



**INTENTIONS AND  
PERSPECTIVES  
OF REFUGEES  
FROM UKRAINE  
IN AUSTRIA**

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## Acknowledgements

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### Cover photograph:

Austria. UNHCR staff at the border welcome refugees arriving from Ukraine.  
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# Executive Summary

As part of UNHCR's intentions survey series with refugees from Ukraine across Europe, this report presents the main findings from a country-specific data collection regarding the situation and intentions of refugees from Ukraine in **Austria**, including an analysis of refugees' profiles, intentions, reasons behind their decisions, as well as key insights into their socio-economic situation – with the goal of informing advocacy, programming and decision-making of all stakeholders. The analysis is based on an UNHCR online survey, conducted in partnership with Ipsos SA, with **553 completed questionnaires between mid-January and mid-March 2023**. Data were collected at the

household level, with the survey thus providing information on over **1,500 refugees** living within those households.

The present report aims to answer the following main questions:

- What are the **household profiles** and current **socio-economic conditions** of refugees from Ukraine in Austria? How can they influence their intentions and inclusion perspectives?
- What are refugees' **intentions or plans** in the short- and the long-term? What are the main **reasons, drivers and enablers** influencing refugees' decisions and planning?

## Key findings

### 1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS INFLUENCE REFUGEES' INTENTIONS AS THERE ARE GROUPS WITH DIFFERENT CAPACITIES AND VULNERABILITIES.

## 82%

of household members are **women and children**.

## 13%

of household members are **older persons** (60 years or more).

## 29%

of households are composed of **only one adult (18-59 years) with dependents** (children and/or older persons), and **35%** are composed of **two or more adults with dependents**.

## 92%

had arrived in the host country **by August 2022** and had therefore been living in Austria for over six months at the time of the survey.

## 17%

of households have a member with any **long-term illness or disability**.

## 78%

of respondents have **university-level education** and over a third have a master level or above (35%).

## 2 INSIGHTS ON SITUATION IN HOST COUNTRY

### ACCESS TO EDUCATION

92%

of children (6 to 18 years) are reported as attending school.

24%

of those aged 15 to 18 years indicate **no school attendance**.

32%

of children attending school are reported as **both attending the formal school in Austria and following remotely the Ukrainian curriculum**.

23%

of 15 to 18 years old are reported as **following only the Ukrainian curriculum remotely**.

### ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

30%

of respondents are **currently working**, while about one fourth declare themselves as **unemployed and looking for a job (26%)**.

37%

of those working are employed in **elementary occupations**.

70%

of those employed report that their current occupation is at a **lower level than their previous employment in Ukraine**.

78%

of respondents report **lack of knowledge of the local language** as the most important challenge for accessing employment in Austria, followed by the **lack of employment opportunities suited to their skills (33%)**.

**Lack of decent employment opportunities**, such as adequate salaries, working hours and formal work, appears also to be a major difficulty faced by respondents (**18%**), while **lack of education or skills recognition** is stressed by **13%** of respondents.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

38%

report **not being able to cover their household's basic needs** in the past 3 months, including about one sixth who reported that their household's income had not covered their basic needs **at all (17%)** and over one in five who indicated that their income only covered their basic needs **"a little" (21%)**.

33%

of respondents indicate they were **"moderately"** able to meet their basic needs.

### 3 LESS THAN HALF OF REFUGEES SURVEYED STILL HOPE TO EVENTUALLY RETURN TO UKRAINE IN THE FUTURE, A SUBSTANTIAL PART IS UNDECIDED AND FOR THE TIME BEING, THE MAJORITY PLAN TO CONTINUE TO STAY IN AUSTRIA.

4%

report **plans to return in the next three months.**

42%

express a **hope to return one day to Ukraine.**

37%

are still **undecided about returning in the future.**

16%

report **no plans or hope to return.**

There are important differences in refugees' return intentions depending on their demographic characteristics, including amongst others:

- Those with no intention to return are all below 60 years old.
- Those who have a partner or child living in Ukraine are more likely than those without family in Ukraine to plan to return permanently one day (**50%** – albeit still only half – **vs 27%**).

### 4 WHILE THE MAIN ENABLER FOR RETURN FOR REFUGEES IS AN END TO THE WAR AND THE RELATED SAFETY RISKS, HAVING ADEQUATE ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY AND WATER, HEALTH SERVICES, HOUSING AND LIVELIHOODS IN UKRAINE WILL ALSO SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE THEIR DECISIONS. IN ADDITION TO THE ONGOING SECURITY RISKS IN UKRAINE, INFORMATION NEEDS AND THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES IN THEIR PLACES OF ORIGIN, REFUGEES' INTENTIONS ARE ALSO INFLUENCED BY THE LEVEL OF ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RIGHTS IN AUSTRIA, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITIES.

75%

indicated that their decision to return would highly be impacted if they faced difficulties to **access services** or to **obtaining rights** in Austria.

59%

of respondents indicated that the most important factor as regards **conditions in Austria** that would have a great deal or quite a lot of importance on their decision to return would be having problems to **access health facilities** in the country.

53%

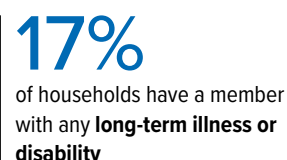
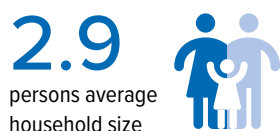
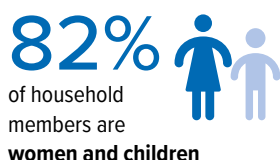
reported that failing to access **stable decent work opportunities** in Austria would also impact the decision to return.

40%

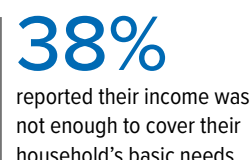
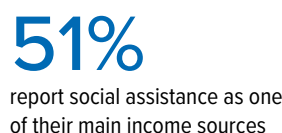
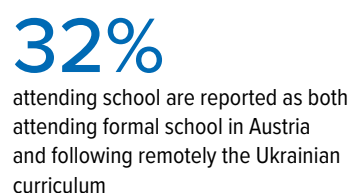
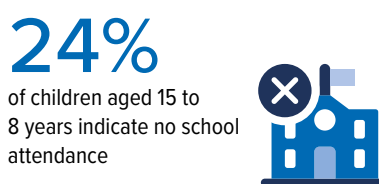
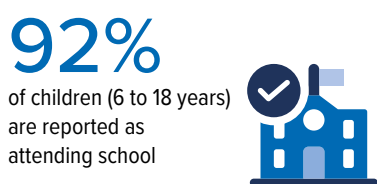
indicated that facing problems to **access education** in Austria would be also considered as determinant on their decision to return, rising to over **one in two** among those with children in household.

