freelancers, and a significant number of them have expressed interest in starting or continuing their entrepreneurial journey in Romania. Providing targeted support and resources to these entrepreneurs could contribute to their economic stability and successful integration into the Romanian business community.

Graph 40: The perspective of the business-owners



The survey results reveal that more than half (60%) of Ukrainian refugees who have ventured into entrepreneurship in Romania view their businesses as long-term projects. This finding suggests that a significant proportion of these entrepreneurs are committed to establishing and growing their businesses in their new host country. Despite potential challenges and obstacles, these individuals are determined to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions and invest in their long-term success.

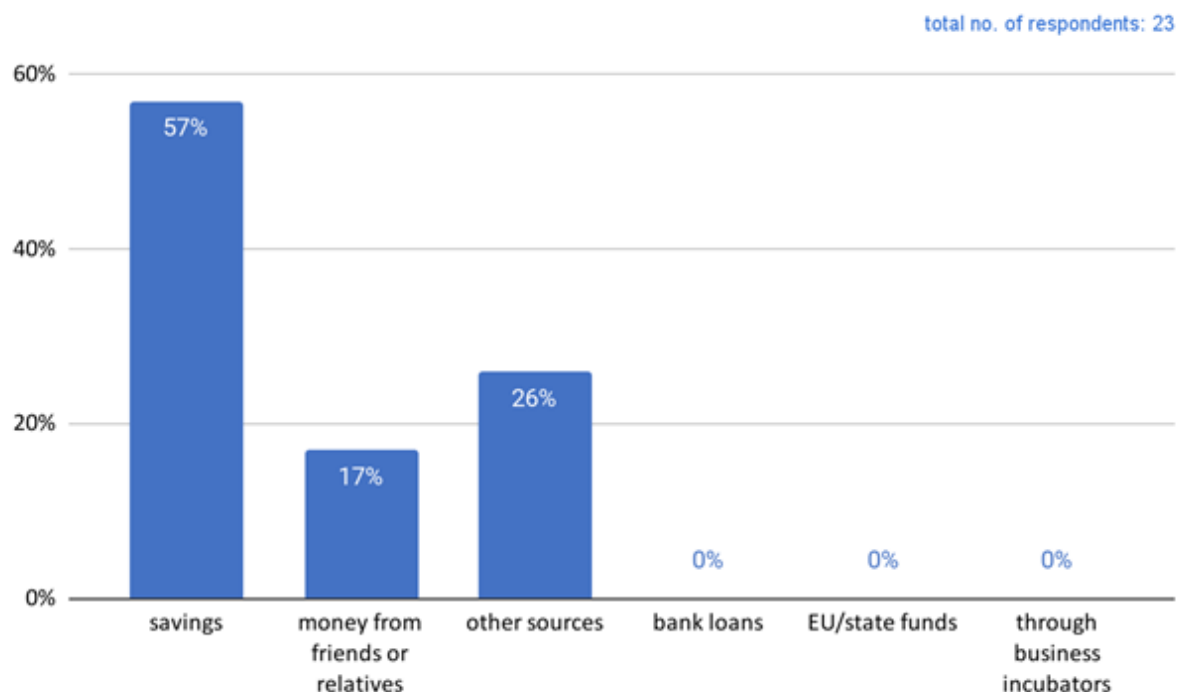
On the other hand, around 40% of respondents consider their businesses as a temporary alternative. This smaller group of entrepreneurs may have different objectives for their businesses, such as generating income during their stay in Romania or testing the market before making a more substantial commitment. While they might not envision their businesses as long-term endeavours, their entrepreneurial initiatives still contribute to the economic activity and diversity in the local business landscape.

The high proportion of Ukrainians who perceive their businesses as long-term projects reflects their resilience and willingness to overcome barriers that may arise while starting a business in a new country. The Ukrainian refugees respondents demonstrate determination to adapt and contribute to the local economy, despite the challenges they might face due to language barriers, cultural differences, or navigating unfamiliar business environments.

Understanding the motivations and perspectives of Ukrainian entrepreneurs is valuable for policymakers, NGOs, and other support organisations. By recognising that a significant number of Ukrainian refugees see their businesses as long-term ventures, stakeholders can develop targeted assistance programmes and resources to support these entrepreneurs in their growth and integration into the Romanian business community.

It is also essential to acknowledge the potential challenges that entrepreneurs may encounter, regardless of their long-term or temporary outlook. Addressing these challenges through tailored support, training, and mentorship can foster a conducive environment for entrepreneurial success and contribute to the overall economic and social integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

Graph 41: Financial sources for running a business



One of the essential conditions for starting and maintaining a business is sufficient financial support (Graph 38). Fifty-seven percent of the respondents used their own money to start and run a business; 17% of the respondents used money from friends and relatives to supply their business. Twenty-six percent of the answers show that people used other sources to start and maintain their business.

It is essential to note that none of the business owners applied for financial support from banks, funding from the European Union, or state funding. The participants also did not use business incubators to generate a budget for starting a business. This may be due to a lack of visibility of such opportunities or other restrictive factors such as legislation and information on how to access funding which are described in more detail in the next section.

The survey results highlight the significant role of personal resources and support from friends and relatives in facilitating the establishment and operation of businesses among Ukrainian refugees in Romania. Specifically, 57% of respondents reported using their own money to initiate and sustain their businesses. This self-funding approach suggests that a considerable number of entrepreneurs are leveraging their personal savings or assets to kickstart their ventures, indicating a high level of commitment and determination or the lack of other sources to fund their business.

Furthermore, 17% of respondents mentioned drawing on financial contributions from friends and relatives to support their business endeavours. This finding underscores the importance of social networks and the support system within the Ukrainian refugee community in Romania. It also highlights the willingness of friends and family members to invest in these entrepreneurs' business ideas and aspirations, demonstrating a sense of trust and belief in their potential for success.

Interestingly, 26% of respondents reported utilising sources other than their own money or support from friends and relatives to start and maintain their businesses. Although the survey does not provide specific details on these alternative sources, they could include various forms of financing, such as grants, microloans, or private investors. The use of diverse funding sources suggests that some Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Romania are exploring different avenues to secure the necessary resources for their businesses.

Notably, the survey revealed that none of the business owners sought financial support from banks, funding opportunities from the European Union, or state funding. Additionally, they did not make use of business incubators to generate budgets for their start-ups. This finding raises important questions about the awareness and accessibility of such funding and support opportunities among Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

The lack of utilisation of traditional financial institutions and government-sponsored funding programmes could be attributed to various factors. It is possible that these entrepreneurs are unaware of available funding options or face challenges in accessing them due to language barriers, bureaucratic processes, or lack of information on eligibility criteria. Addressing these barriers and improving the visibility of financial support programmes could open up additional opportunities for Ukrainian entrepreneurs to grow and expand their businesses.

6.2 Self-employment and barriers to entrepreneurship among Ukrainian refugees

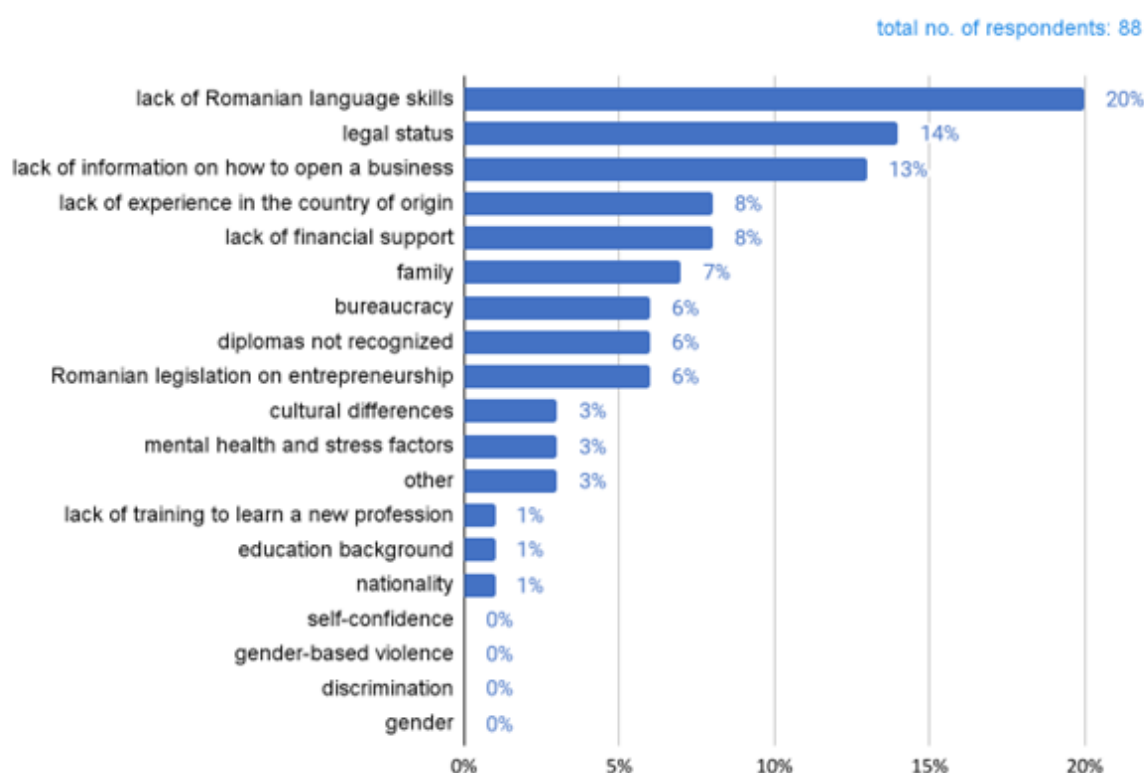
The survey results provide valuable insights into the main barriers faced by Ukrainian refugees in Romania when it comes to starting their own businesses. The language barrier has been identified as the most prominent obstacle, with 20% of participants considering it a major hindrance. This highlights the importance of language skills not only in communication with customers and partners but also in understanding the procedures and steps required to open and run a business in Romania.

The legal status of respondents is another significant restrictive factor, with 14% indicating that their international protection status poses challenges in starting a business. This may be connected to the fact that 13% of respondents reported not being aware of the procedures for opening a business, indicating a need for improved access to information and legal support for aspiring entrepreneurs. Furthermore, during the focus group discussions in Bucureşti, participants highlighted that refugees from Ukraine who aspire to open their own businesses in Romania encounter difficulties primarily due to the lack of advice and guidance from Romanian authorities. This absence of clear information and support in navigating the legal and regulatory aspects of entrepreneurship creates uncertainty and fear among aspiring entrepreneurs, leading them to believe that they may not succeed in their business ventures.

Lack of prior experience in entrepreneurship and financial support are also considered significant barriers in opening or running a business in Romania by 8% of Ukrainian refugee respondents. The lack of financial support was discussed also during the focus group in Brăila, where participants expressed their interest in receiving financial support in the form of a grant to cover the costs associated with opening and launching their businesses. They emphasised that such a grant would be highly beneficial, as it could alleviate some of the financial burdens and obstacles they face in the initial stages of starting a business.

