



SURVEY REGARDING THE SOCIAL COHESION IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINIAN CRISIS

ROUND 2 STUDY REPORT

JUNE - AUGUST 2023

“Survey Regarding the Social Cohesion in the Context of Ukrainian Crisis”

Round 2 Study Report June-August 2023

Study developed by the Romanian Association for Health Promotion (ARPS) for
UNICEF Romania

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**“Survey Regarding the Social Cohesion in the Context of Ukrainian Crisis”
Round 2 Study Report
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UNICEF Romania

The views expressed in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNICEF.

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Executive summary

On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine triggering the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe after World War II due to the large number of people fleeing the war. The European Union, its member states and other European countries provided support to the people displaced from Ukraine. The United Nations also committed support and assistance to the refugee families. In Romania, supporting the refugees and constantly assessing their needs is part of the ongoing UNICEF response to the crisis. The current research was carried out in June 2023, one year and a half after the beginning of the conflict, to assess the perceptions of the Romanian population in the host communities on the people displaced from Ukraine and of the Ukrainian refugees on their own needs in order to participate more in the life of their new communities.

The objective of the research

The objective of the research is to better understand how Romanians perceive the people displaced from Ukraine 16 months after the beginning of the armed conflict and to understand better the factors that might undermine or enhance cohesion between the two communities.

The ultimate purpose of this research is to provide all actors involved in the response to the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis (governmental or civil society) insights which will help them better plan their interventions and to inform their longer-term programming to promote community cohesion between Ukrainians and host communities in Romania.

Methodology

The current research was carried out in the period June-August 2023, 16 months after the beginning of the conflict, to assess the perceptions of only the Romanian population in the host communities on the people displaced from Ukraine. This research and the present report come as a continuation and complement of the image captured in March 2023, one year after the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine.

The research was carried out through a questionnaire-based data collection among Romanian citizens in Romania. We applied the questionnaire used in March, which was developed based on two focus groups, to which we added a few questions to better capture possible points of tension observed in the data collected in March.

The questionnaires were accessible via an URL link in June 2023 and the survey results reflect people's responses during this period. The link was distributed in a national online panel and targeted persons aged over 18 years old. By the end of the data collection stage, a total number of 409 questionnaires was achieved.

For this second round of the survey, there were held no focus group discussions. The survey was applied to Romanian citizens only.

The online surveys do not claim to be representative of the target population.

Main findings

- Fewer Romanians agree with the presence of persons displaced by the war in Ukraine. More and more people consider that Ukrainians who have found shelter in our country may be the source of economic and social problems.
- Romanians are becoming less and less interested in the situation of persons displaced by the war in Ukraine. The level of empathy and willingness to help them is decreasing.
- The number of Romanians who have a good and very good opinion of Ukrainians is decreasing.
- The social distance between Romanians and persons displaced by the war in Ukraine is increasing, i.e. more and more Romanians refuse close relations, including neighborly relations with persons displaced by the war in Ukraine.
- However, half of the respondents to the survey believe that persons displaced by the war in Ukraine should be helped by the Romanian state, and one in five Romanians believe that they should have the same rights as Romanian citizens.
- Only about half of the respondents believe that the Romanian state should provide conditions for the integration of persons displaced by the war in Ukraine in Romania.
- Fewer respondents than in the March 2023 survey believe that persons displaced by the war in Ukraine should live in the same communities as Romanians, have access to the same jobs, and live only in refugee centres.
- Almost half as many respondents as in March 2023 think that the Romanian state should provide persons displaced by the war in Ukraine with material support, and money; 16% more think that the state should provide them with accommodation and meals.
- The number of Romanians who think that the Romanian state should provide persons displaced by the war in Ukraine with support to learn the Romanian language, and culture and to find a job is decreasing. It is remarkable that the number of those who consider that persons displaced by the war in Ukraine should benefit from medical and social assistance increases, the difference compared to March 2023 being +16%.
- Romanians believe that in order to integrate into Romanian society Ukrainians need to learn Romanian, but also to have a job.
- The proportion of those who believe that persons displaced by the war in Ukraine are integrated in Romania decreases by 10%, while the proportion of those who believe that integration requires a job increases by 11%.
- Ukrainians are still considered, by more than half of the respondents, to be easily integrated into Romanian society.
- Almost half of the respondents consider that persons displaced by the war in Ukraine are grateful for the help received from the Romanian state, and 28% of the respondents admit that they do not know how to answer this question.
- The main sources of information about the situation of persons displaced by the war in Ukraine remain the mass media, followed by the internet, but trust in them is decreasing, in favor of friends and family, according to the survey responses.

