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MIGRANTS FROM UKRAINE IN POLAND – SOCIO-LEGAL CONDITIONS IN 2024

The article analyzes the socio-economic situation of migrants from Ukraine in Poland in 2024, focusing on their legal status, access to the labor market and the social system. As a result of the war, Poland became the main host country of Ukrainians, whose number is about 1,5 million. Migrants are highly active in the labor force and represent a significant part of the workforce. The article also discusses changes in the law concerning their stay and integration challenges. The need for a long-term migration strategy to stabilize the labor market and society was underlined. The article points to key legal changes, including simplifying the legalization of stay and access to work, which has affected the stabilization of migrants in Poland. It also points to the significant participation of Ukrainians in sectors such as construction, services and industry. Migrants benefit from the Polish social system, including 800+ benefits, which implies discussions about a long-term support policy. Integration challenges include language barriers and cultural differences. Education and employment support programs are needed to ensure the effective integration and development of both societies.

Key words: Migrants, Ukraine, Poland, society, law, economy.

As a result of the war in Ukraine, Poland has become the main country hosting citizens of Ukraine. At the end of 2024, there were about 1.5 million people from Ukraine in Poland. The article analyzes the most important legal changes introduced in Poland in 2024 regarding the legalization of stay of Ukrainians, access to work and the social system, including conditions for granting benefits and education. Poland faces the challenge of creating a long-term migration strategy that takes into account the needs of the labor market and the integration of migrants. The article emphasizes the need for further support of migrants and the development of integration programs, which may contribute to the socio-economic stabilization of both Poland and Ukraine.

Purpose: The article aims to analyze the socio-legal situation of migrants from Ukraine in Poland in 2024, the conditions of functioning of Ukrainians in Poland, professional activity and the impact of migration on the Polish labor market and social system, taking into account legal aspects.

Research method: The article uses the method of data analysis, the method of content analysis, including the method of analysis of legal acts and the system method.

International migration is an important phenomenon that has gained importance in recent years, especially in the context of political tensions and armed conflicts. The war in Ukraine, starting from 2014 and then until 2022, caused mass displacement of the population, which was reflected in a significant increase in the number of migrants from Ukraine in Poland. This article is based on the available results of studies and analyzes carried out by various think-tanks, institutions and national and international organizations, as well as legal provisions, which provide an overview of the social, legal and economic situation of this group of migrants staying in Poland in 2024. Migrants face and the opportunities offered by the Polish economy and social system. Migrants from Ukraine have contributed to the growth of cultural diversity in Poland, and their presence has influenced changes in many sectors, such as education, the labor market and social services. The article analyzes not

only the figures but also the opinions of migrants, which allows them to better understand their needs and expectations.

Socio-demographic characteristics of migrants. According to data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS), from the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine in 2022 to June 2023, more than 12 million refugees from Ukraine crossed the borders of Poland. During this time, about 1.5 million people were registered in the PESEL-UKR system.[1] At the end of June 2024, the number of Ukrainian citizens registered for insurance amounted to 774 thousand (242 thousand are refugees with a PESEL-UKR, i.e. Ukrainian citizens who came to Poland after 24 February in connection with the war and are registered in the insurance system of the Social Insurance Institution, ZUS[2]. In fact, it is worth emphasizing that the increased migration to Poland from Ukraine began as early as 2014, in particular after the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the conflict in Donbass. Initially, the main reason for migration were economic issues, i.e. the difference between salaries in Poland and Ukraine and Polish regulations allowing immigrants from Ukraine to work in Poland. This phenomenon intensified after the outbreak of the war in 2022. Labour migration is in this case a response to difficult living and economic conditions in Ukraine, such as high unemployment, inflation and political instability. According to GUS data, in 2024 the number of Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland fluctuates around 1.5 million, most of them are professionally active.

Bearing in mind the period from 2014 to 2022, Ukrainian migration was initially mainly circular in nature, and over time it became more settlement-oriented. The change in the nature of migration was influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by the Russian attack on Ukraine in 2022 and the outbreak of war. According to a survey conducted in 2024 by the National Bank of Poland (NBP) and published in the second half of last year, publicly available data from PESEL-UKR registers indicate that there are less than one million immigrants in Poland who arrived after the outbreak of the war in 2022. This number includes 380 thousand children under the age of 18, which means that there were about 600 thousand adults from this group in Poland [3].