Starting a business involves various expenses, including registration fees, licensing costs, rental fees for commercial spaces, purchasing equipment or inventory, marketing and advertising expenses, and more. For Ukrainian refugees who may have limited financial resources and face challenges in accessing traditional funding sources, these initial costs can be significant barriers to entrepreneurship.

Graph 42: Barriers to opening a business in Romania



Respondents identified family responsibilities as an important barrier in the context of both employment and entrepreneurship. Family obligations can impact the time and resources available for individuals to start and manage their own businesses, indicating a need for support services that address these challenges.

Issues related to the Romanian legal framework, such as legislation on entrepreneurship, diploma legalisation, and bureaucratic complexities, were mentioned by 6% of respondents as significant barriers. This highlights the importance of streamlining administrative procedures and providing legal guidance to facilitate business creation.

Cultural differences are considered a limitation by only 3% of respondents, indicating that most Ukrainian refugees are adapting well to the cultural context of Romania. Nonetheless, cultural awareness and sensitivity training can still be valuable in ensuring successful business interactions in a diverse environment.

Stress and anxiety, which are common challenges for individuals coming from a war zone, were also seen as a barrier by 3% of respondents. This emphasises the importance of providing mental health support and resources to help entrepreneurs cope with the emotional challenges they may encounter during their business journey.

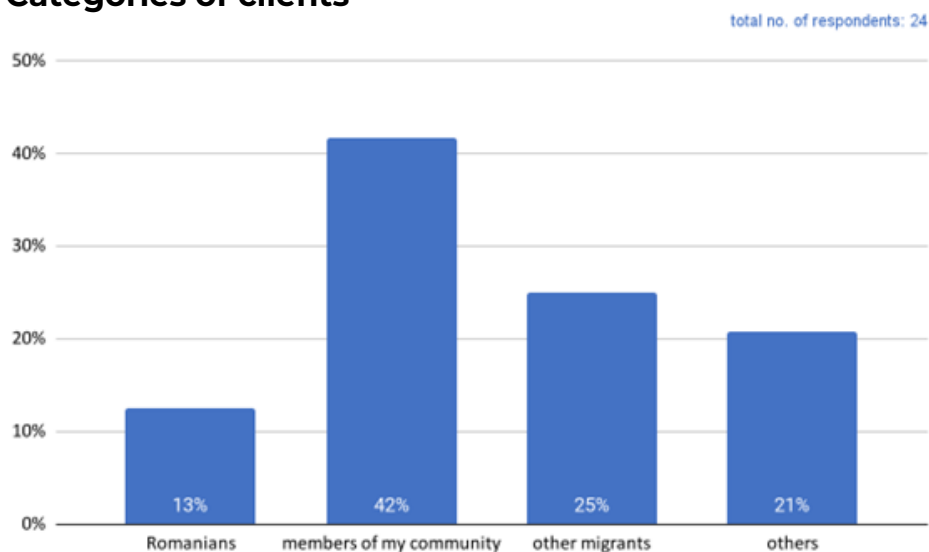
While some factors, such as lack of training in a new profession, educational background, and nationality, were mentioned by only one respondent each, it is crucial to address individual challenges and provide tailored support for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Overall, the survey results highlight the need for targeted strategies and support services to address the barriers faced by Ukrainian refugees in starting their own businesses in Romania. These may include language and entrepreneurship training, legal support, financial assistance, and resources to help entrepreneurs balance family responsibilities. By addressing these obstacles, stakeholders can create a more supportive environment for Ukrainian entrepreneurs, empowering them to contribute to the local economy and fostering their successful integration into Romanian society.



6.3 Self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in Romania for Ukrainian refugees

As previously explained, only around 7% of the survey participants declared to they were self-employed or own their own business. Among these, it seems that the most significant part of their clientele, above 40%, is represented by members of their community, namely Ukrainian refugees or Ukrainians who were already living in Romania. In addition to this, migrants from other countries represent about one quarter of the total clients, while the Romanian population is listed among buyers of about 13% of products or services offered by Ukrainian refugees.

Graph 43: Categories of clients

Thirty-six people stated they would benefit from professional language training and from financial support in opening a business in Romania. Another highly rated type of assistance consists of workshops on how to find financial support and workshops on how to write business plans. Survey respondents rated professional training and market training as the least needed types of support.

Table 5: Rating of the helpfulness of types of support available in opening a business

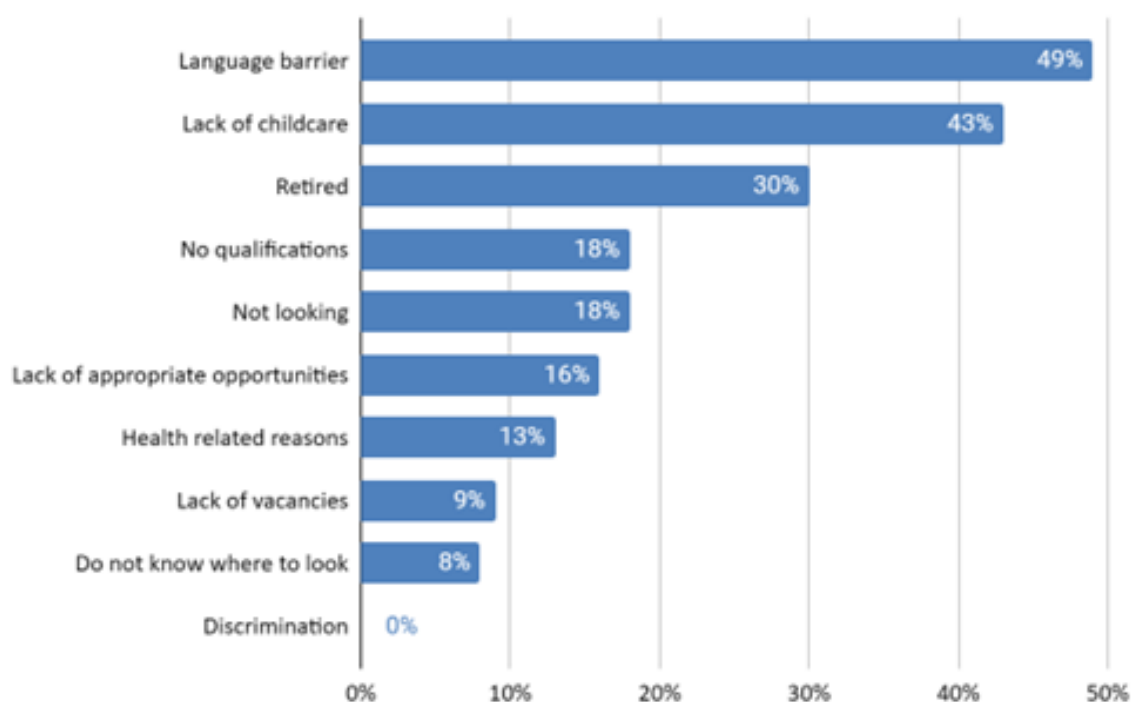
Statement	1 totally disagree	2	3	4	5 totally agree	Overall
professional training	5	3	9	12	21	50
legal counseling	1	1	9	9	29	49
financial support	1	0	9	6	36	52
marketing training	2	3	10	13	21	49
financial management training	4	2	9	12	24	51
professional language training	2	2	4	7	36	51
workshops on how to write business plans	1	3	9	8	30	51
workshops on how to find financial support	0	3	6	10	31	50
another	5	1	9	4	15	34

7. Training and labour market skills

7.1 Romanian and English language skills

Different studies conducted on the situation of the Ukrainian in Romania over the past year and half have approached the employment dimension in terms of needs and barriers. Most of them conclude that a lack of language skills is a significant impediment to employment, or even the most significant one. Graph 44 below showcases the results of research conducted for UNHCR in Bucureşti in September-October 2022 and indicates that almost half of the surveyed refugees defined the language barrier as the most important factor in their unemployment.

Graph 44: Reasons for unemployment (by % of respondents who do not currently have employment)[43]



In this context, it is essential for the Ukrainian refugees to improve their Romanian language skills or at least the use of English and other widely spoken languages. The table below illustrates the Romanian and English language skills of the participants in the study. The biggest share of respondents, 102, do not speak Romanian at all, while only 11 people declared they have advanced language skills for Romanian and 22 for English.

[43] UNHCR Romania. (2022).Area-Based Assessment - Bucharest - September/October 2022, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/98372>.

Table 6: Level of Romanian/English language skills – refugees' assessment

Statement	Romanian	English	Overall
I do not speak at all	102	62	164
Beginner level	65	50	115
Intermediate level	6	46	52
Advanced level	11	22	33

Another perspective on the issue is provided by the Romanian employers. Although the total number of Ukrainian refugees employed by the companies engaged in this study is small, it should be noted that, according to the evaluation of the employers, none of them have advanced skills of English or Romanian language, and most of them are considered beginners.

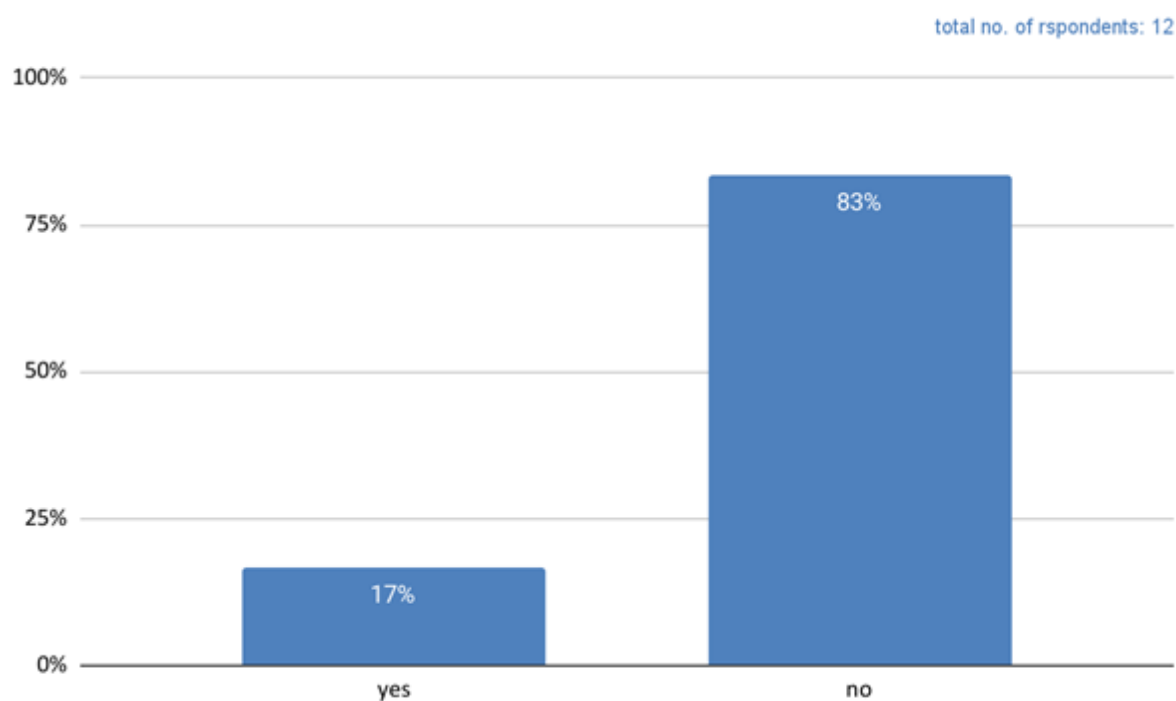
Table 7: Level of Romanian/English language skills – employers' assessment

Language	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Overall
Romanian	6	1	0	7
English	3	3	0	6

In addition to this, the NGO representatives participating in the study also confirm that, based on their experiences with refugee labour market integration in general, and after working with Ukrainian refugees, language classes are among the most important steps to employment. They argue that many of the refugees have competences and skills that would enable them to get employed, but it is difficult to do so when they don't speak the language.

