



Waiting area for buses at Shehyni BCP, January 2025. © Neeka.

Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR and its local NGO partners Right to Protection (R2P), NEEKA, and The Tenth of April (TTA), have conducted border monitoring at 30 border crossing points between Ukraine and Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. The border monitoring teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection as well as to those returning to Ukraine.

1. Overview: Cross-Border Movements (in and out)

Overall, the cross-border movements in January 2025 was slightly elevated compared to January trends in 2023 and 2024, however, remain within a similar range. From December 2024 to January 2025, a slight decrease in cross-border movement was observed, confirming a pattern of the previous two years. However, unlike in the two preceding years, in January 2025, the inflow slightly surpassed the outflow numbers (by 21K), while in January 2023 and 2024, the net outflows stood at 80K and 75K respectively.

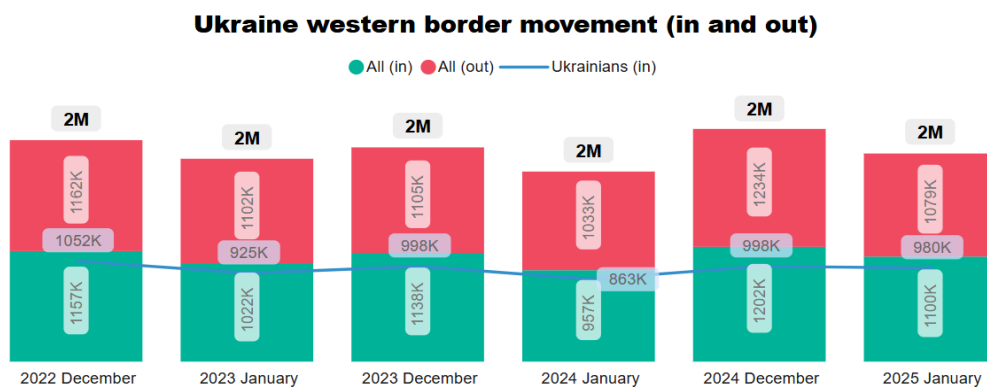


Figure 1: Number of people crossing international borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The figure does not include data on border crossings with Moldova. Source: State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine.

2. Key monitoring findings

Departing Ukraine

In January 2025, 1,400 people were interviewed departing Ukraine. 73% of respondents were female and 12% were older people above the age of 60 years. 3% reported to be living with a disability.

- **First-time departures:** In January 2025, 19% of respondents reported to be leaving Ukraine for the first time. The remaining 81%, had departed Ukraine at least once before.
- **Purpose of departing Ukraine:** 17% of surveyed people said they were leaving Ukraine to seek safety abroad, while the largest share of those interviewed left to visit relatives (30%). 14% said that they were returning to the country in which they are holding temporary protection status. 16% were travelling for vacation, and 11% for business.
- **Internal displacement as factor for departure:** Of the respondents, 12% reported to be internally displaced in Ukraine. Of those, over one third (34%) noted that this situation contributed to their decision to leave Ukraine.
- **Intended duration of stay abroad:** Of those surveyed, 10% said that they plan to stay abroad permanently, while 69% were uncertain about the duration of stay abroad.
- **Intention to return should the situation stabilize:** 45% of those interviewed upon departure in January said that they intend to return should the situation stabilize. Another 45% were unsure, and 10% said they did not intend to return, tallying with the 10% intending to depart Ukraine permanently. Main factors that would influence their decision to return are improvements in the security situation (51%), followed by the stabilization of the energy situation and having access to employment (22% each). Reduction or cut of assistance programmes in host country was mentioned as a factor by 3%.

Arriving and returning to Ukraine

In January 2025, 408 people arriving or returning to Ukraine were interviewed. 85% of respondents were female and 11% were older people above the age of 60 years. 5% reported to be living with a disability.

- **Duration of stay in Ukraine:** 72% of respondents said their intention was to stay short-term only, i.e. for less than one month. 26% was unsure about their duration of stay, and only 2% intended to stay permanently.
- **Reasons for arriving/returning to Ukraine:** 32% of respondents said they just wanted to be home and visiting family members. Other factors included lack of access to medical services in host countries (14%) and wanting to check on properties (13%).
- **Intended destination oblast:** 32% of those surveyed upon arrival to Ukraine intended to go to Kyiv city or oblast, while 16% were aiming to reach Dnipropetrovska and 10% were planning to go to locations in Lviv oblast.

3. Public information by the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine on cross-border movements

- In January 2025, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS) [reported](#) that large-scale inter-departmental measures were implemented in Ukraine against criminal (smuggling) groups specializing in irregular movement of men of conscription age across the border. They reported a significant number of cases on smuggling-related detentions and arrests on their website. These involved both groups and individuals organizing irregular border crossings for conscription-aged men.
- Similarly to regular such reports in 2024, also in January 2025, the SBGS reported several cases of intercepted attempts of men of conscription age to cross the border irregularly. Such attempts can be life-threatening, notably when attempting to cross rivers.
- The SBGS publicly reported on one [case](#) of prevented human trafficking in January 2025. Border guards detained a woman who was recruiting other women, particularly those in vulnerable situations and facing financial difficulties, for sexual exploitation abroad.

SOUNDBITES FROM THE BORDERS

- Border monitors observed increased cross-border movements in both directions during the first half of January, following the holidays.
- Incomplete documentation requirements remain the main reason for denial of border crossing, according to observations at the borders.
- Border monitors reported observations on cases of returns related to the reduction of assistance in host countries.