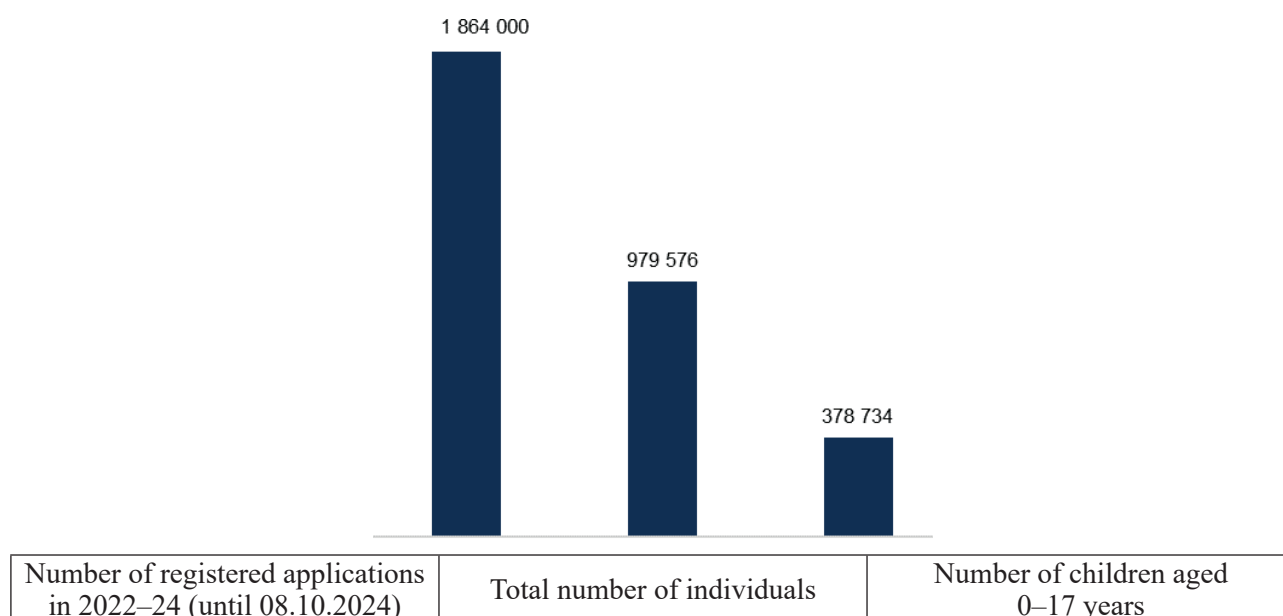


Fig.1. Number of immigrants from Ukraine In the Register of PESEL-UKR [3, p. 9].

Data on the number of valid residence permits published by the Office for Foreigners indicates that in 2024 over 0.5 million valid residence permits were issued, mainly covering people who came to Poland before 2022.

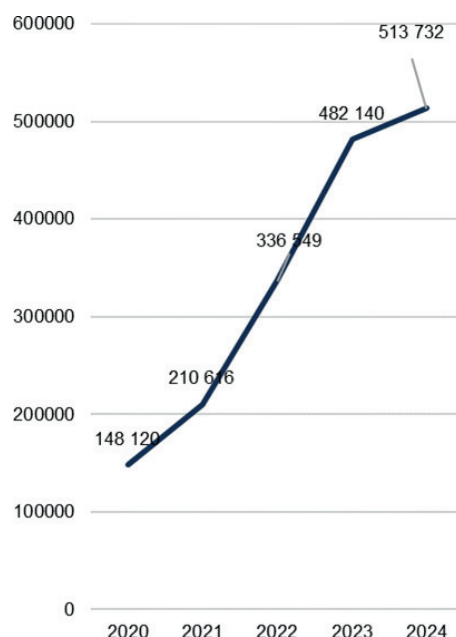


Fig. 2. Number of valid residence permits Immigrants from Ukraine from 2020 to 2024[3]

GUS reported that at the end of February 2024, slightly more than 690 thousand immigrants from Ukraine were working in Poland. It was the largest group of foreigners working in Poland (about 68% of the total number of working foreigners) [4]. In terms of the number of applications for protection in 2024, citizens of Ukraine are now in the first place (35% of all applications) ahead of Belarusians, Russians, Somalis and Syrians. As of July 31, 2024, the Head of the Office for Foreigners conducts 2 317 proceedings in the case of granting protection to citizens of Ukraine (at first instance). As of July 31, 2024, the Social Assistance of the Head of the Office for Foreigners is covered by 1 978 citizens of Ukraine [5].