7.2 Other labour related skills

Graph 45: Activities organised by the employers to facilitate integration



According to the employers surveyed, only 17% of them reported organising activities aimed at facilitating the integration of Ukrainian refugees in the work environment. These activities include initiatives like team building or mentoring programmes that can help foster a sense of belonging and support for the refugees in their new work environment.

However, the majority of employers, approximately 83%, do not allocate time and funding for such integration programmes. This indicates that a significant portion of employers may not have specific initiatives in place to assist Ukrainian refugees in adjusting to their new work environment and may not actively prioritise integration efforts.

The lack of dedicated integration activities could potentially pose challenges for Ukrainian refugees in their work environment, as they may face difficulties in adapting to the workplace culture and forming connections with their colleagues. Integrating refugees into the workforce is crucial for their overall well-being and productivity, as well as for fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. Employers who invest in integration programmes can positively contribute to the successful integration and long-term retention of Ukrainian refugees in the labour market.

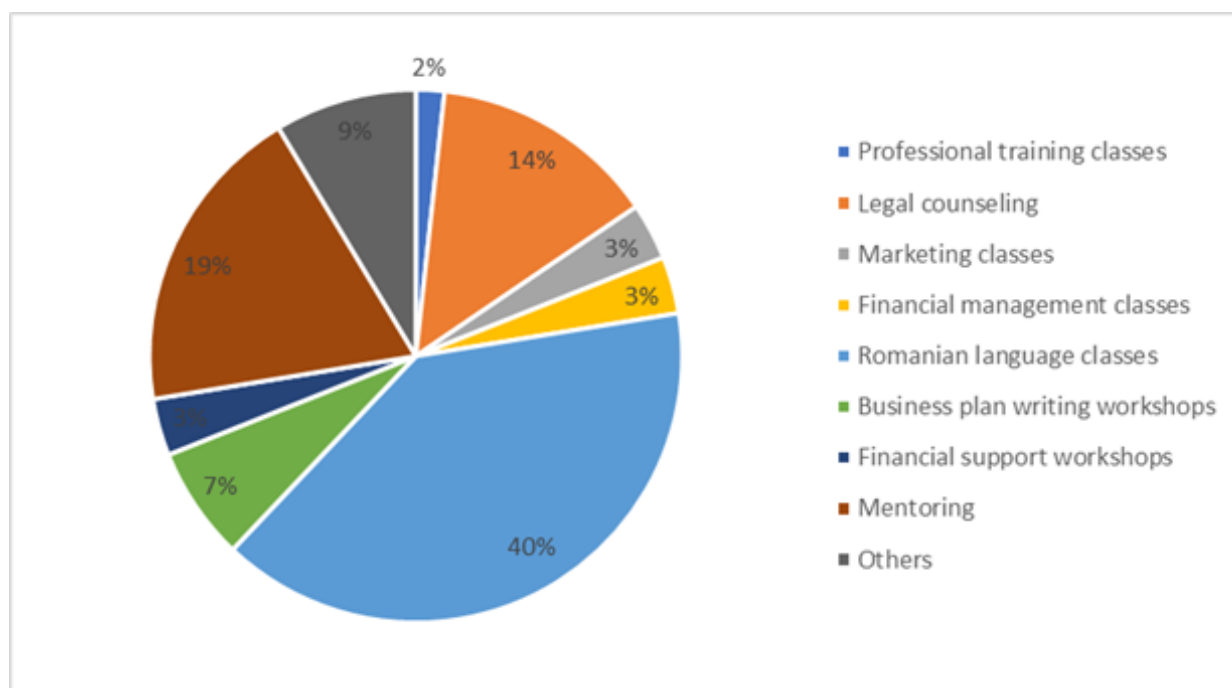
Table 8: Top professional skills and abilities (refugees' assessment)

Statement	
Teamwork	121
Communication	114
Ability to improve personal learning and performance	98
Problem solving	82
Decision making	80
Initiative	69
Time management	68
Creativity	62
Management	53
Ability to work under pressure	46
Autonomy	31
Digital skills	31
IT skills	31
Statistical skills	21

The personal assessment of the refugees of their own work-related skills reveals that most of them consider they work well within a team, and that they have good communication abilities. The formulation of the question encouraged the selection of the top five such abilities, thus allowing a significant number of refugees to also list the ability to improve personal learning and performance and problem solving capabilities among their qualities. However, only 31 respondents declared they have digital or IT skills, and can work in an autonomous manner. Statistical skills were the least chosen abilities, with only 21 selections.

This type of self-assessment, despite not necessarily reflecting the requirements of the available jobs in the labour market, can be a good indicator of the real needs of the Ukrainian refugees in terms of training and, in some cases, qualifications.

Graph 46: NGO organised trainings for refugees



Local and national NGOs in Romania have also been very active in receiving and assisting Ukrainian refugees since their arrival. These offer a wide range training and activities meant to help refugees become active in the employment field and even open their own business in Romania.

The fact that 40% of the NGOs participating in the study organise Romanian language classes is particularly important. Language barriers can be a significant obstacle for refugees seeking to integrate into the local labour market. By offering language classes, NGOs are addressing a critical need and helping refugees improve their communication skills, which is essential for job searches, workplace interactions, and overall integration into Romanian society.

Furthermore, the 20% of NGOs that organise mentoring activities are providing valuable support to refugees. Mentoring programmes can offer personalised guidance, advice, and encouragement to refugees as they navigate the complexities of the job market and work environment. This kind of support can significantly boost the confidence and prospects of Ukrainian refugees in their pursuit of employment.

The additional courses and workshops offered by NGOs, such as legal counselling, business plan writing, and professional training, further contribute to the comprehensive support provided to refugees. These resources can help refugees acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to start their own businesses or find suitable employment opportunities in Romania.

The discussions within focus groups which suggested that language remains the main issue hindering access to the local labour market align with the importance of language classes offered by NGOs. Language proficiency is a fundamental requirement for successful integration into the workforce, and efforts to address this challenge can make a substantial difference in the lives of Ukrainian refugees seeking to build a new future in Romania.

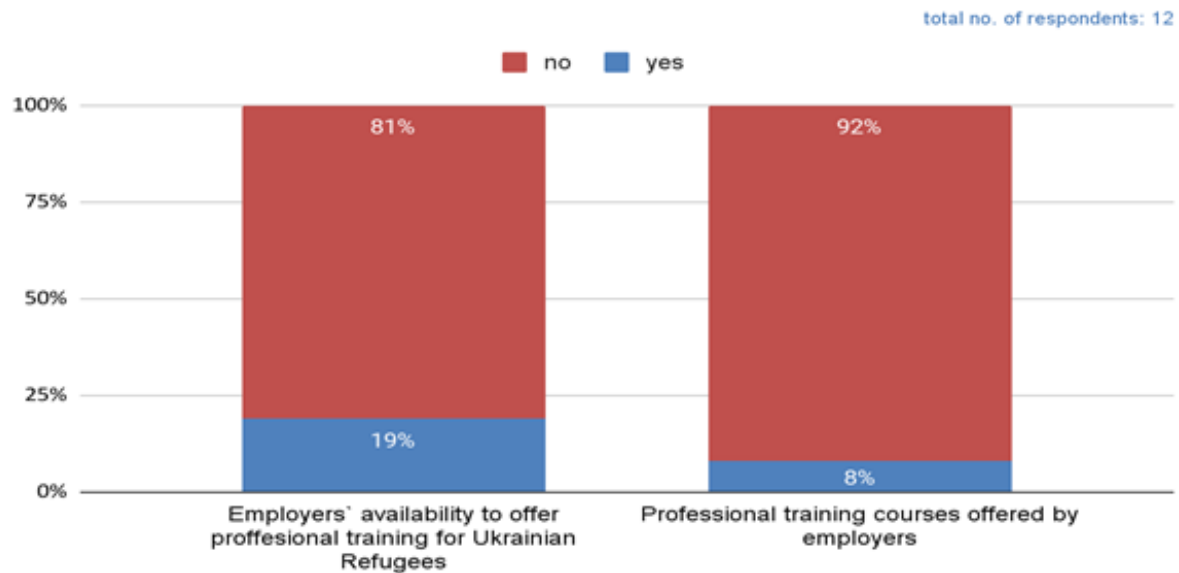
Overall, the active involvement of NGOs in assisting Ukrainian refugees is commendable, and their comprehensive approach in providing language support, mentoring, and various training opportunities contributes significantly to the successful integration of refugees into Romanian society and the labour market.

7.3 Professional training

Despite the fact that the Romanian labour market has been in need of skilled workers for years, it seems that few employers are willing to assist with the training of Ukrainian refugees. According to the data presented in Graph 47 below, about 20% of the employers participating in the research declared they would have availability to offer professional training for Ukrainian employers, but less than 10% actually offer such training courses.



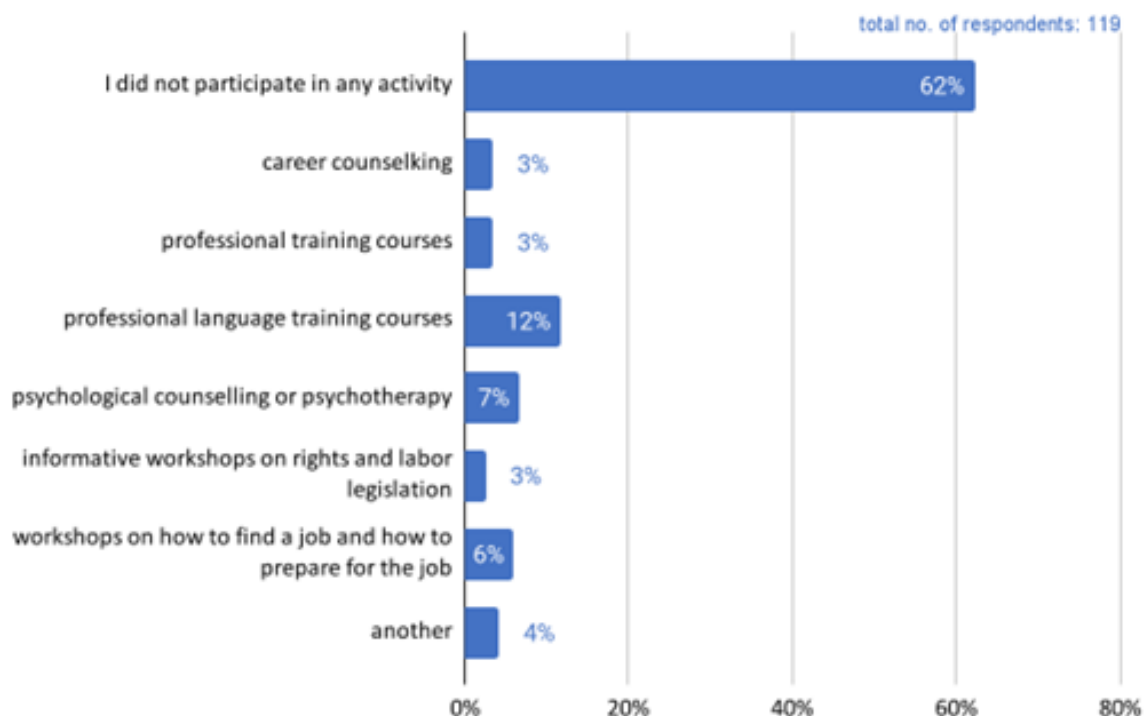
Graph 47: Employers' availability to provide professional training vs. employers offering professional training



Refugees' participation in such activities aimed at helping them find a job (Graph 48) is low, according to their responses in the study. Almost two thirds of them have not participated in any such activity, while the activity that gathered the highest percentage of participants, about 11%, was the professional language training courses. The smallest share of respondents, about 2%, have participated in workshops on rights and labour legislation. Regarding the professional training courses, the percentage of respondents who attended such activities is also very low, around 3%, indicating a low level of interest in such activities that would enable them to integrate easier in the local national labour market.