## Results at a glance

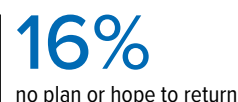
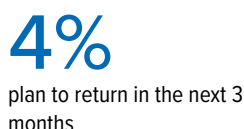
### REFUGEES' PROFILES



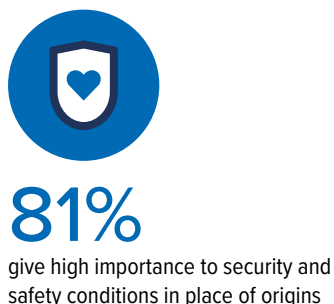
### KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS



### REFUGEES INTENTIONS



### INFLUENCING FACTORS



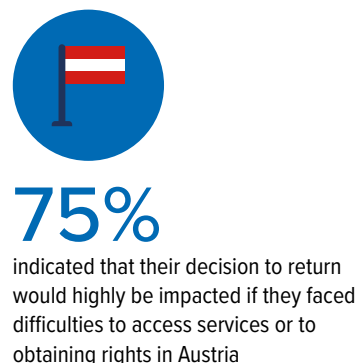
#### Ranking of factors

1. No military occupation
2. No security concerns
3. End / political solution to the war
4. Freedom of movement



#### Ranking of factors

1. Access to electricity and water services
2. Access to health services
3. Work / livelihood opportunities
4. Access to property or alternative housing
5. Access to education services



#### Ranking of factors

1. Problems to access health facilities
2. Failing to access stable decent work opportunities
3. Problems to access education

# Introduction

As a result of the war in Ukraine, nearly one-third of the population of Ukraine remain forcibly displaced from their homes, making it one of the largest displacement crises in the world today. Within Ukraine, over 5 million people remain internally displaced<sup>1</sup>, while millions more fled the country to seek protection in neighbouring countries and beyond. The majority of European Union (EU) member states implemented the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), activated for the first time in March 2022, while a number of other countries applied similar legal frameworks.<sup>2</sup> As of end of May 2023, UNHCR estimated that over 5.1 million have registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Within the first 15 months after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Austria has recorded more than 97,000 refugees from Ukraine and has provided them quickly with support and protection based on the EU Temporary Protection Directive. The temporary protection status for refugees from Ukraine in the EU is currently valid until 4 March 2024. However, it is not entirely known how many of those registered in Austria are currently still in the country. The estimate by authorities based on registrations in the Official Population Register and renewed temporary protection cards is about 72,000.

By end of April 2023, some 51,000 received basic welfare support and almost 9,000 were formally employed according to official records.<sup>4</sup> Within the framework of the basic welfare support scheme, individuals can either be housed in accommodation/reception facilities provided by federal or provincial authorities or live in private accommodation. In the latter, they receive certain limited subsidies. The majority of refugees from Ukraine live in private accommodation. Of the about 50,000 refugees

from Ukraine receiving basic welfare support, more than 15,000 live in state facilities and about 35,000 are privately accommodated. Data from the education ministry indicates that almost 5,700 refugees from Ukraine are in Austrian primary schools and more than 7,400 in secondary education by the beginning of May 2023.

To ensure the centrality of refugees' voices in discussions about their future, as well as to inform evidence-based inter-agency responses in support of host Governments, UNHCR is leading the regular implementation of intentions surveys with refugees from Ukraine, collecting primary data on their profiles, their current situation and intentions, and the factors influencing their decision-making, covering refugees hosted in countries neighbouring Ukraine as well as in the rest of Europe. Three regional intentions report have been published in July 2022 ([Lives on Hold #1](#)), September 2022 ([Lives on Hold #2](#)) and February 2023 ([Lives on Hold #3](#)). An upcoming fourth report will be published by end of June 2023.

This report presents the main findings from a country-specific data collection conducted in **Austria**, including an analysis of refugees' profiles, intentions, reasons behind their decisions, as well as key insights into their socio-economic situation. The report aims to answer the following main questions:

- What are the **household profiles** and current **socio-economic conditions** of refugees from Ukraine in Austria? How can they influence their intentions and inclusion perspectives?
- What are refugee's **intentions or plans** in the short and the long term? What are the main **reasons, drivers and enablers** influencing refugees' decisions and planning?

1. IOM Ukraine (2023): [Internal Displacement Report](#) - General Population Survey Round 12 (as of 23 January 2023).
2. The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) 2001/55/EC was triggered by the [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/382 of 4 March 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.
3. For most up-to date information visit the <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.
4. Ministry of Interior and Public Employment Service.

# Methodology

A total of **553 surveys** were completed through an **online questionnaire**. Refugees displaced by the ongoing war in Ukraine and currently living in Austria were invited to participate in the survey through social media and instant messaging apps (e.g., Facebook, Telegram). The survey link was published by civil society moderators with connections with UNHCR on relevant existing groups or platforms. Data were collected between the 15th of January and the 12th of March 2023. On average, the survey took 13 minutes to complete. Data were collected at the household level, with the survey thus providing information on over **1,500 refugees** living within those households.

The questionnaire collected data on refugees' demographic profiles, including information about their place of origin, living conditions in Austria and intentions for the future. The questionnaire used for

this study was harmonized to the one administered at the regional level across different European countries, so that data can be compared with those collected from refugees living in other host countries.

Majority of the survey respondents were **female (87 per cent)**, with about **a third** between 18 and 34 years of age, **around two thirds** between 35 and 59 years of age, and **4 per cent** 60 years of age or older. The demographic composition of the households in the survey sample showed a very similar distribution than that of the overall refugee population based on latest statistics made available by the Austrian government (March 2023). Nonetheless, for the analysis, weights have been applied on gender and age based on the most recent figures at the time of the survey.

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## SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

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**553**  
surveys completed

**87%**  
of respondents are female

**41 yrs**  
average age of respondents

**71%**  
of respondents left Ukraine between February and March 2022

**56%**  
of respondents indicate living with a child in their household

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## Survey limitations

The results presented in this report must be interpreted according to the limitations of the methodology and given the context of ongoing movements. In particular, web-based surveys are not based on a probabilistic sample and are not necessarily representative of all refugees displaced from Ukraine and living in Austria. Moreover, online samples tend to over-represent individuals with higher levels of education while under-representing those who are elderly, with ill health, or living with a

disability. Finally, these figures do not account for unregistered individuals living in Austria, or those who had registered in Austria since February 24th, 2022, and have since left the country. It is also worth noting that results presented in this report reflect refugees' situations and intentions at the time of data collection, which meanwhile may have changed depending on different factors and contextual changes.



# Refugees' profiles

The **average household size** of respondents is of **2.9 individuals**. One fifth (20 per cent) of households are composed of a single member, while about three quarters (76 per cent) of them have between 2 and 5 members. Only a minority (5 per cent) live in bigger households of more than 5

members. The **vast majority** of household members (82 per cent) are either **women or children**. About one third (34 per cent) of household members are children, and over one tenth (13 per cent) are older persons (aged 60 years or more).

## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

**82%**

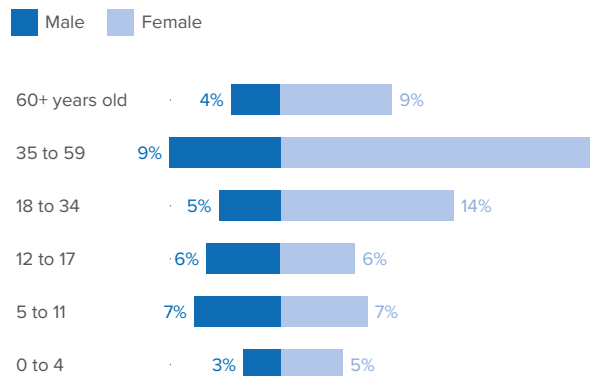
of household members are women and children

**13%**

of household members are older persons (60 years or more)

**2.9**

average household size



In terms of household composition, more than one in three households were composed of **two or more adults with dependents (35 per cent)** while slightly fewer than three in ten were composed of a single adult with dependants (29 per cent) or one or more adults without dependents (28 per cent). Less than one household in ten is composed by older adults only (8 per cent). About **one in six (17 per cent)** of households have any member with any **long-term illness or disability**. These socio-demographic characteristics of the groups influence refugee's intentions and socio-economic situation in the country, as they have different capacities and vulnerabilities. More specifically:

- **35 per cent** are composed of two or more adults (18-59 years) with dependents (children and/or older persons). It is more likely to find males in this type of households (39 per cent of all household members) and respondents from this group are relatively more likely to speak German

well (19 per cent). They are the most likely to be renting an accommodation on their own (42 per cent), while they are less likely than other household composition types to be hosted by relatives or close friends (23 per cent). Three in ten respondents in these households are unemployed but seeking employment, while around one in four are in formal employment (26 per cent). The primary income source for these household is social assistance (cited as a source of income by half of respondents), though more than a third also reports salaries as source of income (35 per cent).

- **29 per cent** are composed of only one adult with dependents. Respondents from these households are the most likely to have a bachelor or higher degree (85 per cent). Almost one in three of such households (29 per cent) are renting their own accommodation while one quarter are living in a hotel or hostel. In fact, this group is more likely than average to be living in

such facilities provided by the government (24 per cent). Respondents from these households are more likely than average to be in professional training (27 per cent) and also more likely than average to be retired (15 per cent). One quarter are in formal employment. The primary source of income for these households is social assistance (60 per cent) and less than a third report income from employment (28 per cent).

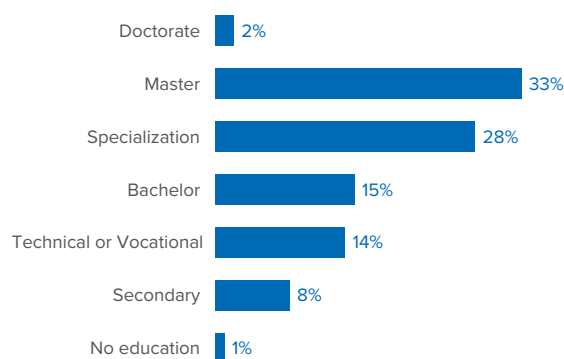
- **28 per cent** of refugee households in Austria are composed of one or more adults (18-59 years) without dependents. They are the group where is most likely to find females (79 per cent, highest proportion of all groups), and more likely than other groups to have a vocational or technical degree as compared to a university education degree. They are most likely to be renting an apartment on their own (42 per cent). They are more likely to speak German well than other household constellations (20 per cent) and the most likely to be employed (36 per cent) earn an income from employment (41 per cent). Nonetheless, one third of respondents living in such households are unemployed and looking for a job. Members of this household type are less likely to report social assistance as source of income (36 per cent).
- **8 per cent** are composed of one or more older persons (60 years or more). More than half of such households are hosted by relatives or close friends (53 per cent). Almost seven in ten of these households are relying on social assistance (69 per cent). Members from these households are more likely to be males (55 per cent), with lower educational attainment, and who arrived in Austria at the start of the war. The vast majority of respondents from these households are retired (67 per cent), and none report speaking German well.

About **one in six (17 per cent)** households have at least one member with **care needs due to a disability or medical condition**. Almost all respondents indicate having relatives back in

Ukraine (94 per cent), with nearly one in three having their **spouse and/or child(ren) still living in Ukraine (32 per cent)**.

- Almost all respondents have Ukrainian nationality (98 per cent), while only 2 per cent have any other nationality (of which the majority have Russian nationality). The majority of respondents have university-level education (78 per cent) including over a third have a master level or above (35 per cent)).

#### RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL



The refugee population in Austria largely reflects that of Europe on average. Indeed, the average household size, age of respondent, education-levels, and time of displacement are in line with the regional averages for these factors found in regional surveys. Household composition is also comparable across both geographic scopes, although households in Austria are less likely than across Europe on average to be composed of only one adult with dependants (29% in Austria versus 38% regionally).<sup>5</sup>

Most respondents left Ukraine between **February and March 2022 (71 per cent)**, and over half of respondents **arrived in Austria** during that period (**62 per cent**). Over one third of respondents were living in the Eastern region of Ukraine on February 23rd 2022 (37 per cent), and more specifically, 16 per cent were living in Kharkiv oblast. One fourth of respondents were living in Kyiv city (25 per cent), and over one in six were living in the Southern

5. See regional intentions report published in February 2023 "[Lives on Hold #3](#)".

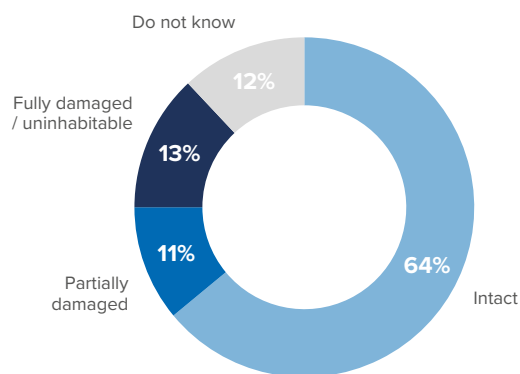
region of Ukraine (17 per cent). Looking at the demographic characteristics of those displaced, more women than men were displaced from the Eastern region (39 vs 28 per cent), while the opposite is true of the Southern region (14 vs 25 per cent). Only 5 per cent of respondents were displaced from the West and a similar share were displaced from the Centre.

The survey captured data about **refugees' property in Ukraine**. Of the respondents sampled, almost nine in ten (**89 per cent**) had been living in Ukraine in a dwelling that they or someone in their household owned. Of those with a dwelling in Ukraine, the majority reported that their house or apartment was **intact (64 per cent)**, particularly among those who had been living in the Central

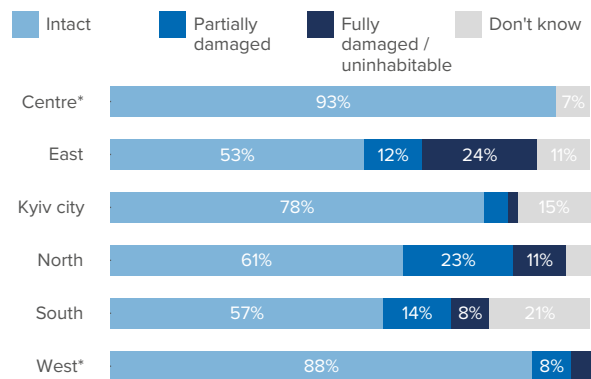
and Western region or in Kiev city (of whom respectively 93, 88 and 78 per cent of owned dwellings are intact). **11 per cent (rising to 23 per cent in the North)** reported **partial damage / destruction** of their dwelling, and **13 per cent** reported **full damage or uninhabitable conditions (rising to 24 per cent in the East)**. Finally, **12 per cent reported not having any information on the status of their dwelling**.