Context

Sixteen months after the war in Ukraine began, Europe is still facing the largest humanitarian refugee crisis on the continent after the Second World War. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), records 6,341,700 refugees from Ukraine across the world as of June 26, 2023. This amounts to around 20% of the Ukrainian population (estimated by Eurostat as of 2021). Over 2,6 million refugees crossed the border into Romania in the last sixteen months and in June 136,074 persons displaced from Ukraine were still in the country.¹

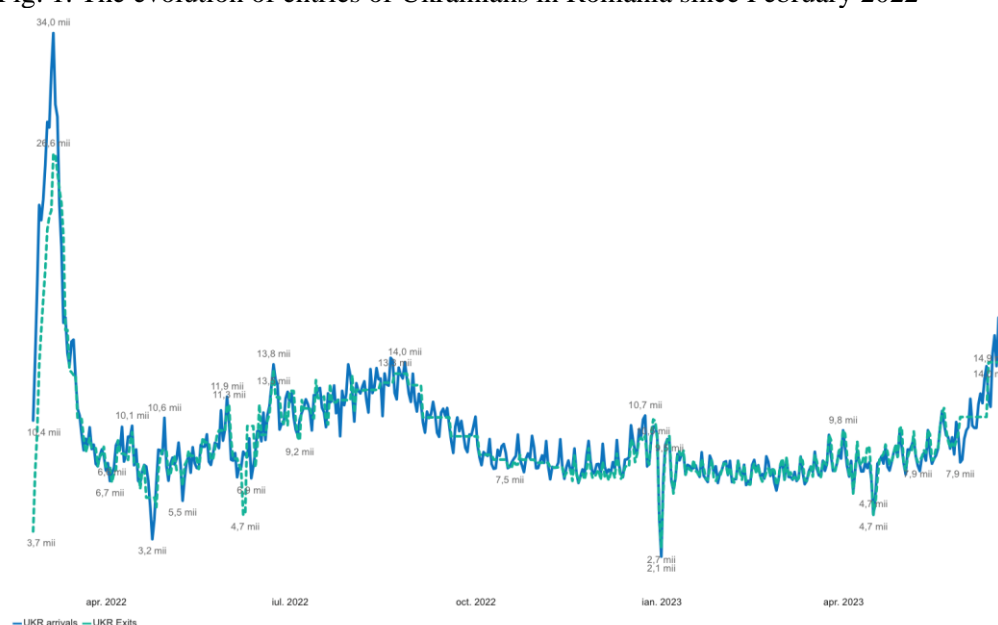
The displacement of a high number of citizens from Ukraine has had a profound impact on the lives of many people, particularly those who lost their homes and livelihoods. Many struggled to find adequate shelter, food, and medical care; and the ongoing conflict has disrupted access to basic services such as education and employment.

The international community has responded to the crisis by providing humanitarian aid and assistance to those affected by the conflict. UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations have been working to provide emergency shelter, food, and medical assistance to displaced persons. However, the situation remains challenging, and the ongoing conflict have hindered efforts to address the crisis effectively.

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Ukraine, Romanians have jumped to the aid of Ukrainians fleeing the war. In the first report (<https://www.unicef.org/romania/reports/survey-regarding-social-cohesion-context-ukrainian-crisis-study-report-2023>), the context of Romanian-Ukrainian relations and the development of civic spirit in Romania were presented in more detail.

According to UNHCR data, in the first days/weeks after the outbreak of the war the number of Ukrainian refugees entering the territory of Romania (through the north-east, south-east, but also from the Republic of Moldova) was very high: from 10400, rising up to 34000 in March 2022.

Fig. 1. The evolution of entries of Ukrainians in Romania since February 2022



<https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/236?sv=54&geo=10782>

¹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10782>

The Romanian Government established an organized response to the humanitarian refugee crisis by setting up a high-level decision-making Task-Force and other coordination structures to ensure the strategic framework of humanitarian response and to facilitate the inter-agency cooperation among national, European, and international partners.

On June 29, 2022, the Government of Romania adopted the „Emergency Ordinance on the implementation of the National Plan of measures for the protection and inclusion of displaced persons from Ukraine and beneficiaries of temporary protection in Romania”, a first of its kind in the EU. The National Plan covered a wide range of essential interventions, focusing on key areas such as child protection, access to healthcare, education and housing, as well as inclusion on the national labor market. People with specific protection needs and the prevention of risks of abuse and exploitation are specifically addressed in the plan. The government measures reflected in the National Plan were meant to help refugees regain a sense of stability through access to socio-economic rights during their stay in Romania and to increase social cohesion with the host communities.