In 2024, an analysis of the gender structure among Ukrainian immigrants in Poland showed a clear predominance of women, who accounted for 67% of the total population. This phenomenon was noticeable among both pre-war migrants (54%) and refugees (76%) [6] and this trend has continued since 2022 [8]. In the studied group, there is a clear dominance of people in the age range of 27–44 years, in which it most often establishes families and the highest professional activity occurs [8, s. 10].

There is a noticeable difference between the 2023 and 2024 studies, with a higher percentage of people aged 60 and over appearing in the 2024 edition of the study [8, s. 9].

The steady influx of migrants has been observed in the last decade, starting in 2014, when eastern Ukraine was hit by an armed conflict. Most of them worked on the basis of the seasonal work system, made possible by the law of 2011, which allowed Ukrainians and citizens of five other countries to work in Poland for 6 months during the year without the need for a work permit, based on the employer's declaration. It was a circular migration – after the end of the six-month period, many migrants returned to Ukraine. As a result, most of them stayed in Poland for less than twelve months and were not included in the resident population or other national population estimates. Data from the NBP, taking into account the years 2014–2018, indicate that between one and two million Ukrainian workers arrived in Poland [7], although these figures may be underestimated. In such circumstances, the most reliable source of data on these flows is the number of Ukrainian workers covered by social security. However, this number is also underestimated, as some types of legal work, often undertaken by temporary workers, did not require insurance, and some Ukrainians worked in the gray area. The largest number of foreigners registered at the end of November 2024 for pension insurance in ZUS came from Ukraine and amounted to 794 thousand [8].

The number of employees with Ukrainian citizenship and social security increased from just 33 thousand at the end of 2013 to 500 thousand on 30 September 2019 and 627 thousand at the end of 2021. Part of this increase is due to the transition of Ukrainians to more regular forms of employment and obtaining work permits. The annual rate of registration peaked at 106% at the end of 2015, and even with the recent influx of refugees, it has never reached such a high rate. Data from 30 September 2023 indicated 753 thousand workers with Ukrainian citizenship registered in the social security system, including 225 thousand refugees [9].

Before the beginning of the war, 57% of the Ukrainian minority in Poland were men, whose share (despite the increase in numbers) fell to 40%. The biggest change was seen among people under 18, whose number increased from about 200 thousand to about 1.4 million people. During the war, many people with high material status and higher education came to Poland, which significantly affected the social structure of this population. At this point, the Ukrainian community in Poland is divided into two significantly different groups: in terms of assets, the way of spending free time and the professions they perform [10].

On 23 January 2025, Sebastian Gajewski, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, informed that in 2024 Ukrainian citizens were paid over PLN 2.8 billion as part of the social benefit 800 plus. He added that in December 2024, the benefit went to 292 thousand Ukrainian children. According to the data of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, there are currently about 1.5 million Ukrainians in Poland, of which 980 are staying with us on the basis of the Act on providing assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with armed conflict on the territory of this country [11]. According to the latest data of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), in December 2024, the educational benefit of 800 plus was collected for 292 thousand children with Ukrainian citizenship [11]. Within 800 plus, PLN 66 billion was paid out in 2024 Citizens of Ukraine – over PLN 2 billion 800 thousand (or 4.2% of the total), most of them under the Ukrainian Aid Act. The number of applications for 800 plus, submitted in 2024 by Ukrainian citizens, amounted to 284 thousand [12]. The minister pointed out that the professional activity of Ukrainians of working age in Poland amounts to about 78%. About 60% he works on the basis of contracts of mandate, about 1/3 on the basis of contracts of employment and a few percent on other grounds, such as contracts for specific work or sole proprietorships. On a regular basis, about 780 thousand citizens of Ukraine pay contributions to the Social Insurance Fund, which constitutes about 5% of the proceeds to the Social Insurance Fund [13].