Furthermore, the participants in the focus group held in Galați emphasised the importance of attending professional courses or similar activities alongside their Romanian colleagues to enhance their competitiveness in the labour market. They highlighted that such opportunities for skill development and professional advancement are not only beneficial for their integration into the local workforce but also for their career progression.

Graph 48: Refugees' participation in activities for finding a job



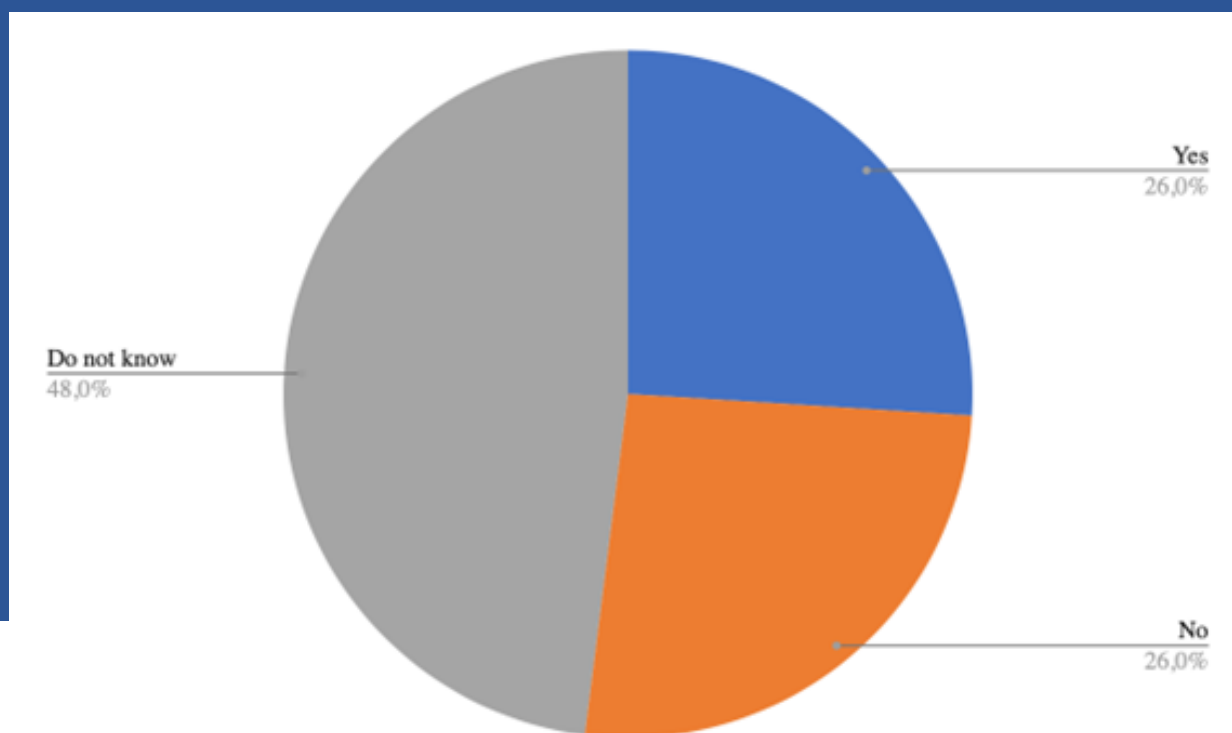
The low participation of Ukrainian refugees in activities aimed at helping them find jobs (Graph 46) is concerning, and the fact that among those who did participate, only 26% estimate that these activities have helped them get employed or provided more employment opportunities in general is a cause for reflection.

The fact that the same share of respondents (26%) evaluated that these activities have not helped them at all indicates that there may be issues with the effectiveness or design of these initiatives. It is essential to understand the reasons behind this perception to identify areas of improvement. Some possible reasons for this perception could include a mismatch between the skills acquired through the activities and the demands of the job market, limited networking opportunities, or inadequate follow-up support.

The fact that almost half of the respondents could not assess the contribution of participating in these activities suggests that there might be a lack of awareness or clarity about the outcomes or benefits of such initiatives. This highlights the importance of better communication and transparency in showcasing the impact and success stories resulting from these activities.

To address these challenges, it is essential to conduct comprehensive evaluations and assessments of the effectiveness of the activities aimed at helping refugees find employment.

Graph 49: Contribution of participation in employment related activities to finding a job



Additionally, collaboration between NGOs, local authorities, and employers can lead to more effective programmes. Understanding the needs of the local job market and aligning the training and activities accordingly can increase the chances of successful employment outcomes for refugees.

Continuous support and follow-up after the activities can also play a critical role in enhancing their impact. Job placement assistance, mentorship, and ongoing skill development can ensure that refugees are better equipped for sustainable employment.

Table 10 below shows that those who did not attend activities developed in order to help them get employed have, in general, high expectations from such programmes. Once again, the professional language training courses receive the highest evaluation from 55 of the respondents, and professional training courses and informative workshops on rights and labour legislation are also believed to have a positive impact in the employment process. Psychological counselling or psychotherapy is believed to be of very high importance for 27 respondents, while 31 neither agree nor disagree on its importance.

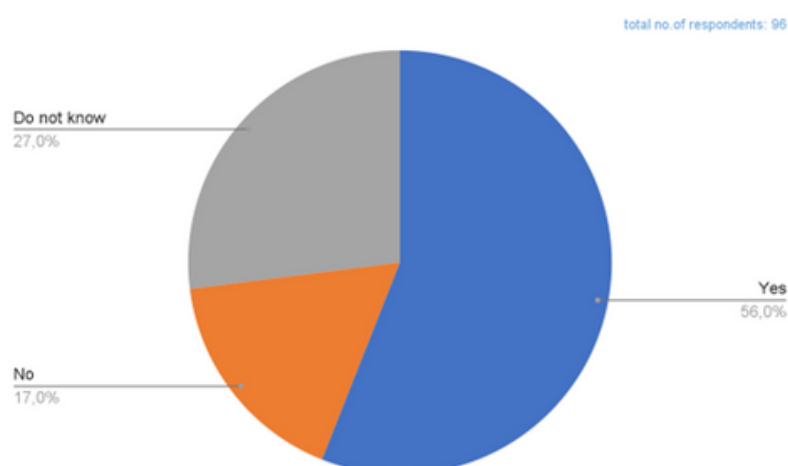
Table 9: Activities refugees consider would help them find a job

Statement	1 totally disagree	2	3	4	5 totally agree
career counseling	7	8	26	19	26
professional training courses	6	4	21	22	34
professional language training courses	3	1	9	16	55
psychological counseling or psychotherapy	6	9	31	9	27
informative workshops on rights and labor legislation	2	6	26	16	32
workshops on how to find a job and how to prepare for the job	7	8	19	17	27

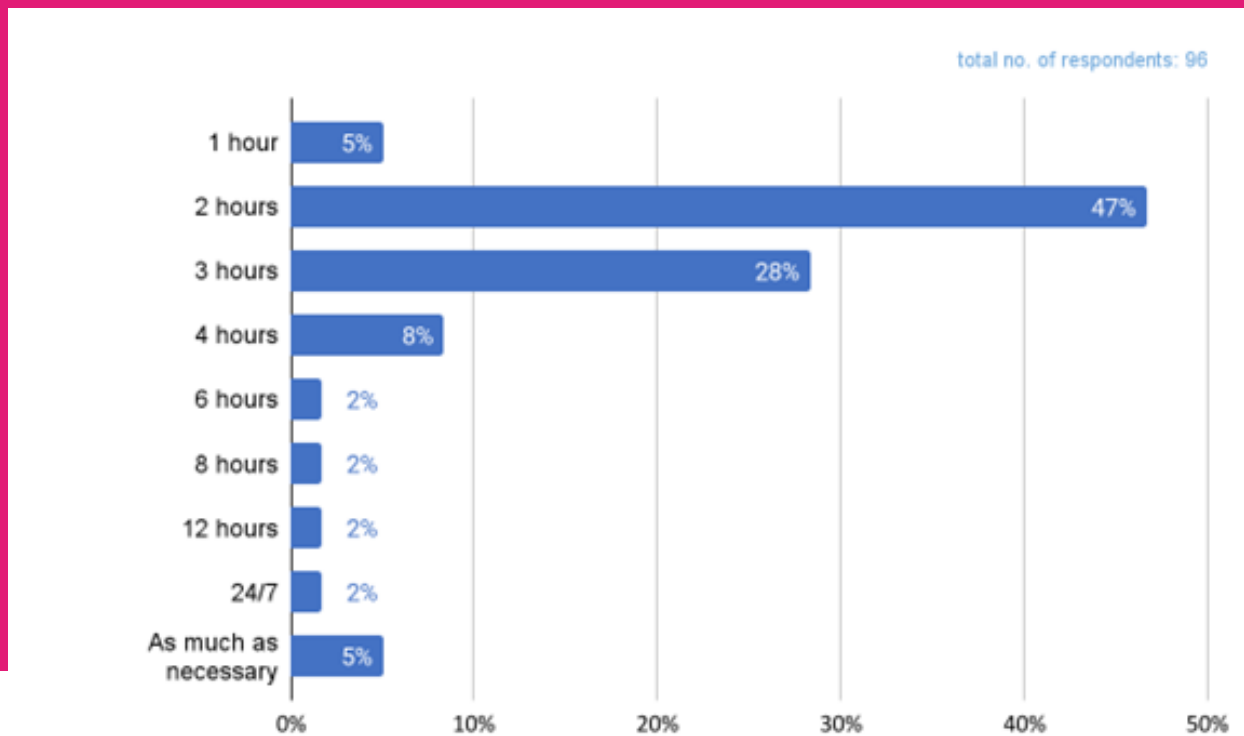
All in all, despite the low participation of refugees in employment related activities, there seems to be growing interest from the Ukrainian refugee community in attending them (Graph 47). More than half of them expressed their willingness to participate in training that would help them learn a profession, while 17% of the participants stated they are not interested in professional training. Twenty-seven % declared they do not know if they would participate, if this opportunity were presented to them.