In response to the Ukrainian crisis, the Government of Romania issued over 20 pieces of legislation to meet the needs of Ukrainians. Some of the legal acts established direct intervention and support measures, while others introduced specific provisions to allow for new ways of operating.

Initially, Ukrainian refugees benefited for almost a year from the so-called "50/20" measure, established by Emergency Ordinance 15/2022 and the Government Decision with implementing rules. The Romanian state paid 50 RON per day per refugee for accommodation and 20 RON per day/refugee for meals. Subsequently, the government approved Emergency Ordinance 22/2023 in April and, at the end of April, a new Government Decision with implementing measures: the state thus provides 2,000 RON per month for each Ukrainian refugee family.

Ukrainian refugees are benefiting, as of 1 May 2023, for a single period of maximum of four consecutive months - May, June, July, August - from a monthly lump sum to cover accommodation and food expenses, granted from the budget of the Inspectorates for Emergency Situations. The amount is 750 RON/month (around 150 EUR) for a single person and 2,000 RON/month (around 400 EUR) for a family. Food expenses of 600 RON/month (around 120 EUR) per person are also covered (see Government Decision 386/2023). After the four months, Ukrainian refugees benefit from a monthly lump sum until the end of 2023, only to cover accommodation expenses, granted from the budget of the Inspectorates for Emergency Situations. The amount is 750 RON/month (around 150 EUR) for a single person or 2,000 RON/month (around 400 EUR) for a family. The government makes the payment of these amounts conditional on the refugees being able to work and the children being able to attend school/training in Romania. According to the official sources, as of June 6th, 2023, only 6,700 Ukrainians had jobs registered in the General Register of Employees. These requirements are difficult to meet by Ukrainian refugees, the vast majority of whom are women with children (95% according to the March 2023 survey). Many of the women have under-age children who need supervision and do not find solutions for child care to go to work.

The people displaced from Ukraine and living in Romania continue to face challenges, including language barriers, and difficulties in finding accommodation, and employment, and in accessing health services.

Justification

UNICEF works together with the Government of Romania, local authorities, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to assess and respond to the needs of the people displaced from Ukraine, to monitor and to ensure that their rights are observed and met. This includes contributing to the creation of an enabling environment through collecting information about attitudes and perceptions and adapting its programs to foster cohesion between the Romanian and Ukrainian communities.

We have used the definition of social cohesion by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), considering its three pillars of social cohesion are social inclusion, social capital, and social mobility.

From this perspective, the objective of the research is to understand better how Romanians perceive the people displaced from Ukraine 16 months after the beginning of the armed conflict and the way in which the people displaced find their place in the Romanian society and to understand better the factors that might undermine or enhance cohesion between the two communities.

The ultimate purpose of this research is to provide all actors involved in the response to the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis (governmental or civil society) insights which will help them better plan their interventions and to inform their longer-term programming to promote community cohesion between Ukrainians and host communities in Romania.

Presentation of exploratory samples

We applied the same questionnaire to see how the Romanians relate to people displaced from the war in Ukraine compared to March 2023.

Again, we appealed to the willingness of Romanians to answer an online questionnaire, with no pretense of representativeness. However, with over 400 valid answers collected and by comparing with the data from March 2023, collected in the same way, we can observe a consistency of data which allows us to draw valid conclusions.

This time, in June 2023, we collected 409 responses in the time allocated for collection compared to 405 responses collected in March, of the same year.

Based on the territorial segmentation, higher percentages of respondents were recorded in Bucharest and Ilfov (20.7%) and in North-East region (16%).





There is no significant change in the distribution of respondents in the two surveys. Bucharest is still on the first place, followed by the South-East and North-East regions. As expected, these are the main regions receiving the refugee flows, considering that Ukrainians are both refugees through the border points in Suceava county, but also come from Moldova and through Galati and Tulcea counties. (Table 1)

Table 1. Territorial segmentation of Romanian sample

| The development region of Romania | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Bucharest | 18% | 21% |
| Centre | 10% | 9% |
| North-East | 16% | 16% |
| North-West | 7% | 9% |
| South | 13% | 13% |
| South-East | 16% | 15% |
| South-West | 13% | 10% |
| West | 8% | 7% |

The gender distribution in both surveys is close to the distribution recorded in the last Population Census conducted in 2022 (51.5% were female). (fig. 1)

Fig. 2. Gender distribution across samples

| March 2023 | | June 2023 | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| 54% | 46% | 57% | 43% |

The sample from June 2023 is mostly composed of adults - 56%, (age group 35-54 years), similar with the sample from March 2023.