It should be emphasized that of the approximately 1.5 million Ukrainians living in Poland, 980 thousand operate on the basis of the law on providing assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with armed conflict on the territory of this country. Citizens of Ukraine legally residing in the territory of Poland are entitled to the benefit in two schemes. The first applies to those who came to Poland before the outbreak of the war staying in Poland under the general rules provided for in the Act on Foreigners. The second – the citizens of Ukraine, who came to us after the outbreak of the war. In the latter scheme, the right to an educational benefit is granted to a citizen of Ukraine if he/she lives with a child in the territory of the Republic of Poland, has not left the territory of Poland for more than 30 days, and the child for whom this benefit is entitled performs the duty of education, school duty or the duty of pre-school preparation, what has been verified in the educational information system. In the period of benefit, which runs from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025, ZUS waived the right to benefit for over 19 thousand children, for which the citizens of Ukraine come to Poland in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine. In case of doubt, ZUS has the possibility to verify whether the benefit is due to the applicant, because the data on the entry and exit of Ukrainian citizens has the Border Guard and makes them available to ZUS [14].

The legal framework in force in 2024. Citizens of Ukraine have long been present on the Polish labor market. Even before the outbreak of the armed conflict, they had the opportunity to take up

employment in Poland. In connection with the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine, legal regulations were introduced to simplify access to the labor market and assistance services. On 12 March 2022, a law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine was adopted [15], which was amended by the law of 15 May 2024 [16] and became effective on 1 July 2024 [17].

As a rule, it provides for a number of specific solutions to seal the system of providing assistance, the functioning of Ukrainians on the labor market and the limitation of certain aid measures. The personal scope of the Act excludes children born on the territory of the Republic of Poland, if their father is a Polish citizen or a citizen other than the Republic of Poland of a Member State of the European Union. The date of application for granting a PESEL number with the status of UKR has changed from 30 days from the date of arrival on the territory of the Republic of Poland to “immediately upon arrival”. The age of persons who are fingerprinted has been reduced (from 12 to 6 years) in order to correlate the regulations concerning the collection of data stored in the register of citizens of Ukraine [18].

Re-introduced the provisions on identity confirmation only on the basis of a valid travel document when issuing a PESEL number and introduced the obligation of Ukrainian citizens to confirm their identity in any municipality authority within 60 days from the date of issuing the travel document in case of, when their PESEL number was issued on the basis of a document other than a valid travel document. The provisions on automatic change of status of Ukrainian citizens in the PESEL register have been specified. In addition, the municipality’s executive body will be able to make changes to this register in the absence of an automatic change of status. The provision under which the municipal authority could provide a citizen of Ukraine free of charge to take a photograph for the application for granting a PESEL number was deleted [19].

The system of providing assistance in collective accommodation has been tightened. The scope of assistance provided to Ukrainian citizens by voivodes has been clarified by indicating that this assistance may consist in providing collective accommodation, which is considered to be accommodation in a facility with at least 10 people or in facilities owned or managed by public finance sector units on a permanent basis, and all-day collective food, operating reception points, providing transport related to accommodation or medical care, taking other actions necessary to implement the assistance, after obtaining the consent of the competent minister. A new mechanism of participation and exemption from fees for stays in collective accommodation places exceeding 120 days and 180 days respectively from the date of the first entry of a Ukrainian citizen into the territory of the Republic of Poland has been introduced. Access to the Polish labor market for Ukrainian citizens has changed. A Ukrainian who is legally resident in Poland can legally work for any employer in Poland without the need to obtain a work permit. A mandatory condition for the work to be considered legal is the submission of an electronic notification by the employer within 14 days from the date of taking up the work. In addition, any citizen of Ukraine residing in Poland legally can register as an unemployed or job seeker, on the same terms as a citizen of the Republic of Poland. The changes introduced by the Act on access to the labor market concern shortening from 14 to 7 days the deadline for sending a notification by an employer employing a Ukrainian citizen, introducing the need to submit another notification about the employment of a Ukrainian citizen in case the type of contract between the entity entrusting work and the citizen of Ukraine has changed, the position or type of work carried out has changed, the working time or the number of working hours per week or month specified in the notification has been reduced, the monthly or hourly rate of remuneration specified in the notification has been reduced, - the introduction of a requirement to indicate in the employment notification of a citizen of Ukraine at least the minimum wage or the minimum hourly rate. An obligation for a citizen of Ukraine to notify the employer of the decision on granting temporary residence and work permits has been added. From 12 to 36 months, the period of storage