Nearly **three quarters** of respondents **arrived in Austria in February, March, or April 2022** (74 per cent), while the **vast majority** had arrived in the host country **by August 2022 (92 per cent)** and had therefore been living **in Austria for over six months at the time of the survey**.

**DWELLING STATUS**

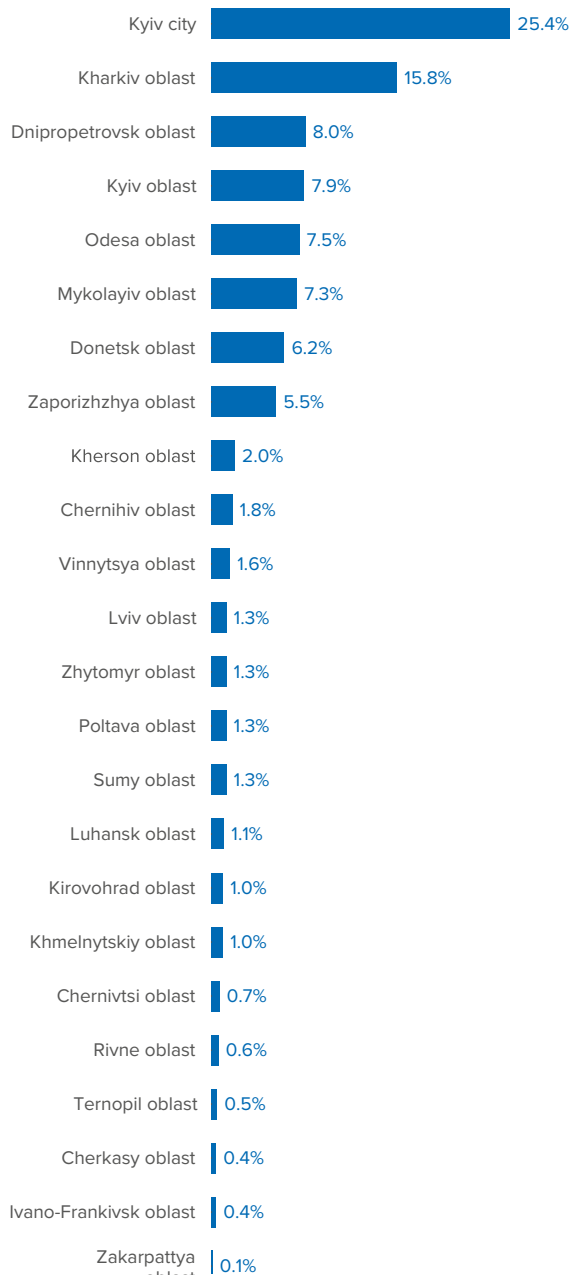


**DWELLING STATUS BY REGION OF ORIGIN**

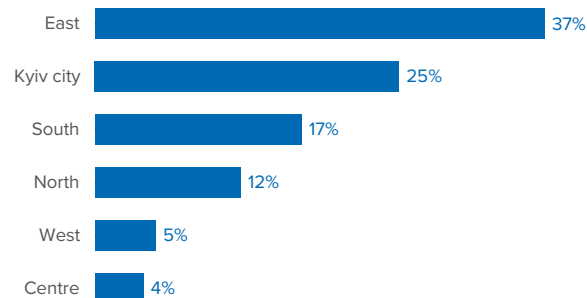


\*Small base (<30 respondents)

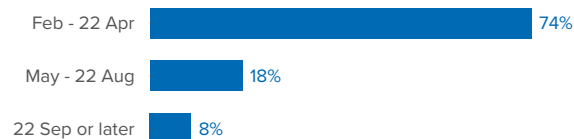
**PLACE OF ORIGIN**



**REGION OF ORIGIN**



**TIME OF ARRIVAL IN AUSTRIA**

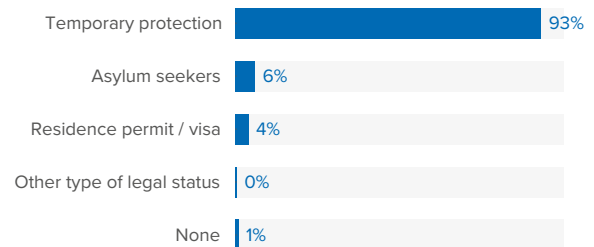


# Current socio-economic conditions

## Legal status

Almost all respondents reported having registered for **temporary protection** in Austria (**93 per cent**), while only a small minority reported having applied for **asylum (6 per cent)** or for a **residence permit or visa (4 per cent)** in the country. Only 1 per cent indicated not having registered to any of those.

### LEGAL STATUS\*



\*Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

## Access to education

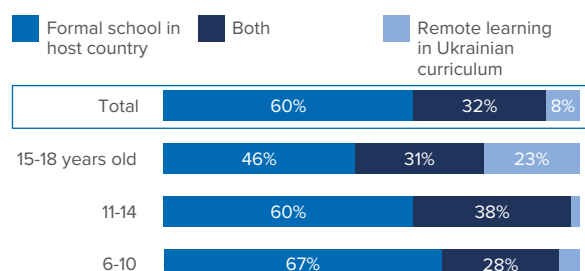
The vast majority of school-age children (6 to 18 years) living in the surveyed households are **currently attending school (92 per cent)** as self-reported by respondents. The majority of them are reported to be attending only **formal school** in the host country (**60 per cent**). Close to one in three children (32 per cent) attending school are reported as both attending the formal school in Austria and following remotely the Ukrainian curriculum, while a minority are reported as only attending the **Ukrainian curriculum** online (**8 per cent**). About **8 per cent** of children of school-age (6 to 18) are reported as **not currently attending school** at all.

School attendance reported by respondents varies depending on the age group of the children in the surveyed households. Virtually **all children aged 6 to 14 (compulsory school age) are reported as currently attending school**, while reporting of school attendance is lower in later adolescence (**76 per cent among those aged 15 to 18 years**). Likewise, the choice of school curriculum also changes by age, with far more children aged 15 to 18 years old reported as **following only the Ukrainian curriculum remotely (23 vs 8 per cent across children on average)**.

### SELF-REPORTED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY AGE GROUP



### TYPE OF SCHOOLING BY AGE GROUP



# Employment

Close to a third of respondents are **currently working (30 per cent)**, while about one fourth declare themselves as **unemployed and looking for a job (26 per cent)**. Almost one fifth are following **professional training or courses (19 per cent)**. **Ten per cent** are **full-time caregivers**, and **nine per cent** are **retired**. A minority are students, apprentices, interns, or volunteers, or are inactive due to illness or disability (6 per cent).