Table 2. Age distribution across samples

| Age group | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 18-24 years old | 5% | 4% |
| 25-34 years old | 19% | 17% |
| 35-44 years old | 28% | 29% |
| 45-54 years old | 29% | 27% |
| 55-64 years old | 15% | 15% |
| 65+ years old | 4% | 7% |

It is important to note that both prospective samples, the one from March 2023 and the one from June 2023 have in common that the majority of respondents have a high level of education: 72% and respectively 67% of respondents have tertiary education (university, college, or master's diplomas). For comparison, it should be added that the latest Census data (2022) shows that only 16% of the Romanian population has a tertiary education, 43.5% have secondary education and the remaining 40.5% have at most primary education. (fig. 5)

Table 3. Level of education

| Level of education | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| At least primary education | 2% | 1% |
| Secondary education | 31% | 28% |
| Tertiary education | 67% | 72% |

The same observation can be made when it comes to the involvement in the labor market. There are similar proportion from both samples.

Table 4. Employment status

| Employment status | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Employed, self-employed, employer | 79% | 77% |
| Unemployed | 3% | 3% |
| Inactive person (retired, student, housewife, etc.) | 18% | 20% |

The same observations, as the ones from the analysis of the March 2023 data, are appropriate to be made:

Obs. 1: It is important to bear this in mind because other research has shown that a higher level of education can lead to a higher level of tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

Obs. 2: From the beginning of the research, we were aware of the fact that we will have to deal with the social-desirability bias, a type of respondents' reaction that makes them answer the survey questions in a manner that will be viewed favorably by others. It can take the form of over-reporting "good behavior" or under-reporting "bad", or undesirable behavior.

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN ROMANIA, A REALITY

Already from the first question of the questionnaire, unchanged from March 2023, one can see the colder and less involved attitude of the Romanians towards the people displaced from the war in Ukraine (table 5). The sixteen months of war in Ukraine have led to a decrease in the interest and empathy of Romanians for Ukrainians. Empathy and understanding for the situation of some people are fading with the passage of time. Empathy decreases and with it the degree of acceptance of the other.

Table 5. Do you agree with the presence of Ukrainian refugees in Romania?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Yes | 76% | 82% |
| No | 24% | 18% |
| Total number of responses | 409 responses | 405 responses |

Analyzing the data, we can see that the total number of people rejecting the Ukrainians is higher, from 72 in March to 97 in June, of the same year. In only three months, Romanians become more detached from the Ukrainian problem/war and less willing to cope with the presence of Ukrainians displaced from the war in Ukraine in their country. First (table 6), we notice that more Romanians blame Ukrainians for the economic crisis in Europe. More and more Romanians are associating the Ukrainians with the economic problems many are facing because of the near-by armed conflict. The second reason mentioned by Romanians, with a substantial increase, refers to the fact that the presence of Ukrainians in Romania could generate outbreaks of violence or social tensions.

Table 6. What would be the main reason why you disagree?

| Number of responses | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|--|-----------|------------|
| May generate economic instability (price increases, cost increases, etc.). | 43 | 27 |
| May generate outbreaks of violence or social tensions | 27 | 15 |
| May lead to increased crime and criminality in the community | 17 | 19 |
| May lead to job losses for Romanians | 10 | 10 |
| Don't know | 3 | 1 |
| Total number of responses | 97 | 72 |

Out of 97 collected in June 2023, respective 72 responses collected in March 2023 (being a small number we chose to analyze the raw data)

The attitude towards people displaced from the war in Ukraine seems to be based on reduced interaction with these people. Among Romanians, 20% declare that in the 16 months since the start of the war and refugee influx, they have not met or seen a refugee (in person, not in the media); 47%, slightly more Romanians, compared to the data collected in March 2023, declare that they have met or seen Ukrainians, but have not interacted with them. Overall, 33% of respondents to the June 2023 survey said they had interacted with Ukrainians, a slight decrease from the data collected in March 2023, when the percentage was 37. So, despite limited or no interaction, more and more Romanians are distancing themselves from people displaced by the war in Ukraine.