of data from the register of minors in the it system has been extended. The granting and payment of the parental benefit (so-called 800 plus) and the “Good Start” benefit were made dependent on whether the child performs the obligation of annual pre-school preparation, compulsory schooling or compulsory education in a kindergarten or school belonging to the Polish education system [20]. The grounds for obtaining a one-time payment of PLN 300 per person for maintenance by a citizen of Ukraine have been waived. However, the possibility of restoring this benefit by issuing an appropriate regulation was left, in the event of an increase in the inflow of Ukrainian citizens [21].

There have been significant changes in the legalization of stay. It has been possible to apply for a temporary residence permit for family reunification for citizens of Ukraine who benefit from temporary protection in the Republic of Poland, to allow temporary residence permit for a period of 6 months in the case of a temporary residence permit. when a citizen of Ukraine applies for this permit due to circumstances requiring a short stay or due to seasonal work. A new procedure has been introduced to enable the citizens of Ukraine to convert their residence permits into temporary residence permits by issuing a residence card.

With the temporary residence permit obtained by transformation, the Ukrainian will have access to the Polish labor market by exemption from the obligation to have a work permit. Therefore, there will be no obligation to notify the district employment office. Ukrainians have retained the right to undertake and perform economic activity on the same basis as Polish citizens, i.e. on the basis of entry in the Central Register and Information on Economic Activity.

Specific grounds for withdrawing temporary residence permit held by Ukrainian citizens have been introduced. It will be withdrawn for reasons of defense or state security or protection of security and public order or the citizen of Ukraine will leave the territory of the Republic of Poland for a period of at least 6 months. The maximum 36-month period in which students who are citizens of Ukraine will be able to participate in additional free Polish language classes, if they started them in the school years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

Students from Ukraine were exempted from the obligation to take the eighth-grader exam in the Polish language in the 2024/2025 school year, with the introduction of episodic regulations specifying the method of converting individual recruitment criteria to secondary schools for the 2025/2026 school year into points. The period during which a citizen of Ukraine who obtained a qualification as a doctor or dentist outside the territory of the Member States of the European Union has been extended by 32 months from 24 February 2022, permission to pursue the profession of doctor or to pursue the profession of dental practitioner may be granted and when a conditional right to pursue those professions may be granted.

The period during which the minister competent for health may assign a number corresponding to the number of the right to practice at the request of a doctor or dentist has been extended until 30 September 2025, if the doctor has obtained a certificate of entry in the register of doctors temporarily and occasionally practicing the profession and has notified his intention to provide health services to citizens of Ukraine.

The possibility of providing psychological services to citizens of Ukraine was restored by Ukrainian citizens residing on the territory of Poland with appropriate education obtained in Ukraine in the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2025, the data was clarified, what should contain a medical certificate issued in a foreign medical institution or by a foreign doctor, which is the basis for establishing the right to sickness or care allowance for a citizen of Ukraine.

The extension of the periods of validity of the special legal arrangements provided for in the Act on Assistance related to the extension until 30 September 2025 of the period during which the stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland of citizens of Ukraine who came to this territory in connection with hostilities conducted on the territory of Ukraine is considered legal. Tax preferences were extended for 2025, providing tax support in connection with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine [22].

A legal basis has been introduced to confirm by an administrative decision the education of a person who obtained a certificate or other document in a country which has denounced the international agreement concerning the mutual recognition of such certificates or other documents issued abroad [23]. The possibility of obtaining full qualifications of a doctor and a dentist was introduced for people who perform these professions under the so-called simplified procedure [24].

New grounds were introduced for cancelling the certificate confirming the use of temporary protection by a foreigner [25]. A requirement was introduced to demonstrate knowledge of the Polish language at the B1 level by nurses and midwives who obtained qualifications outside the European Union and have the consent of the minister competent for health to practice in the territory of the Republic of Poland obtained under the so-called simplified procedure [26].

Schools are to create positions of intercultural assistant, who will provide non-Polish citizens, subject to compulsory school or compulsory education, who do not know the Polish language or know it at a level insufficient to benefit from education, help in contacts with the school environment, and cooperate with their parents and with the school [27].