Graph 50: Willingness to participate in training in order to learn a profession

Regarding the amount of time Ukrainian refugees would be willing to spend in professional training (Graph 50), the biggest share of respondents declared they would spend two hours per week, while some of them said they would spend as much as necessary.



Graph 51: Amount of time available for professional training (per week)



To sum up, even if until now the level of interest of Ukrainian refugees towards professional training activities seems to have been relatively low, it is likely to increase. Apart from the findings in this study, this prediction is also based on the changes in the housing and food programme in the last couple of months, which demand Ukrainian refugees to attend training and register with the local employment agencies for finding jobs, in order to continue receiving the financial assistance.

Training

developing the skills, experience
to perform the

8. Conclusions

Socio-demographic profile of Ukrainians

The results of this research, along with other studies previously mentioned, highlight the fact that one and a half years after the start of the conflict in Ukraine, the focus of assistance has shifted from covering the basic needs, such as housing or food, to job search and employment, vocational training etc., as main instruments in developing medium and long-term integration approaches.

However, the family composition of Ukrainian refugees in Romania differentiates them from other types of refugees and represents an additional challenge to their labour market integration. This situation relates to the fact that a large number of the displaced are mothers who fled their home country with their children, and the responses indicate scarcity in accessing support public services such as childcare. The absence of their partners and the exposure of their children to various stressors in the new environment amplify their caregiving responsibilities, making it challenging to balance family duties with work obligations. In addition, Ukrainian refugees in Romania also face other difficulties in being economically active, especially due to the lack of language skills, professional skills matching the local labour market, the lack of long-term perspective, and the more recently increasing number of foreign workers on the Romanian labour market.

Another important finding regarding the community of Ukrainian refugees in Romania regards their economic status. In general, the data emphasises the economic inequalities among Ukrainian refugees living in Romania. A notable number of them encounter financial difficulties when trying to fulfil their fundamental requirements, whereas a smaller portion has a more prosperous financial situation. This data underscores the significance of tackling the financial requirements and susceptibilities of the refugee community, in order to guarantee their effective integration and welfare within the new country. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of focused aid initiatives and support programmes aimed at mitigating the economic disparities and enhancing the overall economic status of Ukrainian refugees residing in Romania. The findings of the research illustrate that almost all the respondents applied for temporary protection or other similar forms of international protection, and more than 60% of them are caregivers. The data also shows that, in terms of employment, 68% of the surveyed group declared they were employed or self-employed before leaving Ukraine, but only 43% are currently employed (25%), work remotely (12%) or are self-employed (7%), thus calling for intervention in this area.

Labour market in Romania

Despite facing setbacks and challenges due to inconsistent reforms and global economic recessions, Romania's GDP per capita has shown remarkable improvement, rising from 30% of the EU average in 1995 to 74% in 2021, and the country has moved from middle-high to high-income status. [44]

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a recession in 2020, but the Romanian economy bounced back strongly with 5.8% growth in 2021 and 4.7% growth in 2022, driven by robust private consumption and investments. However, high inflation rates at 4.1% in 2021 and 12.0% in 2022 may pose challenges to further growth. [45]

The labour market in Romania experienced some fluctuations due to the pandemic, but it generally benefited from the pre-pandemic economic growth. The employment rate is close to the EU average, and while the ILO unemployment rate was 5.7% in March 2022 (corresponding to 475,000 unemployed), the National Employment Agency's registered unemployment rate was 2.6% (corresponding to 230,300 registered unemployed). [46]

However, youth unemployment and gender disparities remain significant challenges. Inequality and the risk of poverty and social exclusion are also high in Romania. Additionally, the country is experiencing immigration trends, with both emigration and immigration affecting its population dynamics. The country had significant emigration, with many Romanians seeking better economic opportunities abroad. Immigration from neighbouring countries and refugees from conflict zones has also contributed to the country's demographic changes.

The country is also facing a labour shortage, partially due to negative population growth and exponential economic development. This shortage is particularly noticeable in industries such as automotive, machinery, and construction. Romania also faces central-periphery disparities, with the central regions being more developed and economically prosperous compared to the periphery regions, which suffer from a lack of economic development and limited opportunities.

Regarding the situation in different regions of Romania, it should be noted that each of them has specific characteristics. The București-Ilfov region is densely populated, with București being the most populous city in Romania.

[44] International Labour Organization. (2023). The ILO and Romania. <https://www.ilo.org/budapest/countries-covered/romania/lang--en/index.htm>.

[45] European Commission. (2023). Labour Market Information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en#national-level.

[46] European Commission. (2023). Labour Market Information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en#national-level.

This region has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, indicating a competitive job market. București-Ilfov is a major transportation hub with well-developed road, rail, and air infrastructure. The region attracts direct investments and has a skilled workforce, contributing to its economic success.

The main occupations with the highest number of vacancies are in the services sector, and jobs like security guards and customer service agents are in high demand.

The South-East Region of Romania with a population of 2.36 million people is the second-largest region in Romania. The target cities are Constanța, Brăila, and Galați. The region has a lower employment rate compared to București-Ilfov, with the services sector being the most dominant in terms of civilian employment. The registered unemployment rate in the region is higher than in București-Ilfov but still relatively low compared to other regions in Romania.

The region has a varied economic landscape, with a mix of agriculture, industry, construction, and services.[47]

The South-East region has significant industrial centres, including petrochemicals, metallurgy, machinery manufacturing, and shipbuilding. The major employers in the region are mainly in the industrial and healthcare sectors. The main occupations with the highest number of vacancies are diverse, ranging from security guards and bakers to unskilled workers in various industries.[48]

Overall, several key conclusions can be drawn about Romania's economic situation and labour market. First, the Romanian labour market has seen both progress and challenges over the last years, with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting various indicators. The country's economic growth, driven by multiple sectors and start-ups, has led to job opportunities, but disparities and vulnerabilities persist. The București-Ilfov region and the South-East region play significant roles in the country's economy, each with its unique characteristics and employment opportunities.

By and large, while Romania has made significant economic progress, it still faces challenges related to unemployment, regional disparities, and the labour market's demand and supply dynamics. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for sustaining and furthering the country's economic development and ensuring a stable and prosperous labour market for its citizens.

[47] European Commission. (2023). Labour Market Information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en#national-level.

[48] European Commission. (2023). Labour Market Information: Romania. https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-romania_en#national-level.

Economic profile of Ukrainian refugees

The economic profile of Ukrainian refugees in Romania reveals important insights into their potential employability and contribution to the labour market. Therefore, the following key points can be highlighted:

- **Favourable Employment Regulations:** Ukrainian citizens have the opportunity to work in Romania without the need for a work permit and without observing the usual nine-month employment contract limitation that is used for third country nationals. This creates a potentially more accessible pathway for them to enter the labour market and find employment.
- **Extended Stay for Work Purposes:** Ukrainian citizens from the armed conflict zone in Ukraine have the option to stay and work in Romania for up to 12 consecutive months, with the possibility of extending this period. This provision offers more flexibility to refugees seeking employment in Romania.
- **Occupational Status in Ukraine:** The survey data indicates that a significant percentage of Ukrainian refugees participating in the survey (41%) had full-time jobs in Ukraine, while others were employed under different types of contracts or had their own businesses. This demonstrates that many of the respondents have prior work experience and are accustomed to the working environment.
- **Diverse Occupations:** The respondents represented a diverse range of occupations, with specialists in various fields of activity being the most prominent (35%). This diversity can be a valuable asset for the Romanian labour market, bringing in a wide range of expertise and skills.
- **Challenges in Utilising Professional Qualifications:** While having highly qualified individuals among the refugees can be advantageous, it also poses further challenges. Language barriers, difficulties in recognising diplomas, and limited job opportunities in certain fields may hinder some highly qualified refugees from finding suitable employment.
- **Potential for re-entering to the Labour Market:** An important portion of respondents (22%) were on maternity leave and temporarily out of the workforce. This suggests that these individuals have the potential to re-enter the labour market in Romania, further expanding the pool of potential workers.
- **Employability and Contribution:** Overall, the data indicates that most of the Ukrainian refugees in Romania are employable and can make a valuable contribution to the labour market. Their diverse skillsets and prior work experience can be harnessed to meet the demands of various industries.

To fully tap into the potential of Ukrainian refugees in the labour market, it is essential to address the challenges they may face, such as language proficiency and diploma recognition. Additionally, promoting inclusive policies, providing support for cultural integration, and offering incentives to employers can further encourage the hiring of Ukrainian refugees and create a more inclusive and diverse workforce in Romania.

Employment profile of Ukrainian refugees in Romania

The survey findings highlight several key points regarding the employment situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania:

- **Unemployment Challenges:** A significant portion of the surveyed respondents are currently unemployed, indicating the difficulties Ukrainian refugees face in finding employment in Romania. The unemployment rate among the respondents compared to the low unemployment rate in Ukraine (3%) suggests that the transition to the labour market in Romania is more challenging for these individuals.
- **Employment Success:** 25% of the respondents stated that they are currently employed, indicating that a significant portion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania has been able to secure employment. Having employment not only provides individuals with a source of income but also enhances their sense of stability, self-sufficiency, and integration into the local community.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Approximately 8% of the respondents reported being self-employed or owning a business. This may indicate that some refugees have chosen to leverage their previous entrepreneurial experiences or have pursued self-employment as an alternative pathway to achieve financial independence.
- **Occupations:** Among Ukrainian refugees who have found employment in Romania, their job distribution is diverse. The majority have secured jobs as specialists in various fields (32%) and in the services sector (22%). Additionally, many are employed as technicians and other specialists (11%) and unskilled workers (16%). This suggests that there are a wide range of opportunities available for refugees in Romania across different skill levels and industries. A noteworthy finding is that a significant portion of respondents have been able to continue working in similar occupations as they did in Ukraine. This indicates a successful integration into the Romanian job market and the ability to leverage their existing skills and expertise.

The distribution of employment categories highlights the complexity of refugee employment, encompassing both low-skilled and highly specialised positions. However, it is important to emphasise that there is a significant increase in the number of respondents working as unskilled workers in Romania compared to their previous employment in Ukraine (4% in Ukraine vs. 16% in Romania). This points to a shift in the types of jobs that refugees are engaging in after their migration to Romania.

- **Job Search Duration:** A considerable portion of respondents (43%) reported spending between six and 12 months in finding a job. This may be attributed to factors such as job market competition, language barriers, or specific requirements in their chosen fields. However, a majority of respondents found employment within the first five months (50%).

- **Sources for Job Search:** Social media and personal networks were considered the most helpful sources for job search, while traditional online job platforms, local labour agencies, and company websites were ranked lower in importance. This preference for informal sources highlights the importance of digital platforms and social connections in the job search process for Ukrainian refugees.

- **Labour Contracts:** More than half of the respondents (52%) indicated that they do not have a labour contract to attest their employment, suggesting a significant portion of Ukrainian refugees in Romania are engaged in informal or undocumented work arrangements.