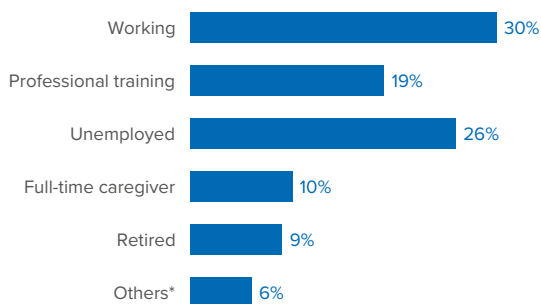
**Men declare themselves more often unemployed and looking for work** than women (**34 vs 23 per cent**), while women are more often doing a professional training or course (22 vs 10 per cent). Women are also more often full-time caregivers than men (12 vs 3 per cent). Respondents with an education level below university are more often retired compared to their counterparts (18 vs 7 per cent). Beyond differences in retirement, main activities remain comparable across education levels and age groups.

Among employed respondents, most are **working in person in Austria (90 per cent)**. The minority of remote workers (10 per cent of respondents) are

split between working for Austrian and Ukrainian businesses. Most of those working are employed in **elementary occupations<sup>6</sup> (37 per cent)** or working in **sales or services (26 per cent)**. Over one fifth are **professionals<sup>7</sup> (15 per cent)** or **managers (7 per cent)**. The majority of those employed report that their current occupation is at a **lower level than their previous employment in Ukraine (70 per cent)**, while about one in five say their occupation is at the **same level (19 per cent)**, and a minority declare their current occupation is of a **higher level** than the one they had in Ukraine (**4 per cent**).

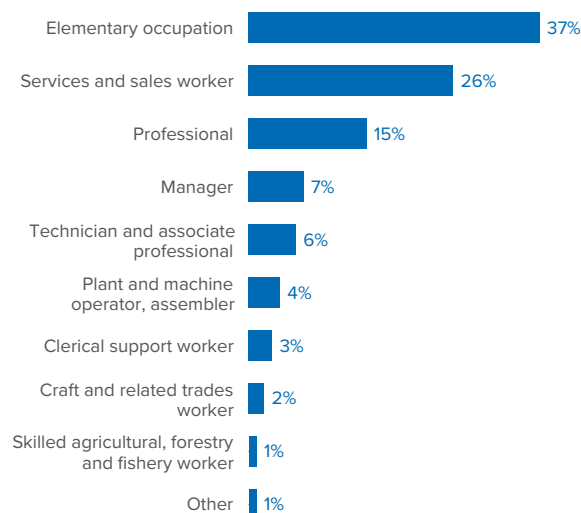
**Lack of knowledge of the local language** is mentioned as the most important challenge for accessing employment in Austria (**78 per cent**), followed by the **lack of employment opportunities suited to their skills (33 per cent)**. **Lack of decent employment opportunities**, such as adequate salaries, working hours and formal work appears also to be a major difficulty faced by respondents (**18 per cent**), while **lack of education or skills recognition** is stressed by **13 per cent** of respondents.

## MAIN ACTIVITY



\*Includes apprentice, intern, volunteer, student, and no activity due to illness/disability.

## OCCUPATION



- In the questionnaire, this response item was phrased as follows: “Elementary occupation (e.g. cleaners, mining/construction labourers, street vendors, refuse workers)”.
- In the questionnaire, this response item was phrased as “Professional (e.g. lawyer, doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants)”.

# Income

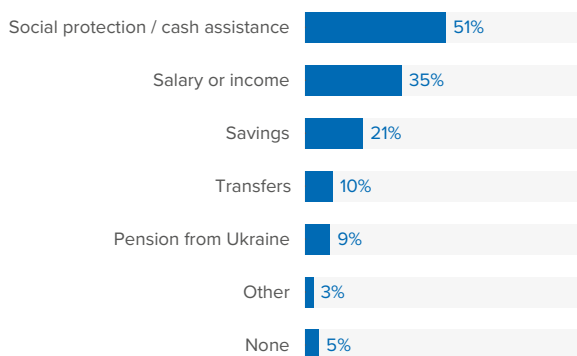
Around half of respondents cite **social assistance** as one of their main sources of income (**51 per cent**), while over a third cite **salary or income** (**35 per cent**) as one of their main sources of income. About one fifth are using their **savings** (**21 per cent**), while one in ten indicate that **transfers** from relatives and friends in Ukraine are one of their main sources of income (**10 per cent**). A minority receive **pensions** or report **other sources** of income (**9 and 3 per cent**). **5 per cent** of respondents indicate not having **any source of income**.

**Salary** is the main income source for most **working respondents** (**81 per cent**), although about one in six of those currently employed indicate relying also on **social assistance** programs (**19 per cent**). The majority of those following **professional training** or courses (**76 per cent**), those currently **unemployed** (**58 per cent**) and **full-time caregivers** (**63 per cent**) depend on **social assistance** programs. Most **single adults with dependents** also rely on social assistance programs (**60 per cent**), while fewer of them are currently living from their **savings** compared to the average (**11 vs 22 per cent**).

Those who were displaced from the Centre region of Ukraine are more likely than average to be relying on transfers from relatives and friends in Ukraine (**23 per cent vs 8 per cent**). Conversely, those from the Western region are less likely than average to be relying on social assistance (**29 per cent vs 51 per cent**).

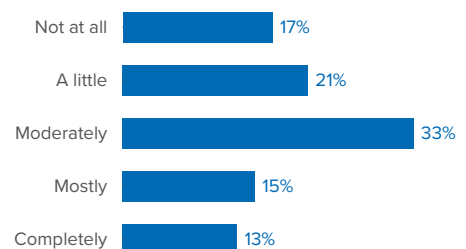
When asked if their income had allowed them to meet their household’s **basic needs** in the past three months, two in five respondents replied **negatively** (**38 per cent**): about one sixth reported that their household’s income had not covered their basic needs **at all** (**17 per cent**), and over one in five indicated that their income only covered their basic needs **“a little”** (**21 per cent**). One third of respondents indicate they were **“moderately”** able to meet their basic needs (**33 per cent**). About three in ten consider they were **mostly** (**15 per cent**) or **completely able** (**13 per cent**) to meet these. Capacity to meet basic needs varies greatly depending on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent. In particular, men (**23 per cent**) and adults aged 18-34 (**20 per cent**) are more likely than average to be in a household completely able to meet its basic needs. Conversely, **women** (**20 per cent**) and adults **over the age of 60** (**29 per cent**) are more likely than average to be in a household that is **not at all** able to meet its basic needs. Moreover, those who cited **social assistance among their main sources of income** during the last month are more likely to indicate having met **a little or not at all** their basic needs, compared to those who do not rely on social assistance (**44 vs 31 per cent**). Conversely, those relying on a salary are more likely to indicate having mostly or completely met their basic needs over the last three months than those who do not count on salary among their main sources of income (**47 vs 20 per cent**).

## INCOME SOURCES\*



\*Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can exceed over 100%.