Introduction of a statutory delegation to issue by the voivode, under the authority of the minister competent for internal affairs, the so-called temporary rapid passports at passport points at airports [28].

Immigrants from Ukraine on the Polish labor market. Economic migration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland is one of the most important socio-economic phenomena of recent years. The intensification of this process is the result of both internal factors, such as the economic and political situation in Ukraine, and external factors, including the demand for labor in Poland [29].

Since 2022, Poland has become the main country receiving refugees from this country. Nearly 800 thousand Ukrainians pay contributions to the FUS constituting nearly 5% of insured persons in Poland and pay taxes in our country [30]. The majority of migrants are women and children, which results from the obligation to mobilize men of conscript age in Ukraine.

In 2024, 17 thousand foreigners applied for international protection in Poland. The two largest groups of applicants were citizens of Ukraine and Belarus. In 2024, the Office for Foreigners issued decisions against 12 thousand people. The number of applications for international protection submitted in Poland was 79% higher compared to 2023. In 2023, the most refugee applications came from citizens of Ukraine – 7 thousand people and Belarus – 3.9 thousand people [31].

The territorial distribution of Ukrainians settling in Poland is characterized by concentration in voivodships with large urban agglomerations. The most popular regions are: Mazowieckie – 21% of people, Lower Silesia – 11% of people, greater Poland – 11% of people, Lesser Poland – 10% and Silesia – 9% of people [32]. Women and children make up about 87% of this group. Children and young people are about 43% citizens of Ukraine with PESEL numbers. Among adults, women make up 77% of the population [38].

The structure of the Ukrainian population in Poland changed radically after February 24, 2022. By 2021, Ukrainians in Poland were mostly men (almost two-thirds) who came to look for work, often leaving their families in Ukraine. After the beginning of the war in Ukraine, refugees fleeing the war began to arrive in Poland. They were mainly women and children. This is consistent with the change in the nature of migration flows – from mainly economic migration to forcibly displaced refugees [39].

In February 2024, ZUS reported that more than 755.8 thousand Ukrainian citizens work in Poland. Three-quarters are women employed primarily in catering, retail and other services [34].

The employment rate of war refugees of working age from Ukraine in Poland is 65%, which is the highest result among OECD countries (much higher compared to other Polish neighbors: 53% in Lithuania, 51% in the Czech Republic, 34% in Slovakia and 18% in Germany). This result can be considered a significant achievement, given that refugees from Ukraine active on the Polish

labor market represent a variety of qualifications and professional experience, which makes their professional integration a complex and diverse process [35].

Ukrainian migrants are mainly employed in sectors that require a large labor force and offer relatively low wages [36]. The highest demand for workers from Ukraine is recorded in sectors such as construction, agriculture, transport, catering and processing industry. Women from Ukraine often find employment in the care and home services sector.

At the end of February 2024, the share of foreigners in the total number of people performing work amounted to 6.6%. Foreigners working in February 2024 came from more than 150 countries [37]. At the end of February 2024, there were 1004.6 thousand foreigners doing work. In this number, 384.2 thousand foreigners executed order and related contracts. The share of foreigners working in Poland in the total number of people working in Poland increased by 1.4 percentage points compared to January 2022. In the analyzed population of foreigners, the majority were men, their share decreased from 64.7% at the end of January 2022 to 59.5% at the end of February 2024. The largest group of foreigners performing work in Poland were citizens of Ukraine, who at the end of February 2024 were 690.2 thousand people. Their share in the total number of foreigners performing work decreased by 4.6 percentage points compared to January 2022. On the last day of February 2024, almost one in five out of all foreigners working in Warsaw lived in the capital region (19.0%). However, the least of the analyzed population of foreigners lived in the Świętokrzyskie region (less than 1.0%) [37]. Ukrainian migrants in Poland constitute an important segment of the labor market, contributing to the reduction of labor shortages in key sectors of the economy. At the same time, their presence allows inflation to stabilize, as lower labor costs help to limit price increases in some sectors [38].