- **Language Skills:** The main language of communication used in companies surveyed is Romanian (99%), followed by English (60%). Proficiency in Romanian and English can enhance job prospects for Ukrainian refugees seeking employment in Romania.

- **Employer Perspective:** While some companies have employed Ukrainian refugees, the overall share of employers hiring Ukrainian citizens is relatively low. However, those who were hired mainly worked as specialists in various fields of activity, and a significant gender disparity exists, with more male Ukrainian refugees being employed compared to female.

- **Salary Satisfaction:** A majority of respondents (60%) considered themselves fairly paid considering their job position and performance, suggesting a level of satisfaction with their current salary.

Overall, the survey provides valuable insights into the employment situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania, highlighting both challenges and successes in their job search and integration into the labour market. The findings can help inform policies and initiatives to better support the employment and financial independence of Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

Employment barriers

The survey results reveal several key impediments faced by Ukrainian refugees in finding employment in Romania:

- **Language Barrier:** The inability to speak Romanian is cited as a significant challenge by both the Ukrainian respondents and NGOs experts in the process of pursuing job opportunities in Romania. The initial communication between employers and employees often proves to be challenging due to language barriers. This obstacle can hinder effective interaction, making it difficult for refugees to showcase their skills and qualifications during the job application and interview processes. As a result, even if refugees possess the necessary skills and experience, their limited proficiency in the local language can impede their ability to successfully access job opportunities. This underscores the importance of language training and support programmes to enhance refugees' language skills and improve their overall employability and integration into the labour market.
- **Caregiving Responsibilities:** Caregiving responsibilities are seen as a barrier by some respondents, particularly for those with dependents requiring care.
- **Lack of Information:** Some refugees reported a lack of information on how to find a job, which can hinder their job search effectiveness.
- **Legal Status:** Their legal status in Romania can impede refugees from accessing job opportunities. According to the Ukrainian respondents, their legal status poses a hindrance to finding a job. This challenge can be interpreted in two ways. First, they might lack awareness of their labour rights. Alternatively, employers could be misinformed about the regulations concerning the employment of Ukrainian citizens.
- **Limited Job Opportunities:** Some refugees face challenges in finding job opportunities that match their previous experiences and qualifications.
- **Qualifications and Skills Mismatch:** The mismatch between refugees' skills and qualifications from Ukraine and the requirements of the Romanian labour market can be a hindrance to finding suitable employment.
- **Lack of Recognition of Diplomas:** Many refugees encounter difficulties in having their qualifications recognised in Romania, particularly in specialised fields like psychology or law.
- **Perception of low income:** Some refugees view the salaries provided in Romania as insufficient, potentially influencing their readiness to accept specific job offers.

- Absence of childcare facilities: The duty of looking after children can influence the capacity of refugees, particularly women, to effectively participate in the job market. With the inability to enrol their children in schools, kindergartens, or other educational establishments, refugee mothers might encounter challenges in securing suitable employment.
- Limited desire for extended employment commitment: Certain refugees might not exhibit a strong inclination towards securing jobs with medium- to long-term prospects due to the uncertainty surrounding their future intentions, such as the potential decision to return to Ukraine.

Employer responses reveal the primary impediments to hiring Ukrainian refugees. The dominant factor is the lack of demand for their services, cited by 24% of employers. This hints at restricted opportunities or incongruence between job market conditions and refugees' skills. Language barriers follow closely, with 19% noting inadequate Romanian proficiency, hindering communication and integration, consistent with refugees' and NGOs' responses.

Moreover, 13% feel Ukrainian refugees lack qualifications required for their fields, implying a mismatch. This aligns with findings from refugees and NGOs, suggesting it is a probable reason for their joblessness. Additional barriers include insufficient job openings (8%), perceiving unprofessionalism (6%), language skills (5%), and company policies against hiring foreigners (5%).

Of respondents (total: 75), 59% resist hiring Ukrainians, while 41% are open. This duality signals mixed attitudes. Reasons for reluctance vary, shaped by language, culture, qualifications, or corporate policies. Given the employers' reluctance to participate in focus groups, it becomes even more important to design research that can effectively uncover the reasons behind not hiring Ukrainians.

Employment opportunities

The survey conducted among various stakeholders, including NGO representatives, Ukrainian refugees, and employers in Romania, provided valuable insights into the labour market dynamics and the types of occupations in demand.

NGO Representatives' Perspective:

- According to responses from NGO representatives, there is a consistent need for specific occupations in the Romanian labour market.
- Unskilled Workers (20%): There's a continuous demand for roles that do not require specialised skills, including manual labour and service-oriented positions.
- Services Sector (21%): Positions related to services continue to be in high demand.
- Skilled and Assimilated Workers (16%): This suggests that there is a demand for individuals with specific skills and expertise who can integrate into the local labour market.
- Specialists in Various Fields (12%): Professionals with specialised knowledge are also sought after, even if their qualifications might not perfectly match those of Ukrainian citizens.
- The types of jobs that Ukrainian refugees managed to secure closely match those reported by the refugee respondents themselves, indicating consistency between available job opportunities and actual employment outcomes.
- Unskilled Workers (25%): A significant proportion of refugees found employment in unskilled labour positions.
- Service Sector (23%): Many refugees secured jobs in service-oriented roles.

Employers' Perspectives:

- Responses from 19 employers revealed a variety of job opportunities in their companies.
- Unskilled Workers (47%): The highest number of job vacancies were for unskilled labour positions.
- Technicians and Technical Specialists (24%): There is substantial demand for technical roles.

These findings collectively suggest that Ukrainian citizens have opportunities to find employment in Romania, particularly in unskilled labour. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that the survey had a limited number of respondents, so while it provides valuable insights, the results may not comprehensively represent the entire population. Nonetheless, these insights provide valuable information for policymakers and organisations working with refugees to understand the employment landscape in Romania and tailor their support accordingly.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship

According to the survey results, a relatively low percentage of respondents participated in various activities aimed at improving the employment process. Almost two-thirds of them have not participated in any such activities, while the type of activity that gathered the highest percentage of participants, about 11%, was professional language training courses.

Although the level of interest among Ukrainian refugees in vocational training has been relatively low so far, it is likely to increase considering the new edition of the Parliament resolutions No. 15/2022. This expectation is based on the changes in the housing and food programme in the last couple of months, which require Ukrainian refugees to attend training and register with the local employment agencies to find jobs in order to continue receiving financial assistance.

Another important finding of this study is the eagerness and willingness of Ukrainians to start their own business in Romania. Interestingly, these are usually people who have not had such formal experience in their home country. The results of the qualitative data collection indicate that Ukrainians are interested in entrepreneurship in areas such as services, beauty, psychological counselling, and education. The main obstacles to starting a business are usually language barriers, limited knowledge of the legal framework, lack of language skills, and absence of start-up capital. While the research results showed that Ukrainians are not very active in participating in various grant programmes for starting a business, there were still successful cases when a business in Romania was opened with grant funds.

Training and labour market skills

The results of the study reveal that one of the main areas where intervention is due, is represented by the level of foreign languages skills, as only about a third of the group listed English as a spoken language and only 13% have Romanian language skills. This is a significant issue in relation to their integration into the Romanian labour market, as well as when generally addressing the integration level. In addition to this, language classes and skills are listed among the most important not only by refugees, but also by employers and NGO representatives participating in the research.

About two thirds (66%) of the respondents have achieved a higher education level - either bachelor, or master's, and can be considered senior 'specialists' in their field of work. None of the profiled refugees reported lacking education. Thus, in this context, their participation in professional training is not absolutely mandatory for getting employed, but they would rather benefit from attending workshops on navigating the Romanian labour market, or participate in professional retraining programmes that would allow them to match the existing needs in the local labour market.

All in all, the findings in this study indicate that, despite the tragic conditions of their arrival in Romania, the Ukrainian refugees, as a group, possess the characteristics to be considered a valuable resource for the Romanian labour market, which is currently facing severe shortage in terms of workforce. However, their vulnerable situation, combined with the lack of medium- and long-term predictability in their future, seems to hinder them from becoming more employable in Romania. The following part of the study includes recommendations for addressing each of the shortcomings identified throughout the research, and possible solutions towards a smoother transition from the status of beneficiaries of temporary protection towards an economically active population.

9. Recommendations

Language training

The results of the research indicate that one of the most significant impediments to refugee integration, especially in regard to the labour market, is represented by the language skills. Thus, both Romanian and English communication abilities need to be developed, by addressing the following initiatives:

● **Commence language instruction within three months of the arrival** of asylum/temporary protection seekers who have a strong likelihood of remaining in Romania. The first months after the arrival in the host country are essential for integration, and by starting to attend language classes as soon as possible, Ukrainian refugees in Romania have better chances at accessing information needed to navigate the available services.

● **Combining language courses with work-oriented activities.** Such an approach can help promote integrated initiatives that involve both work and language engagement, like volunteering, internships, practical work exposure, and apprenticeships, making it easier for Ukrainian refugees to learn the Romanian language.

● **Conduct initial competency evaluations** to determine appropriate language course placement, thus allowing each person to access the most suitable language training. In order to do so, NGOs and public institutions offering Romanian and/or other language classes should have established procedures to assess and determine the level of language skills. In doing so, they can arrange language classes based on proficiency levels, and tailor them to the specific needs identified among Ukrainian refugees.

● **Give precedence to refugees possessing skills that can contribute to the host country's development when enrolling them in language courses.** By adopting this approach, Ukrainian refugees already possessing professional qualifications that make them a valuable resource can become economically active more rapidly in Ro

● **Establish a set of minimum language proficiency criteria using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR),** and allow Ukrainian refugees to occupy jobs or activities appropriate for their individual language level.

Professional training

Professional training and retraining of refugees in order to access the host country's labour market represents one of the key domains of refugee integration. In order to facilitate this process for the Ukrainian refugees in Romania, the following steps can be approached:

● **Implement early assessments of practical skills shortly after arrival.** By evaluating the practical skills of Ukrainian refugees within a short period of time after their arrival in Romania, they can be sooner matched with jobs fitting their abilities. In addition to this, training programmes can be better tailored to suit the existing skills of the refugees, and assist them in identifying a job.

● **Create a dedicated facility for recognising and validating skills.** As previously mentioned, existing qualifications and abilities can be evaluated through interviews and practical assessments, thus identifying the employment fields where Ukrainian refugees can be integrated more rapidly.

● **Engage experts well-versed in the prevalent occupations among third-country nationals.** Cooperation with experts in different fields of activity allows for a better evaluation of the individual skills of Ukrainian refugees, and can also simplify the procedure of job-matching.

● **Encourage mentoring with the collaboration of NGOs and public services.** Mentoring and internship programmes are often a more rapid alternative to long - term training, while, at the same time, offering the Ukrainian refugees the possibility to be less financially dependent. Furthermore, these kinds of programmes incorporate adaptability to accommodate individual skills and ambition, allowing the refugees to obtain a job suited for their intentions.

● **Educate refugees about available educational opportunities.** This is a very important step in addressing the labour-market integration of refugees in the long-term. Furthermore, loan, grant, and scholarship programmes to facilitate higher education opportunities for Ukrainian refugees should be established, allowing them to access education programmes that can prepare them for a career in Romania.