## MEETING BASIC NEEDS IN LAST 3 MONTHS



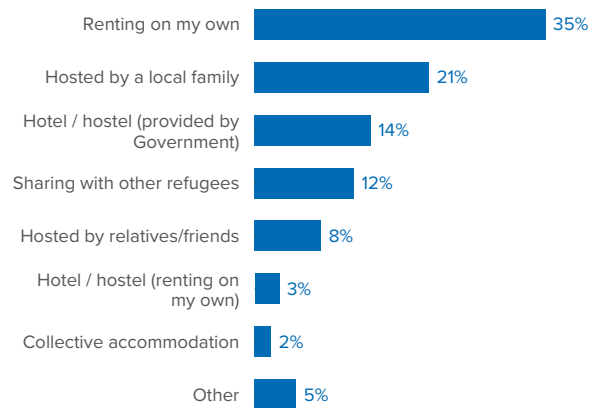
## Accommodation

The most common type of accommodation is private rental, with **33 per cent of respondents renting accommodation on their own**. A similar share is being hosted (**20 per cent by a local family and 10 per cent by relatives or close friends**). About one in six are living in **facilities provided by the Austrian government (16 per cent)**<sup>8</sup>, while about one in ten are **sharing an apartment or house with other refugees (11 per cent)**. It is worth noting that the share of those **renting on their own** is sensibly higher **among men (41 per cent vs 31 per cent of women); those aged 18-34 (45 per cent vs 33 per cent on average), and those who are working (50 per cent vs 26 per cent of those not working)**.

In terms of stability of current arrangements, half of respondents indicate not having a specific time limit on their current arrangement or being able to stay until they secure long-term accommodation. **Around one in ten** will be able to stay for **up to three months** from the moment of the interview (with 2

per cent being required to leave within one month). Finally, around one in three (**34 per cent**) **do not know how long** they can remain in their current accommodation. The most important reasons for having to leave within the next three months include having been asked to leave; not planning to stay in Austria, and the rental or grace period running out.

### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION



8. Mentioned as hotels or hostels in the questionnaire.



# Refugees' intentions

## Overall intentions

4%

are planning to return in next three months

42%

hope to return one day to Ukraine

37%

are undecided about returning to Ukraine

16%

have no hope to return to Ukraine

The survey collected information about refugees' plans in the short-term (next three months) as well as their intentions or hope to return to Ukraine in the future. Less than half of refugees reported **hoping to return to Ukraine one day (42 per cent)**, while an **important share** of them declared being **undecided** about returning to Ukraine one day (**37 per cent**). About close to one fifth have **no hope to return** to their country (**16 per cent**). Only a small minority have plans to return **in the next three months (4 per cent)**.

When comparing intentions of refugees in Austria, these differ significantly from findings among refugees hosted in countries in Europe non-neighbouring Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, refugees hosted across countries in Europe non-neighbouring Ukraine, a larger share indicates planning to return in the next three months (12 per cent compared with 4 per cent in Austria specifically). Conversely, fewer refugees in Austria indicate hoping to return to Ukraine one day (42 per cent compared with 59 per cent across non-neighbouring countries as a whole). In line with this **trend to remain in Austria**, a larger share of refugees in Austria indicates having no hope to return to Ukraine (16 per cent compared with 6 per cent).

Of those who are not planning to return to Ukraine in the three months following the survey, the vast majority are planning to stay in Austria within that same time period (**87 per cent**). Only **2 per cent** are planning to move to a third country while the remainder of respondents (**11 per cent**) are undecided about whether or not they will stay in Austria or go somewhere else.

Specific demographics characterise each of these four profiles:

- **Those planning to return in the next three months:** are more likely to have been displaced from the Northern or Western regions. They are also more likely to be elderly (living in a household composed of one or more elderly adults); retired or a full-time caregiver; and to be hosted in Austria by relatives or friends.
- **Those hoping to return permanently to Ukraine one day:** are somewhat more likely to be females and to be full-time caregivers with a spouse or children living in Ukraine. They are more likely to have applied for asylum or a residence permit or visa. They are also more likely to have returned to Ukraine more than once since their displacement, to be hosted by relatives or friends in Austria and to be dependant financially on social assistance.

9. See regional intentions report published in February 2023 "[Lives on Hold #3](#)".

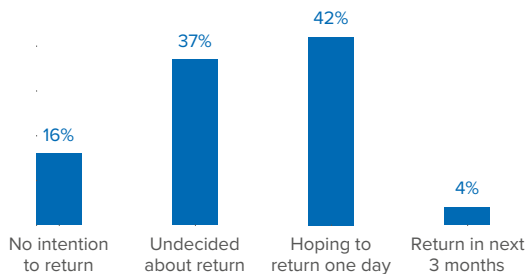
- **Those who are undecided about returning to Ukraine:** are more likely to have arrived in Austria recently (since September 2022) and to be working, in formal training, or looking for work. They are more likely to be hosted by a local family.
- **Those who are not hoping to return permanently to Ukraine:** are more likely to be males and to have been displaced from the Centre or Southern regions of Ukraine. They are more likely to be below the age of 60 years old and working or looking for work. They are also more likely to be renting their own accommodation and living from their income or salary. They are less likely to have any relatives in Ukraine.

There are important differences in refugees' return intentions depending on their demographic characteristics. By sex, there are no differences when it comes to plans to return in the next three

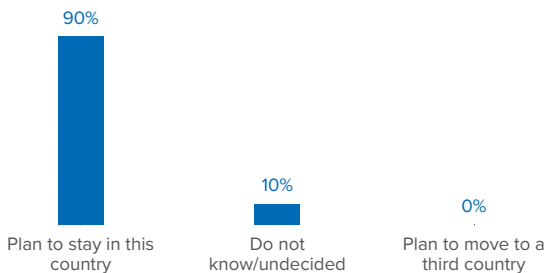
months. However, **women** were more likely than men to say they **hoped to return one day (45 – albeit still less than half - vs 34 per cent)**, while men were more likely than women to say they have no intention of returning (**23 vs 14 per cent**). Looking at intentions to return by age, there are few distinctions to note. However, those with no intention to return are all below 60 years old. On another hand, those who have a partner or child living in Ukraine are more likely than those without family in Ukraine to plan to return permanently one day (**50 per cent vs 27 per cent**).

Refugees displaced from the Northern region of Ukraine are more inclined to have plans to return in the next three months (**10 per cent**), followed by those displaced from Kyiv city (**5 per cent**), while refugees from the South have virtually no plans to return in the short-term, and are the most likely to say they do not plan to return permanently (**21 per cent**).