Immigrants from Ukraine fill gaps in sectors such as light industry, food processing and electronics assembly. Men who arrived before the war or received special permits often work in construction and agriculture, where their work is necessary due to labor shortages. Women from Ukraine find employment in the services sector, including catering, cleaning, childcare and elderly care, as well as in the retail trade. More and more highly qualified specialists from Ukraine find work in the IT, engineering and finance industries. However, there are still language barriers associated with knowledge of Polish [39]. The Law on Assistance to Ukrainian citizens of 2022 [40] made it possible to quickly take up legal work without obtaining permits, which significantly facilitated the integration of immigrants into the Polish labor market. In many cases, employment is based on contracts of mandate or specific work, which gives flexibility to both employers and employees, but may be associated with less stable employment. In 2024 there were significant changes in this area referred to in the above part of the article.

The presence of large numbers of immigrants contributes to increasing demand for goods and services, which stimulates economic development. Legal employment of immigrants translates into additional revenues to the state budget due to taxes and social security contributions. Despite cultural similarities, the integration process requires activities in the field of learning Polish, educating children and adapting to Polish social norms [41].

Ending the conflict in Ukraine may result in a massive return of immigrants to their homeland, which would pose a challenge for the Polish labor market, especially in sectors heavily dependent on Ukrainian workers. Poland is facing the need to develop a long-term migration strategy that will take into account both the needs of the labor market, as well as social and demographic aspects.

Poles generally show solidarity with immigrants from Ukraine, but growing competition on the labor market and the burden on the social system can lead to social tensions. The Polish authorities are taking measures to support the integration of immigrants, but there are also voices calling for a tightening of migration policy, fearing negative effects on the labor market and the social welfare system. Depending on the further course of the conflict in Ukraine and the economic situation

in Poland, immigrants from Ukraine may choose to stay in Poland permanently, return to their homeland or migrate to other European countries. For those who decide to stay in Poland, it will be crucial to provide access to education, health care and housing market, as well as to create conditions for professional and social development.

The labor market in Poland played a key role in the integration of migrants from Ukraine. In 2024, a significant proportion of respondents found employment, with most of them working in industries such as construction, services or manufacturing. A high percentage of migrants were employed on the basis of employment contracts (42%), which indicates their professional stability. However, work below qualifications remains a significant problem, which affected 35% of respondents. The barrier was often the lack of fluent knowledge of the Polish language and the lack of knowledge of the Polish labor market [42].

The salary of migrants was similar to the average rates on the Polish labor market, although in the case of women, the average net salary was lower than among men. These differences were particularly evident in sectors where lower-paid positions prevailed. The introduction of programs to support professional development, such as vocational training and language training, could significantly improve the economic situation of migrants [43].

Economic situation of migrants. In 2024, the economic situation of Ukrainian citizens in Poland was shaped by their activity on the labor market and support from the Polish social system. Immigrants from Ukraine showed high activity on the Polish labor market. According to the NBP report [44]. The share of people working or looking for work among immigrants was 78%, which is a significantly higher rate than among Polish citizens. The basic source of income for these people was paid from work, accounting on average for about 90% of the income of pre-war immigrants and 76% for refugees.

Under the 800 plus program, over PLN 2.8 billion was paid to Ukrainian citizens in 2024. In December 2024, 292 Ukrainian children received this benefit. It is worth noting that about 800 thousand Ukrainians pay contributions to the FUS, which accounts for nearly 5% of insured persons in Poland [45].

NBP research indicates that 21% of refugees who came to Poland after the Russian invasion and 48% of pre-war immigrants plan to stay in Poland permanently. Only 2% of Ukrainians consider moving to another country. In 2024, Ukrainian citizens in Poland were economically active, benefited from available social benefits and were planning a long-term stay in the country.

The analysis of the economic situation of migrants from Ukraine in Poland showed a significant diversity. The median net income was PLN 3.5 thousand per month, which allowed to cover basic life needs. However, the high cost of living, including housing, has been a challenge for many migrants. As many as 60% of respondents spent more than 30% of their income on renting an apartment. In contrast, 15% of migrants used employer-provided accommodation, which reduced their spending. 5% of Ukrainians agreed to earnings below PLN 4000 net, 85% expect salaries ranging from PLN 4000 to PLN 7700 net, and 10% want to earn more than PLN 7700 per hand [46].