Table 7. How would you describe your level of interaction with Ukrainian refugees?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|---|-----------|------------|
| I have not met or seen any Ukrainian refugees so far | 20% | 21% |
| I have met or seen Ukrainian refugees, but have not interacted with them | 47% | 43% |
| I have met Ukrainian refugees and interacted with them a few times | 24% | 27% |
| I interacted frequently with Ukrainian refugees (in the community, at school, etc.) | 9% | 10% |

Data collected in June show a significant drop in the interest of Romanians in the situation of people displaced from the war in Ukraine, from 53% to 38% and a growing lack of interest in the issue. (Table 8)

Table 8. How would you describe your level of interest in the Ukrainian refugee situation?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Interested and very interested | 38% | 53% |
| Very little and little interested | 44% | 34% |
| Not at all interested | 16% | 10% |
| Don't know | 2% | 4% |

Even the opinion on the Ukrainians is beginning to change significantly. This is reflected by the proportion of Romanians who say they have a bad and very bad opinion of people displaced by the war in Ukraine being on the rise. (Table 9)

Table 9. In general, what do you think is the opinion of Romanians on Ukrainian refugees?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Good and very good | 46% | 63% |
| Bad and very bad | 44% | 24% |
| Don't know | 10% | 13% |

The drop in empathy levels is reflected in a drop in the willingness of Romanians to help, from 26% in March to 33% a few months later. (Table 10)

Table 10. Would you personally be willing to get involved in activities supporting Ukrainian refugees in Romania (donations, volunteer activities, etc.)?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 45% | 50% |
| No | 33% | 26% |
| Don't know | 23% | 24% |

The willingness of Romanians to know more about how they can help Ukrainians who have found refuge in Romania drops in just a few months, from 56% in March to 49% in June 2023. (Table 11)

Table 11. Would you like to know more about how you can get involved in improving the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 49% | 56% |
| No | 34% | 27% |
| Don't know | 16% | 17% |

SOCIAL DISTANCE

To get a picture of people's willingness to participate in social contacts of varying degrees of closeness with members of diverse social groups we were inspired by the scale created by Emory S. Bogardus.

We calculated, the same as in March 2023, the cumulative sum of five of the scale steps (partner, counted as one; close relative, counted as two; close friend, counted as three; neighbor counted as four; co-worker, counted as five) and the results shows that: if in March 2023 the sum is 4422, in June 2023 the result was 4480, so very little differences when it comes to analyze the social distance.

It is important to note some of the issues raised by the data: the non-acceptance of Ukrainians as possible life partners or very close relatives, even as friends, increases; social distance increases as more Romanians refuse to have Ukrainians as neighbors, but interestingly, the acceptance of sharing the same apartment increases as Romanians feel more familiar with them. (Table 12)

Table 12. Social distance

| Would you personally accept a Ukrainian refugee? Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|--|-----------|------------|
| As a partner (husband/wife) | | |
| No | 40% | 35% |
| Don't know | 24% | 26% |
| As a close relative (son-in-law, daughter-in-law) | | |
| No | 30% | 21% |
| Don't know | 24% | 26% |
| As a close friend | | |
| No | 19% | 14% |
| Don't know | 14% | 14% |
| As neighbors of the staircase/street | | |
| No | 14% | 10% |
| Don't know | 12% | 8% |
| As a co-worker | | |
| No | 12% | 11% |
| Don't know | 12% | 9% |
| As a classmate of your child | | |
| No | 12% | 11% |
| Don't know | 15% | 9% |
| Living together in the same house/apartment | | |
| No | 44% | 40% |
| Don't know | 28% | 26% |

As mentioned in the report analyzing the data collected in March 2023, we have again to emphasize the fact that the majority of respondents (both in March and June 2023) have a high level of education, which can positively influence the level of tolerance and social distance towards otherness, as it is shown by our data.

This clarification comes in the context that social distance data collected² in 2020 on a representative sample of Romanians shows that Romanians, in 2020, declared themselves much

² Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy (2020). *Perceptia asupra romilor in timpul pandemiei de Covid-19*. <https://ires.ro/articol/403/percep-ia-asupra-romilor-in-timpul--pandemiei-de-covid-19>

more distant towards immigrants (see table 13). So, the social distance data collected by this survey should be considered with care.