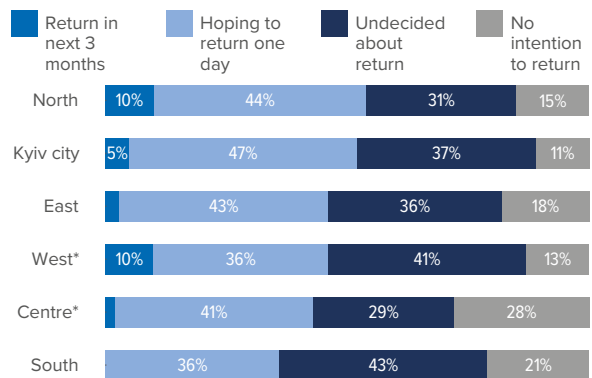
**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS**



**PLANS FOR NEXT 3 MONTHS**

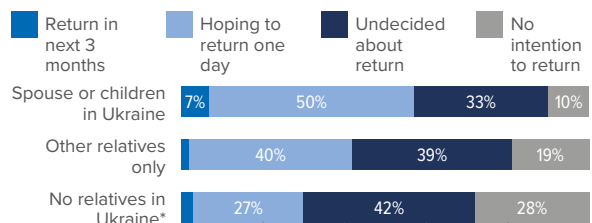


**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS BY REGION OF ORIGIN**



*\*Small base (<30 respondents)*

**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS BY RELATIVES IN UKRAINE**



*\*Small base (<50 respondents)*

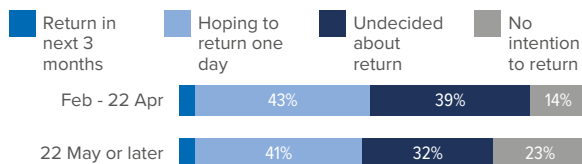
Looking beyond the basic demographic characteristics, those who have not visited Ukraine since they left the country are less likely to plan to return to Ukraine than those who have had prior visits (**19 per cent vs 11 per cent**).

Refugees who are hosted by relatives or friends in Austria declare planning to return in the next three months sensibly more often than the average (**13 vs 4 per cent**) and are less prone to be undecided about return than average (**23 vs 37 per cent**). Refugees that are renting an accommodation on their own report above average having no return intentions (**23 vs 16 per cent**).

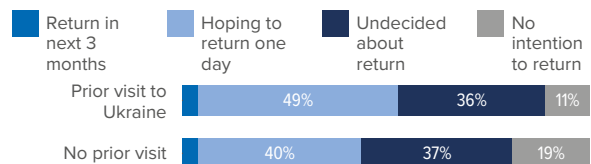
Those who are full-time caregivers are more often planning to return in the next three months than those working or in professional training (**10 vs 2 and 1 per cent respectively**), similarly the first are less prone to be undecided about returning than those unemployed and those in professional training (**24 vs 39 and 45 per cent respectively**).

If return intentions in the short-term are comparable independently of household income sources, those who are receiving social assistance say more often they hope to return one day to Ukraine, compared to those having an income from employment (**47 vs 34 per cent**). In turn, the latter report more frequently having no return intentions than those receiving social assistance (**23 vs 13 per cent**).

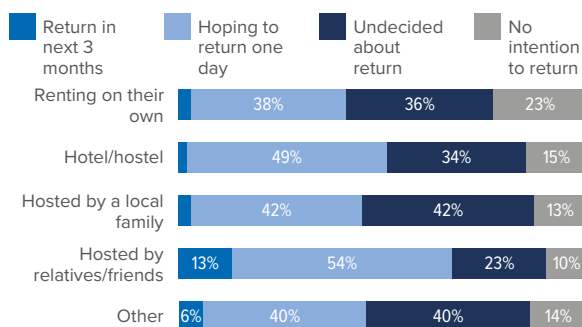
**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS BY TIME OF ARRIVAL**



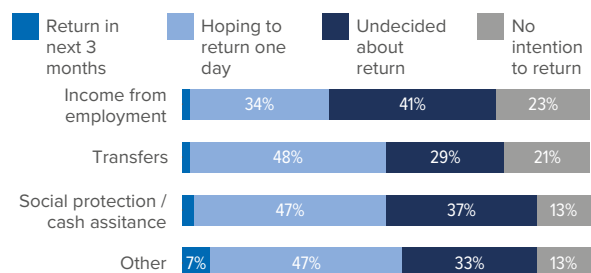
**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS BY PRIOR VISIT TO UKRAINE**



**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS BY ACCOMMODATION TYPE**



**REFUGEES' INTENTIONS BY MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME**



## Drivers and enablers for return

### Self-reported reasons for return in the next three months

The majority of those planning to return in the next three months plan to do so with all their current household members (79 per cent) and to the same place they were living before the onset of the war (88 per cent). In terms of the reasons for returning in the next three months, the most cited reason is wanting **to go back to their country or live in their cultural environment (three in four)**, followed by wanting **to reunite with their family in Ukraine (half of them)**. **Access to work or livelihood opportunities** is mentioned by close to a third (30 per cent), while taking **care of their property** is the reason for returning of one in four (24 per cent).

To those hoping to return to Ukraine one day as well as to those undecided about returning we asked them evaluate in a scale from “Not at all” to “A great deal” how much different factors would influence their decision to return to Ukraine.

### Improvement of the security situation

Understandably, the most determinant factors that would enable refugees to return to Ukraine are related to the improvement of the security situation in Ukraine. The two factors considered as most important (combining categories “A great deal” and “Quite a lot”) are: If there is an end to **temporary military occupation** of the territory in the place where I was living and if there are **no security concerns** in the place where I was living (82 and 81 per cent respectively), followed closely by if there is **an end or political solution to the war** and if there is **freedom of movement** within the country (75 and 74 per cent, respectively). The end of the military conscription is only considered an important enabler by one in five respondents.

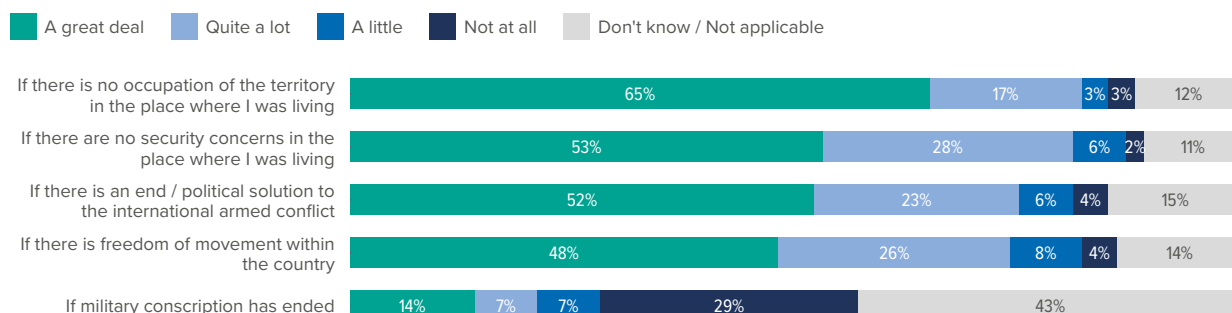
The end of the temporary military occupation in the place where they were living is ranked as most important by those aged 35 to 59 years old compared to both their younger and older counterparts (86 vs 78 and 75 per cent for 18-34 and 60+ respectively). Freedom of movement is ranked highest by those originally from the Northern region of Ukraine, as compared to those coming from the Eastern region and Kyiv city (86 vs 71 and 75 per cent respectively).