Access to social benefits has been an important support for migrants. In 2024, 41% of respondents benefited from various forms of social assistance, such as 800+ or family benefits. Nevertheless, many older people, especially those over 60, have struggled with economic problems due to a lack of sustainable means of subsistence. These individuals were often dependent on the help of their children or other family members [47].

The situation of migrants from Ukraine in Poland varied from region to region. The Mazowieckie and Małopolskie voivodships were the most popular among migrants due to their access to the labor market and higher standard of living. Less developed regions, such as the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, were dominated by more difficult economic conditions, which influenced the decisions of migrants to change their place of residence [47].

The importance of local support programs was particularly evident in regions where NGOs and local authorities supported migrants in the adaptation process. The introduction of regional initiatives such as language courses, vocational counselling and housing support can significantly improve the situation of migrants and their families.

Conclusions. In 2024, migrants from Ukraine in Poland constituted an important social and economic group, contributing to the development of many sectors of the economy. However, their living and economic situation was complex and requires further integration and support. Polish authorities should focus on the development of educational and integration programs, including learning Polish, simplifying procedures for recognition of professional qualifications of migrants and introducing additional forms of housing and social support, as well as promoting local initiatives supporting the integration of migrants in the local community. It would be valuable to establish a long-term cooperation strategy with Ukraine to support the country's reconstruction and improve the migration situation. The implementation of these demands will contribute to the more effective integration of migrants from Ukraine in Poland and strengthening their position on the labor market and in society. These actions can also improve Polish-Ukrainian relations, while supporting the development of both countries.

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16. Act of 15 May 2024 amending the Act on Assistance to citizens of Ukraine in relation to Armed Conflict on the territory of that State and certain other Acts (Dz 854).
17. The act follows the extension by the Council of the European Union (Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/2409 of 19 October 2023) of the temporary protection introduced by Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine.

18. Article 6 of the Act of 12 March 2022 on Assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with armed conflict on the territory of that country (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 167, as amended).
19. Article 5 of the Law of 12 March 2022 on Assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with armed conflict on the territory of that State has been repealed.
20. This provision will apply from the benefit period beginning on 1 June 2025 and the school year 2025/2026.
21. Act of 15 May 2024 amending the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian citizens in relation to Armed Conflict on the territory of that State and certain other Acts.
22. Amendments to the Act of 26 July 1991 on personal income tax (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 226, as amended) and Article 2 and Article 4 of the Act of 15 February 1992 on corporate income tax.
23. Amendment to the Act of 7 September 1991 on the Education System (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 750, as amended).
24. Amendment to Article 5 of the Act of 5 December 1996 on professions of doctor and dentist (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1287, as amended).
25. Amendment of Article 6 of the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 1504, as amended).
26. Amendment to Article 8 of the Act of 15 July 2011 on the professions of nurse and midwife (Dz 1640).
27. Amendment to Article 9 of the Act of 14 December 2016 – Educational Law (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 737, as amended).
28. Amendment to Article 10 of the Act of 27 January 2022 on passport documents (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1063).
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Івона Ласек-Суровец, Тетяна Струтинська. Мігранти з України в Польщі: соціально-правові умови у 2024 році

У статті аналізується соціально-економічне становище українських мігрантів у Польщі у 2024 році. Увага зосереджується на їх правовому статусі, доступі до ринку праці та соціальної системи. У результаті війни Польща стала основною країною, що приймала українців, яких налічується приблизно 1,5 мільйона. Мігранти мають високу професійну активність, становлять значну частину робочої сили. У статті також обговорюються зміни в законодавстві щодо їх проживання та проблем інтеграції. Наголошено на необхідності створення довгострокової міграційної стратегії для стабілізації ринку праці та суспільства. У статті висвітлюються основні законодавчі зміни, зокрема: спрощення легалізації перебування та доступу до роботи, що вплинуло на стабілізацію мігрантів у Польщі. Указується також про значну частку українців у таких секторах, як будівництво, послуги та промисловість. Мігранти користуються перевагами польської соціальної системи, зокрема: 800+ переваг, що передбачає обговорення політики довгострокової підтримки. Визначено, що проблемами інтеграції є мовні бар'єри та культурні відмінності. Для забезпечення ефективної інтеграції та розвитку обох суспільств необхідні програми підтримки освіти й зайнятості.

Ключові слова: мігранти, Україна, Польща, суспільство, право, економіка.

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