● **Customise services to consider cultural variety, gender, age, and distinct requirements.** The development of training and retraining programmes must take into consideration the characteristics of the Ukrainian refugee group. In this context, professional programmes should be designed to meet the needs of the beneficiaries, and help them integrate in the labour market after graduating.

Facilities for faster entry into labour market of Ukrainian refugees

Facilitating a faster entry into the labour market for refugees requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses various barriers and provides targeted support. Here are some specific facilities that can be implemented:

● **Establishing or updating Nurseries and Childcare Support:** Creating nurseries, updating available places and offering accessible and affordable services for childcare and other vulnerable groups can enable Ukrainian refugee women to participate in the labour market more easily. By addressing childcare responsibilities, Ukrainian refugees can actively seek employment without the burden of caregiving hindering their prospects.

● **Official Channels for Job Placement:** Promoting official channels for job placement, such as those provided by the National Agency for Employment (AJOFM), can be essential. These channels can connect refugees with legitimate and lawful employment opportunities, ensuring they are protected and treated fairly by employers.

● **Job Fairs and Employer Relations:** Employers and AJOFM can establish stronger connections and organise regular job fairs specifically targeting refugees. These job fairs can be conducted every three months or on a predetermined schedule to provide consistent opportunities for refugees to access a wide range of job openings. By promoting these events among the targeted group, refugees can find employment through legitimate sources that adhere to employment regulations.

● **Workshops on Rights and Duties:** Conducting workshops and other informative materials that teach refugees about their rights and duties in the Romanian labour market is crucial. These workshops can cover topics such as labour laws, employment contracts, workers' rights and responsibilities, ensuring that refugees are aware of their legal protections and obligations in the workplace.

● **Language training and job related skill development:** Offering language training programmes tailored to the needs of the labour market can significantly enhance refugees' language proficiency and communication skills in Romanian. Additionally, providing skill development and vocational language training in line with the demands of the job market can improve refugees' employability and chances of securing suitable employment.

● **Collaboration with NGOs and community organisations:** Collaborating with NGOs and community organisations supporting refugees can significantly enhance the effectiveness of facilities and services. These partnerships offer valuable insights into the unique needs and challenges refugees face, aiding in customising facilities to meet their specific requirements. This is particularly relevant considering that many of these organisations are dealing with reduced funding for Ukrainian refugees.

Working together ensures a more holistic and impactful approach to supporting refugees' integration and well-being.

● **Mentoring and Networking Opportunities:** Establishing mentoring programmes and networking opportunities for refugees can help them build professional connections and gain insights into the job market. Mentors can guide refugees in their job search and provide valuable advice and support throughout the employment process (e.g., Ateliere Fara Frontiere programme that supports economic inclusion).

● **Recognising the Contributions:** Recognising and acknowledging the contributions of refugee employees within the company and the overall society can further promote a culture of inclusivity. This can be done through internal communication, awards, or recognition programmes.

By implementing at least these policies, Romania can create an inclusive and supportive environment for Ukrainian refugees to enter the labour market successfully. This approach not only helps refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency but also enriches the country's workforce with diverse talents and expertise.

Encouraging companies to hire Ukrainian refugees

Encouraging companies to hire Ukrainian refugees requires a proactive and inclusive approach that addresses both the perceived challenges and the benefits of hiring refugees. Here are some strategies to promote the employment of Ukrainian refugees by companies in Romania:

● **Non-Discriminatory Policies:** Companies should be encouraged to adopt non-discriminatory policies that embrace diversity and inclusion. Emphasising the importance of equal opportunities for all job seekers, regardless of their nationality or background, can create a more welcoming environment for refugees.

● **Public Campaign on the Benefits of Hiring Ukrainian Refugees:** A targeted public campaign can be launched to highlight the benefits of hiring Ukrainian refugees. This campaign can showcase success stories of companies that have employed refugees and thrived due to their diverse skillsets and perspectives.

● **Forming Partnerships with Companies:** Collaborating with companies and forming partnerships can be instrumental in promoting the employment of Ukrainian refugees. Public institutions, NGOs, and relevant agencies can work together with companies to create opportunities for refugee hiring and provide necessary support and resources.

● **Financial Benefits for Companies:** Introducing financial incentives for companies that hire vulnerable populations, including refugees, can encourage employers to actively seek refugee employees. These benefits can include tax breaks, grants, or subsidies to offset recruitment and training costs.

● **Informational Packages for Employers:** Creating informational packages or booklets for employers can provide valuable insights into the benefits of hiring refugees and the support available to companies in the hiring process. These packages can include information on legal procedures, cultural integration, and available resources.

● **Training and Workshops:** Organising training sessions and workshops for employers can enhance their understanding of refugee integration in the workplace. Topics such as intercultural communication, diversity management, and addressing potential challenges can be covered in these sessions.

● **Highlighting Transferable Skills:** Highlighting transferable skills possessed by Ukrainian refugees can counter biases. HR managers should clearly outline relevant skills during hiring. Involving owners in discussions about diversity benefits can lead to open-mindedness. Showcasing successful refugee contributions can illustrate positive impacts. Fostering an inclusive atmosphere among co-workers is crucial for mutual respect. Encouraging teamwork and cross-cultural interactions can break down barriers and promote collaboration. This multi-pronged approach involving HR, owners, and co-workers can create an inclusive work environment, in which refugees' skills are effectively valued.

● **Facilitating Communications between Ukrainian Companies Entering Local Labour Market and Labour Agencies:** Facilitating communication between labour agencies and Ukrainian companies opening representative offices in Romania, such as Nova Poshta, to provide employment opportunities for Ukrainians seeking work.

By combining these strategies, Romania can encourage more companies to hire Ukrainian refugees, contributing to their successful integration into the labour market and the broader society. The active engagement of employers and public institutions is key to ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for refugees in the workplace.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship

In order to overcome the barriers in starting a business, it is important to provide potential entrepreneurs with specialised knowledge and skills or ways to adjust their existing experiences and skills. There are few possible ways to improve the current situation:

- **Language courses** to improve language proficiency, workshops on starting and running a business, seminars peculiarities of Romanian legislation, etc.

- **Local entrepreneurship mentoring programmes**, for example, having a local entrepreneur become a mentor for a Ukrainian refugee who wants to start a business in a similar field.

- **It is important to provide Ukrainians with information about the possibility of obtaining special loans or grants from the European Union, government, and other similar organisations**, due to the fact that Ukrainians mostly use their own savings or loans from friends and relatives to start their own businesses.

- **Existing business incubators and support programmes that help new start-ups and companies access resources, mentoring, and networking opportunities** should be actively promoted (beauty services, catering, transportations, retail, constructions, educational services, etc.).

In this case, **it is important to mention the largest group of Ukrainian refugees – single women** who take care of their children or other family members. Business offers them **numerous advantages and opportunities that can significantly improve both the mothers' and children's/relatives' lives**. As a business owner, a woman can create a work environment that aligns with her family's needs, and plan flexible working hours that enable her to balance work and childcare. Additionally, it means financial independence and a flexible schedule. Despite the advantages, it's essential to acknowledge that running a business can also be challenging. However, with proper planning and support, it can be a rewarding and empowering journey that positively impacts women and their family members.

In this section, **it is essential to mention the potential for developing and building new business ties between Ukraine and Romania**. Before the events of February 24, 2022, the two countries had limited business ties. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the establishment of cooperation between the two countries in various sectors. These areas hold great promise for fostering stronger economic relations and promoting mutual growth and development.

But in order to succeed in establishing business ties between two countries, it is important for individuals to take into account the macro (policy, economic context), mezo (social capital), and individual (human capital) levels. Furthermore, increasing business cooperation between the two countries holds undeniable benefits. It also offers a promising opportunity to create more job opportunities for Ukrainians in Romania. As the business ties strengthen and sectors like trade, energy, infrastructure, and agriculture develop, there will likely be a demand for skilled workers from Ukraine to contribute to the workforce in Romania. This cross-border exchange of human resources can be beneficial for both nations, fostering economic growth and further enhancing the bilateral relationship.

Some of the possible way to achieve increased cooperation:

- **Facilitating exports and imports** of goods and services through simplified and fast customs clearance.

- **Promoting the exchange of technologies:** Encouraging the transfer of technological knowledge and innovations between Ukrainian and Romanian companies.

- **Supporting education and training:** Establishing exchange programmes for students and professionals between universities and educational institutions in both countries.

- **Developing transport infrastructure:** Enhancing roads, railways, and ports to facilitate greater exchange of goods between the two countries and streamline logistics for businesses.

- **Providing support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs):** Implementing SME support programmes, including concessional lending, advisory support, and facilitating access to new markets for SMEs on both sides of the border.

- **Fostering cultural and linguistic exchange:** Promoting the exchange of cultural and linguistic values to enhance mutual understanding among citizens of both countries.

Lastly, an important aspect is improving administrative procedures to facilitate the process of starting and running a business for Ukrainians in Romania. This includes streamlining the steps required to establish a business, obtain the necessary permits and licenses, and comply with regulations. A key focus should be on making it easier for entrepreneurs to open a business bank account, as this is a fundamental requirement for conducting smooth and efficient commercial transactions.

Further research and limitations

The effective integration of refugees into the labour market of host societies poses a significant political challenge in numerous countries. Thus, the rising number of refugees seeking assimilation underscores the need for comprehensive research in this area. Current research on the economic integration of refugees within host countries would benefit from more thorough investigations utilising longitudinal statistical data, particularly with regard to pre-migration factors that may impact refugees' short- and long-term integration into the host economies. Such studies regarding the labour market integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania are currently limited by the relatively short period of time that has passed since their arrival, as well as by the uncertainty regarding the future developments in their country of origin. Longitudinal statistical information, which allows for the tracking of individuals over time, plays a pivotal role in evaluating labour market entry, as well as occupational and income mobility, among refugees compared to other immigrant groups and the native population. Furthermore, conducting comparative research across different countries is imperative to assess the effectiveness of refugee integration policies and their ability to produce desired outcomes.

Despite the fact that for the past years the Romanian labour market has faced severe workforce shortage, employers seem to be reluctant to hire foreigners. In addition to this, research and available data on the specificities of integration of refugees and other categories of migrants into the Romanian labour market are limited, making it more difficult to assess the input of various factors such as public policy or legislation in the process. First conclusions indicate that the difficulty of communicating in another language or the additional paperwork that needs to be completed might discourage such endeavours, but the experience of other European countries that used migration in order to cover similar workforce gaps proves these are not obstacles impossible to overcome. Therefore, a study dedicated to this topic, addressing further issues and barriers faced by Romanian employers in hiring refugees and migrants, would significantly increase the knowledge in the field and would contribute to a better understanding of this situation and development of public policy in the field.

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About HIAS

HIAS is there for refugees when and where they need help most. We are a Jewish humanitarian organization that works in the United States and 15 other countries, providing vital services to refugees and asylum seekers of all faiths so they can rebuild their lives. With the Jewish community beside us, we also advocate for the rights of forcibly displaced people globally. We partner closely with domestic and international leadership, like the U.S. Department of State and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as refugee agencies and human rights groups.