4. Support provided at the border crossings in January 2025

In January 2025, UNHCR partners, R2P, NEEKA and TTA, conducted **255 monitoring visits to the BCPs** with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. During these visits, UNHCR's partners provided different forms of support to **877 individuals** who crossed the border. This support included a range of services, including counselling of 848 people, the provision of legal assistance to 62 people, while 27 persons received social accompaniment and 3 persons were provided with transportation services.

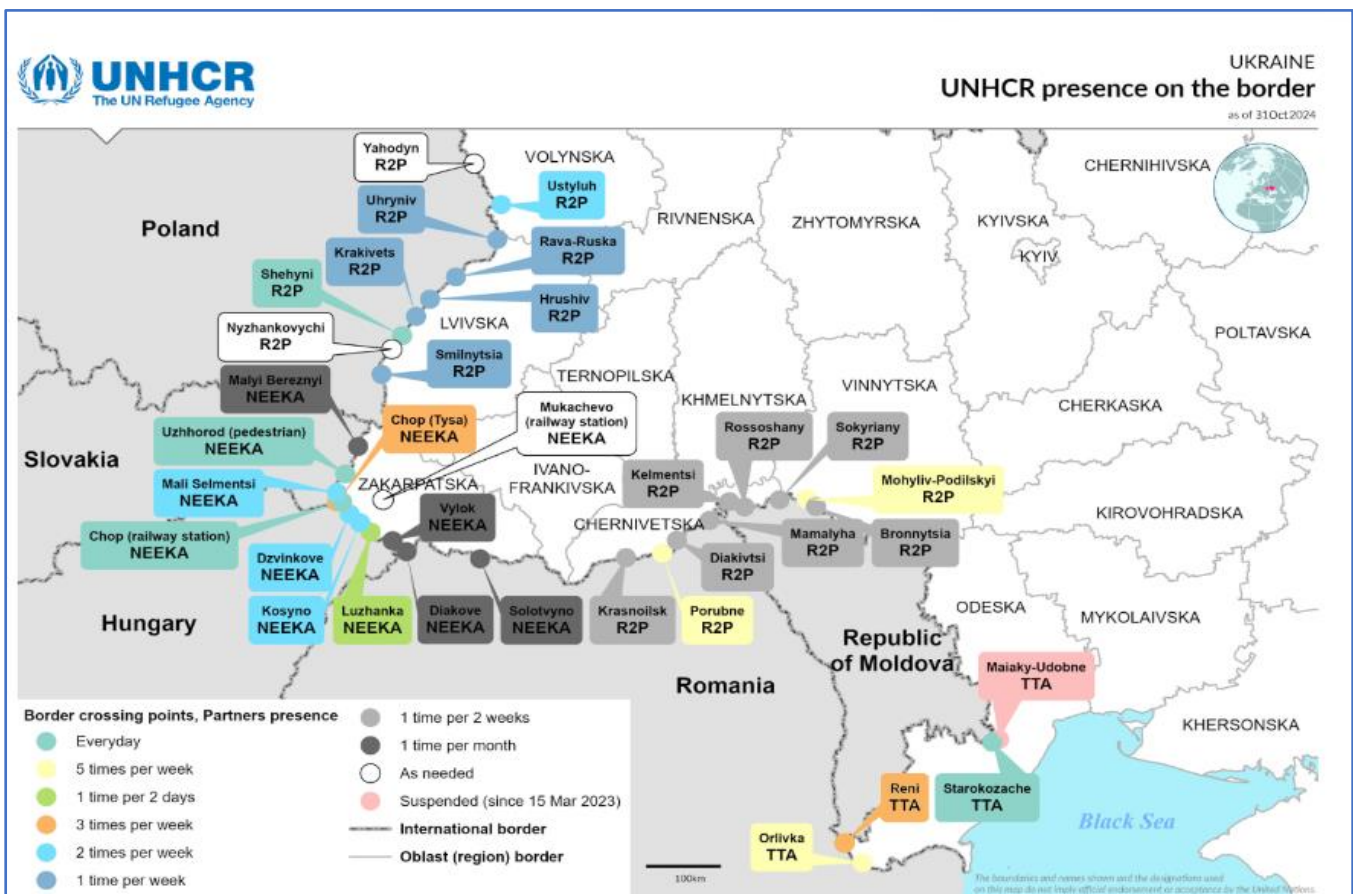
Note on Methodology

In January 2025, UNHCR partners surveyed 1,808 people (comprising 70% females 18-59 years of age, 18% males 18-59 years of age, 5% females 60+ years of age, 7% males 60+ years of age and 3% persons with disabilities).

Since mid-March 2022, UNHCR has deployed border monitoring teams through local NGO partners to provide information and assistance to people crossing the border with EU countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania) and Moldova. These teams provide information, legal assistance, protection counselling and social support to people leaving Ukraine to seek international protection, as well as to those returning to the country.

Border monitoring teams conduct individual interviews with people who are exiting and entering Ukraine. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information about the individual circumstances, reasons for moving and their protection needs. The border monitoring methodology is focused on assessing and responding to the protection and humanitarian needs of people crossing the border between Ukraine and the EU countries and Moldova. By conducting interviews, gathering data, and providing necessary support, the goal is to enhance protection measures and ensure the well-being of those who are on the move.

The monitoring findings are based on individual interviews conducted with people crossing the border, both those entering and exiting Ukraine and other observations made by the border monitors.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- See Border Snapshot for October 2024 [here](#), November 2024 [here](#), December 2024 [here](#).
- Visit Ukraine's Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Visit UNHCR Ukraine's Website [here](#).

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