Table 13. Social distance between Romanians, Roma, and Immigrants

| Would you personally accept a ... (Data from 2020) | Roma | Immigrant |
|---|-------------|------------------|
| As a close relative (son-in-law, daughter-in-law) | 11% | 7% |
| As a close friend | 19% | 14% |
| As a neighbor down the stairs/street | 16% | 10% |

THE HELP FOR THE PEOPLE DISPLACED FROM THE WAR IN UKRAINE

• How Romanians think the Romanian state should help people displaced from the war in Ukraine:

While 35% of respondents agree people displaced from the war in Ukraine should benefit from complex services offered by the Romanian state (social protection, education, health, employment), 16% do not want them to receive material aid. However, 22% would like Ukrainians to have the same rights as the Romanians, but 18% would like them to go to another country or return to Ukraine. We can notice that more than half of the respondents are empathetic towards the situation of Ukrainians compared to a quarter who do not agree with support. (Table 14)

Table 14. Do you think Ukrainian refugees should...

| Percentage | June 2023 |
|--|------------------|
| Benefit from material aid from the Romanian state | 16% |
| Benefit from complex services offered by the Romanian state (social protection, education, health, employment) | 35% |
| Have the same rights as Romanians | 22% |
| Go to another country/return to Ukraine | 18% |
| I don't know | 10% |

In the view of the June 2023 respondents, the Romanian state should provide Ukrainians with conditions for their integration in Romania 45%; to facilitate their temporary stay in order to prepare their transit/access to other countries 39%. What is worrying is that 16% of respondents believe that the state should do nothing.

Table 15. What should the Romanian authorities do with Ukrainian refugees?

| Percentage | June 2023 |
|---|------------------|
| Provide them with conditions for their integration in Romania | 45% |
| Facilitate their temporary stay in order to prepare their transit/access to other countries | 39% |
| They should do nothing more | 16% |

More than half of the respondents (58%) to the June 2023 survey say that Ukrainians should live in the same communities as Romanians, yet 37% of Romanians who responded to the survey would prefer Ukrainians to be accommodated in refugee centers. A similar percentage of respondents, 58% consider that Ukrainians should have access to the same jobs as Romanians. 64% agree that Ukrainian students should study in the same classes as Romanian students, and 57% of respondents consider that Ukrainian refugees in Romania should have the same access to compensated medical services as Romanian citizens.

Table 16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Ukrainian refugees should live in the same communities as Romanians | | |
| Agreement and total agreement | 58% | 62% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 26% | 24% |
| Disagreement and totally disagreement | 13% | 10% |
| Don't know | 3% | 4% |
| Ukrainian refugees should only be accommodated in refugee centers | | |
| Agreement and total agreement | 37% | 41% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 27% | 23% |
| Disagreement and totally disagreement | 30% | 32% |
| Don't know | 6% | 4% |
| Ukrainian refugees should have access to the same jobs as Romanians | | |
| Agreement and total agreement | 58% | 63% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 23% | 21% |
| Disagreement and totally disagreement | 16% | 12% |
| Don't know | 3% | 4% |
| Ukrainian students should study in the same classes as Romanian students | | |
| Agreement and total agreement | 64% | 66% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 18% | 17% |
| Disagreement and totally disagreement | 13% | 14% |
| Don't know | 5% | 3% |
| Ukrainian refugees should have the same access to compensated medical services as Romanian citizens | | |
| Agreement and total agreement | 57% | 54% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 21% | 20% |
| Disagreement and totally disagreement | 19% | 21% |
| Don't know | 3% | 5% |

• **How Romanians think the Romanian state is helping Ukrainians:**

This question aimed to measure what Romanians believe/consider that the Romanian state offered to the people displaced from Ukraine.

Changes can be observed in the hierarchy of responses: if in March 2023 the first place was held by access to education for children and support to learn the Romanian language, closely followed by support to learn Romanian culture and customs, and support for finding a job, in June 2023 the first place is occupied by housing and food, medical and social assistance and material support, money, the next place by support in finding a job and support to learn Romanian. It is a trend that makes one think about the possibility of the integration of Ukrainians in Romania. It is also a sign that the Romanians want Ukrainian people to have a decent life, to be able to survive in Romania, but they are not interested in increasing the refugees' ability to integrate into Romanian communities.