### Access to basic services and livelihoods

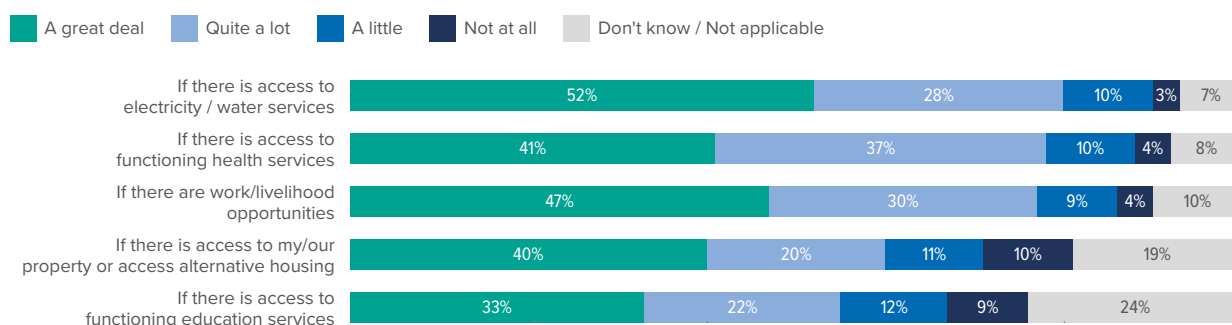
After security concerns, access to basic services and livelihoods in Ukraine would have the highest influence of refugees in their return decisions. In order of importance, access to **electricity and water services**, followed by access to **functioning health services** and **having work and livelihood opportunities in Ukraine** are considered as important enablers to return by close to four in five respondents (80, 78 and 77 per cent respectively). Less determinant but still considered important by three in five is access to the **property or to alternative housing**. Over half ranked having access to **functioning education services** as having a big influence in their return decisions (55 per cent).

Access to electricity and water services was particularly important for those coming from the Southern region from Ukraine (90 vs 80 per cent on average). **Access to health services** is understandably of higher importance for those aged **60+ years** (91 vs 78 per cent on average). Work and livelihood opportunities (87 vs 77 per cent) as well as access to housing (71 vs 60 per cent) is ranked above average by those who are currently unemployed and looking for a job in Austria. Those with dependants and those aged 35-59 rank access to functioning education services as more important compared to average.

**IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS RELATED TO SECURITY SITUATION WHEN DECIDING TO RETURN TO UKRAINE**



**IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS RELATED TO BASIC SERVICES, HOUSING AND LIVELIHOODS WHEN DECIDING TO RETURN TO UKRAINE**



**Personal circumstances and access to information on place of origin**

Having sufficient information on the situation in the place where they were living is considered as an important determinant on their decision to return by nearly three in five respondents (**58 per cent**). This is particularly the case among those who live as single adults with dependents, as well as among those coming from the South of Ukraine as compared to those from Kyiv city. Having **sufficient resources or support to return and reintegrate** would be determinant for over half respondents (**52 per cent**). The situation of relatives or the preferences from household members with regards to returning is ranked less frequently as an influencing factor on the matter.

**Conditions in Austria**

Facing difficulties to access services or to obtaining rights in the host country are considered as less determinant for returning compared to factors related to the situation in Ukraine but are nonetheless influential for respondents. The most

important factor for respondents is having **problems to access health facilities** in Austria, which would have a great deal or quite a lot of importance on their decision to return for three in five respondents. Failing to access **stable decent work opportunities** in Austria would also impact the decision to return to over half respondents (53 per cent). **Problems to access education** in the host country are considered as determinant by two in five respondents (rising to over one in two among those with children in household), while having problems to obtain or renew their legal status in Austria would have an impact on returning among one third of respondents (34 per cent).

Those coming from the Southern region of Ukraine would be more prone to return in case of problems accessing health services in the host country (72 vs 59 per cent in average). Understandably, those unemployed rank as more determinant in their decision to return failing to access stable decent work opportunities in Austria (71 vs 53 per cent in average). Similarly, those who are currently

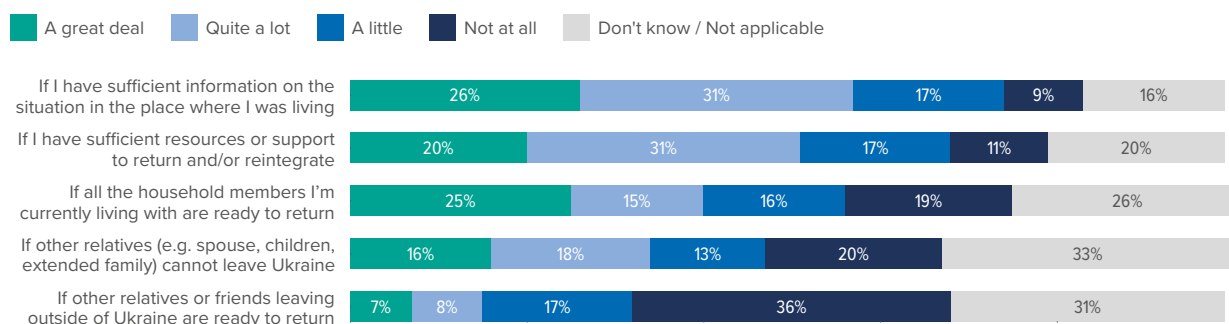
following a professional training rank having problems to access education services in Austria higher than average (55 vs 40 per cent).

**Self-reported reasons for not hoping or planning to return**

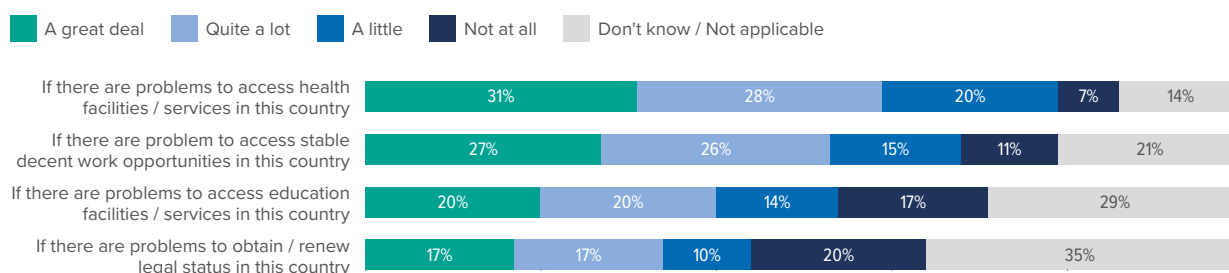
Refugees who indicated having no hope to return one day to Ukraine were asked to indicate up to three main reasons for not hoping or planning to return. Consistently with the findings from the previous section, the most important reason was

because of **safety and security concerns**, mentioned by over three in five respondents. Other reasons were because of **lack of work / livelihood opportunities in Ukraine** or because of stable work opportunities in Austria (29 and 24 per cent), followed by because their **children are attending school** in this country (21 per cent). One in five said because they feel **integrated** in Austria, while almost the same share mentioned because of **inadequate housing in Ukraine** (19 per cent).

**IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS RELATED TO INFORMATION AND PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN DECIDING TO RETURN**



**IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS RELATED TO SITUATION IN HOST COUNTRY WHEN DECIDING TO RETURN**



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**See in this context also:**

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# INTENTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE IN AUSTRIA

June 2023



**UNHCR National Office in Austria**

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