We also engage in advocacy by educating, organising and mobilising American Jews to put their values into action and fight for refugees. We work with grassroots advocates, opinion leaders, legislators, and other policymakers to protect and advance policies that promote fair and humane asylum laws, refugee resettlement, and integration. **Learn more at [HIAS.org](https://www.hias.org).**

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Refugee protection framework

As a member state of the European Union, Romania is obliged to adhere to the European *acquis*, which includes implementing common normative provisions either directly or by incorporating them into national legislation. In this context, the Council Directive 2001/55/EC of July 20, 2001, which establishes minimum standards for providing temporary protection in the event of a large influx of displaced persons and promotes a fair distribution of responsibility among member states,[49] was incorporated into Romanian law through Law no. 122/2006 on Asylum in Romania.[50] This law sets out the legal framework for foreigners seeking international protection in Romania, including the conditions for granting, excluding, and terminating temporary protection.

To address the current situation, the Romanian Government has enacted the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of March 4, 2022, which recognises a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine according to Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC.[51] This decision has been transposed into Romanian law through Emergency Ordinance (referred to as GEO) no. 15 of February 27, 2022,[52] which aims to provide humanitarian support and assistance to foreign citizens or stateless individuals in special situations who come from the conflict-affected area in Ukraine. The issuance of this GEO enables the implementation of measures to offer support and facilities to Ukrainian citizens in Romania under the temporary protection regime.

[49] Portal Legislativ. (2006). Romanian Parliament, LEGE nr. 122 din 4 mai 2006 privind azilul în România. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/71808>.

[50] Portal Legislativ. (2006). Romanian Parliament, LEGE nr. 122 din 4 mai 2006 privind azilul în România. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/71808>.

[51] Official Journal of the European Union. (2022). COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2022/382 of March 4, 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32022D0382>.

[52] Romanian Government. (2022). Ordonanța de urgență nr. 15 din 27 februarie 2022 privind acordarea de sprijin și asistență umanitară de către statul român cetățenilor străini sau apatrizilor aflați în situații deosebite, proveniți din zona conflictului armat din Ucraina. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/251954>.

Taking into account the continued necessity of support measures and providing humanitarian assistance to foreign citizens or stateless individuals arriving from Ukraine,[53] an amendment to the Emergency Ordinance (GEO) no. 15/2022[54] was adopted on March 7, 2022. This amendment is referred to as GEO no. 20/2022, and it modifies and complements certain legislative acts, while also establishing additional measures for support and humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the Romanian Government issued Government Decision no. 367/2022,[55] which sets forth conditions for ensuring temporary protection and introduces modifications and additions to various legal acts in the field of asylum and immigration.

As per the definition stated in Law no. 122/2006, temporary protection is an exceptional procedure designed to provide immediate and temporary protection to a large or imminent influx of displaced persons from third countries who are unable to return to their country of origin. This procedure is particularly employed when there is a risk that the asylum system would be overwhelmed, resulting in adverse effects on its effective functioning and the well-being of the individuals in need of protection.[56] By registering for temporary protection in Romania, Ukrainian individuals who have fled the conflict are granted the right to reside in Romania for one year, access the labour market, receive free healthcare, and enrol in the education system under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. However, it is important to note that, despite the legal provisions that grant Ukrainian refugees a wide spectrum of rights and freedoms, in agreement with the EU legislation, in certain situations there have been reported issues related to restrictions of access to various services that they were entitled to, or cases where the lack of information means that it appears so.

According to Article 131, Paragraph 4 of Law no. 122/2006 on asylum in Romania, when temporary protection is granted through a decision of the Council of the European Union, the Romanian Government, based on a proposal from the General Inspectorate for Immigration, issues a decision specifying the conditions for providing temporary protection to displaced persons on Romanian territory, as well as the source of funding for the expenses associated with the provision of temporary protection

[53] Valcu, EN. (2022). The influx of refugees from Ukraine - unional and national mechanisms regarding temporary protection or asylum request, The International Conference "European Union's history, culture and citizenship". Pitesti, 6 May 2022, p. 180.

[54] Romanian Government, GEO no. 20/2022 regarding the amendment and completion of some normative acts as well as for the establishment of some measures of support and humanitarian assistance.

[55] Romanian Government. (2022). Government Decision no. 367 of March, 18th, 2022, privind stabilirea unor condiții de asigurare a protecției temporare, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea unor acte normative în domeniul străinilor. [HOTARARE 367 18/03/2022 - Portal Legislativ \(just.ro\)](https://portallegislativ.just.ro/PortalLegislativ/Just.ro).

[56] Portal Legislativ. (2006) Romanian Parliament, LEGE nr. 122 din 4 mai 2006 privind azilul în România. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/71808>.

With regard to the possibility of invoking Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, which allows member states to apply either the aforementioned Council decision or an appropriate form of protection based on their national legislation, Government Decision (GD) no. 367/2022 [57] has determined that individuals falling within the scope of that paragraph shall be considered beneficiaries of temporary protection. Specifically, this includes stateless individuals and third-country nationals, excluding Ukrainians, who can provide evidence of legal residency in Ukraine prior to February 24, 2022, based on a valid permanent residence permit issued in accordance with Ukrainian law. Furthermore, these individuals must demonstrate that they are unable to return to their country or region of origin under safe and stable conditions.

Temporary protection process

By registering for temporary protection in Romania, Ukrainian individuals who have fled the conflict are granted the right to reside in Romania for one year, access the labour market, receive free healthcare, and enrol in the education system under the same conditions as Romanian citizens. However, it is important to note that, despite the legal provisions that grant Ukrainian refugees a wide spectrum of rights and freedoms, in agreement with the EU legislation, in certain situations there have been reported issues related to restrictions of access to various services that they were entitled to, or cases where the lack of information means that it appears so.

According to Chapter IX of Law 122/2006 on asylum in Romania, the category of beneficiaries of temporary protection encompasses individuals described in Article 2, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382. This includes Ukrainian nationals who were residing in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, stateless persons, and nationals of third countries (excluding Ukraine) who received international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, along with their family members. Additionally, as Paragraph 2 clarifies, this category also includes stateless individuals and nationals of third countries (excluding Ukraine) who can provide evidence of legal residence in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, based on a valid permanent residence permit issued in accordance with Ukrainian law, and who are unable to return to their country or region of origin under safe and sustainable conditions.

[57] Romanian Government. (2022). Government Decision no. 367 of March, 18th, 2022, privind stabilirea unor condiții de asigurare a protecției temporare, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea unor acte normative în domeniul străinilor. [HOTARARE 367/18/03/2022 - Portal Legislativ \(just.ro\)](#).

In accordance with Article 2, Paragraph 3 of the Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, individuals falling within the above-mentioned categories who were present on Romanian territory before February 24, 2022, as well as their family members, are also considered beneficiaries of temporary protection, provided that these individuals are acknowledged as such by the Romanian government. Additionally, this can include other close relatives who were living together as a household at the time of the events leading to the massive influx of displaced persons and who were wholly or mainly dependent on the person.

According to information from the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration, the entity responsible for registering data and issuing residence permits to beneficiaries of temporary protection who present themselves to the competent authorities, temporary protection is granted for a period of one year from the date of the issuance of Decision (EU) 2022/382. It can be automatically extended for successive periods of six months, up to a maximum of one year, if the circumstances that led to the granting of temporary protection persist. If the situation continues beyond this period, the Member State may propose to the European Commission, through the Council of the European Union, an extension of temporary protection for up to one year. Specifically, in Romania, the mechanism of temporary protection was initially set to last until March 4, 2023, with the possibility of renewal for two consecutive periods of six months each, until March 4, 2024. This period can be further extended by an additional year based on the situation in Ukraine. Temporary protection may also be terminated before the specified terms under conditions established by law, through a decision of the Council of the European Union.

Regarding the procedure for confirming the status of displaced persons, Article 2 of Government Decision (GD) 367/2022 specifies that temporary protection is granted by the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration to individuals belonging to the aforementioned categories. These individuals must be located at a Romanian state border crossing point, including the transit zone, or within the territory of Romania, and must not fall under any of the exclusion cases outlined in Law no. 122/2006. The exclusion cases pertain to situations where there are substantial grounds to believe that the individual in question has committed serious crimes against peace, war crimes, or crimes against humanity as defined in international instruments regulating such offenses; has committed serious crimes other than those mentioned outside of Romania prior to entering the country as a person under temporary protection; has engaged in acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations; poses a significant risk to Romania's security; or has been convicted by a final judgment for a particularly serious crime, representing a threat to public order in Romania.

The Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration issues residence permits to beneficiaries of temporary protection, free of charge, and assigns them a personal numerical code. According to Government Emergency Ordinance no. 15/2022, these documents are provided in the context of rules governing the provision of humanitarian support and assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless individuals in special situations stemming from the armed conflict in Ukraine. Pursuant to Article 134 of Law no. 122/2006, for the purpose of issuing residence permits, beneficiaries of temporary protection have their facial image captured, and the following data is recorded: name, surname, date of birth, citizenship, gender, marital status, family situation, family ties, known address in Romania, all of which is stored in the Informatic Systems for Foreigners' Management (known as "SIMS" in Romanian). Within 12 months of the cessation of the implementation of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382, the data stored in SIMS for the issuance of these documents will be automatically and irreversibly deleted, except in cases where the person who benefited from temporary protection has been granted a right of residence or permission to stay in Romania or has a pending request in this regard.

Regarding the issuance of residence permits, several administrative aspects should be noted. Given the unique nature of this type of protection, individuals are not required to submit an application to activate temporary protection. By expressing their willingness to have their personal data processed, in compliance with guarantees in this field, their intention to benefit from this type of protection, along with all related rights and obligations, is considered to be manifested. However, to enable the secure exercise of rights enshrined in the legislation, beneficiaries of temporary protection will be assigned a personal numerical code by the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration, similar to the code assigned to asylum seekers.

Regarding access to information, comprehensive details about temporary protection in Romania are available on the website of the General Inspectorate for Immigration,[58] which is accessible in Ukrainian, Romanian, and English. Additionally, the governmental platform[59] provides information and resources. The categories of individuals eligible for temporary protection in Romania are as follows:

[58] INSPECTORATUL GENERAL PENTRU IMIGRĂRI. (2022). Informații pentru cetățenii ucraineni. <https://igi.mai.gov.ro/ucraina/>

[59] Guvernul României. (2022). Aplică pentru protecție temporară. <https://protectieucraina.gov.ro/1/aplica-pentru-protectie-temporara/>.

Ukrainian citizens who resided in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, regardless of when they left Ukraine, along with their family members; non-Ukrainian third-country nationals or stateless individuals who received international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before February 24, 2022, and their family members; non-Ukrainian third-country nationals or stateless individuals who can prove legal residence in Ukraine based on a valid permanent residence permit issued in accordance with Ukrainian law and who cannot safely and sustainably return to their country or region of origin. Family members, irrespective of their nationality, include legally married spouses, minor and unmarried children (born in or out of wedlock or adopted), and other close relatives who lived together as part of the family unit at the time of the events leading to the massive influx of displaced persons and were wholly or mainly dependent on the person benefiting from temporary protection.