Table 17. To what extent do you consider that the Romanian state has provided Ukrainian refugees with the following

| Percentage | June 2023 | | | March 2023 | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | Much and very much | Small, very little, not at all | DONT'T KNOW | Much and very much | Small, very little, not at all | DONT'T KNOW |
| Material support, money | 76% | 17% | 8% | 41% | 49% | 10% |
| Housing and food | 80% | 15% | 5% | 64% | 30% | 6% |
| Access to education for children | 77% | 16% | 7% | 80% | 14% | 6% |
| Support to learn Romanian | 60% | 22% | 18% | 81% | 14% | 5% |
| Support to learn Romanian culture and customs | 53% | 30% | 17% | 73% | 20% | 7% |
| Support for finding a job | 65% | 25% | 10% | 76% | 18% | 6% |
| Support to bring their family to Romania | 60% | 23% | 17% | 60% | 30% | 10% |
| Medical and social assistance | 77% | 14% | 9% | 61% | 22% | 7% |

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

As stated, the objective of this research is to better understand how Romanians perceive displaced persons from Ukraine more than one year after the beginning of the armed conflict, and to better understand factors that could undermine or enhance cohesion between the two communities. We were interested to find out if and how the Romanians see the social integration of refugees.

Social integration is a multidimensional construct that can be defined as the extent to which individuals participate in a variety of social relationships, including engagement in social activities or relationships and a sense of communality and identification with one's social roles (Holt-Lunstad and Uchino 2015³).

Sixteen months after the war, the issue of integration should be a priority for the Romanian state. If at the beginning of the war the Romanian civil society mobilized itself exceeding any expectation (from a society that more than 30 years ago voluntary work was compulsory and detested by all), 12 months, and then 16 months later Romanians have begun to distance themselves from the Ukrainians. As it was previously discussed, Romanians are more towards letting Ukrainians survive in Romania, that getting help to integrate. The answers to the question “Do you consider that Ukrainian refugees have integrated in our country?” reflect this trend. If in March 2023 more than 80% of the respondents considered that Ukrainian refugees have integrated into Romania, in June 2023 the proportion dropped with almost ten percent.

Table 18. Do you consider that Ukrainian refugees have integrated in our country?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 74% | 83% |
| No | 26% | 17% |

If in March 337 people answered the question, so 83% of the sample expressed their views on the integration recipe, in June 2023 only 301 people out of 409, which means that this time only 73% of the respondents gave us their opinions.

³ Holt-Lunstad J, Uchino BN (2015) Social support and health. In: Glanz K, Rimer BK, Viswanath KV (eds) Health behavior: theory, research, and practice. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp 183–204

Compared with March 2023, “learning Romanian” remains in the first position, but according to the responses gathered in June 2023, it is immediately followed by “having a job”. Surprisingly, but not so, is the fact that more Romanians consider that Ukrainians, in order to get integrated into Romanian society, have to enroll their children in Romanian schools. In only few months it seems that Romanians have got a more precise view of how they see integration: learning the language and having a job, then followed by educating children into the Romanian schools, making them also to learn Romanian.

Table 19. What do you think are the most important things a Ukrainian refugee should do to integrate in Romania?

| Percentage | June 2023 301 responses out of 409 | March 2023 337 responses out of 405 |
|--|--|---|
| Learning Romanian | 75% | 77% |
| Learning about Romanian culture and customs | 39% | 38% |
| Having a job | 70% | 59% |
| Enrolling their children in Romanian schools | 44% | 38% |
| To be actively involved in their community | 51% | 49% |

Around half of Romanians from the exploratory sample from June 2023 consider that Ukrainians could easily integrate into Romanian society. Compared with March 2023, more Romanians considered that Ukrainians work longer and better than Romanians.

Table 20. To what extent do you agree with the following statements

| Percentage | June 2023 | | | March 2023 | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | Much and very much | Small, very little, not at all | DONT'T KNOW | Much and very much | Small, very little, not at all | DONT'T KNOW |
| Ukrainian refugees can easily integrate into our society | 56% | 34% | 10% | 58% | 31% | 11% |
| Ukrainian refugees work longer and better than Romanians | 20% | 55% | 25% | 15% | 49% | 36% |

However, almost 7 out of 10 Romanians consider that Ukrainians who have found refuge in Romania have received more support from the Romanian state than other immigrants, having a preferential status. In addition, about the same proportion consider that displaced persons from the war in Ukraine are not discriminated against in Romania, data consistent with those collected in March 2023, and almost half of the respondents believe that Ukrainians are better paid than Romanians.

Table 21. June 2023

| Percentage | Much and very much | Small, very little, not at all | DONT'T KNOW |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Ukrainian refugees have received more support from the Romanian state than other immigrants, thus having a preferential status | 67% | 18% | 15% |
| Ukrainian refugees are discriminated against in Romania | 16% | 68% | 16% |
| Ukrainian refugees are better paid than Romanians | 46% | 31% | 23% |

TENSION LINES

The first report identified several potential lines of tension between Romanians and Ukrainians who have taken refuge in Romania. The first, identified in the focus groups, concerned the

financial support offered to Ukrainians. According to the data collected in June 2023, it can be seen that there is an increase in the opposition of Romanians to the state providing cash support to refugees. However, the question of funding sources for refugees in Romania following the war in Ukraine has not been clarified.

The second potential line of tension identified in March 2023 concerned the fact that the Romanians consider the Ukrainians to be ungrateful for all the help they provide. In the data collected in June 2023, we checked the situation on the whole sample. The data shows that almost 3 out of 10 Romanians think this way, but also that the same proportion does not know how to answer the question.

Table 22. How do you think Ukrainians feel about the aid received from the Romanian state?

| Percentage | June 2023 |
|------------|-----------|
| Grateful | 45% |
| Ungrateful | 27% |
| Don't know | 28% |

A third potential line of tension was the perception of Romanians that Ukrainians would not want to integrate into Romania. The data already presented in the sub-chapter on social integration show that Romanians are becoming increasingly skeptical about the integration capacity of Ukrainians. However, it cannot be overlooked that Romanians' views on support for integration are beginning to change, not for the better. Romanians no longer consider that Ukrainians would need so much support in learning Romanian, finding a job, and getting to know better the culture and customs of the society in which they live.

INFORMATION

The hierarchy of the main sources of information used by Romanians to find out information about the refugee situation in Romania shows the following: the first place is occupied by the mass media (64%); followed by the internet (49%); in third place (32%) are social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, TikTok); the fourth place is shared, approximately equally, by information provided by friends, family, work colleagues and Official websites of Romanian authorities in the field. Data collected in June do not differ significantly from those collected in March.

Table 23. Where do you usually get information about the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Friends, family, work colleagues - | 27% | 31% |
| Media (print media, TV, radio) | 64% | 67% |
| Internet | 49% | 55% |
| Facebook or other social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, TikTok) | 32% | 34% |
| Official websites of the relevant authorities in Romania | 23% | 28% |
| I don't inform myself on this topic | 16% | 15% |

When it comes to the trust given to information sources, Romanian respondents' answers collected in June differ from the ones collected in March. It seems that the most reliable sources of information about the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania are friends, family, and work colleagues (59%), followed by the official websites of the relevant authorities in Romania (57%), media (print media, TV, radio – 48%) and the internet (47%), and lastly, by Facebook or other social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, TikTok – 36%).

Table 24. How reliable are the following sources of information about the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Romania?

| Percentage | June 2023 | March 2023 |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Friends, family, co-workers | | |
| Much and very much | 59% | 60% |
| Little, very little, and not at all | 31% | 30% |
| Don't know | 10% | 10% |
| Media (print media, TV, radio) | | |
| Much and very much | 48% | 55% |
| Little, very little, and not at all | 45% | 39% |
| Don't know | 7% | 6% |
| Internet | | |
| Much and very much | 47% | 55% |
| Little, very little, and not at all | 45% | 39% |
| Don't know | 8% | 6% |
| Facebook or other social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, TikTok) | | |
| Much and very much | 36% | 39% |
| Little, very little, and not at all | 54% | 49% |
| Don't know | 10% | 12% |
| Official websites of the relevant authorities in Romania | | |
| Much and very much | 57% | 66% |
| Little, very little, and not at all | 34% | 28% |
| Don't know | 9% | 6% |

Conclusions

The data collected at a short distance from each other, only four months, **show a cooling of the feelings of the Romanians towards people displaced by the war in Ukraine.** The interest of the Romanians in the situation of these people is decreasing, as is their interest in the subject. If the mass media and the internet are the main sources of information for Romanians about the situation of Ukrainians who have found shelter in Romania, there is a decrease in trust in these sources. Similarly, the trust of Romanians in official sources of information is decreasing. Romanians are beginning to refuse information about the situation of Ukrainians.

More and more Romanians see the people displaced by the war in Ukraine as the source of economic problems due to the crisis that not only Europe is going through.

Romanians started to distance themselves from the situation of the refugees. However, three-quarters of Romanians still think that people displaced by the war in Ukraine should be helped by the Romanian state.

16 months on, the state and the people involved in the response to the humanitarian crisis must still find solutions to foster social cohesion and integration of refugees: proper information and communication, access to basic services (housing, food, health services) and finding a way to help Ukrainians access Romanian classes and finding a job. These two issues are extremely important not only for the refugees who must find means to survive, but also for the Romanians who feel that help should be conditioned somehow.

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