

THE INFLUENCE OF MIGRATION FROM UKRAINE ON EUROPEAN ECONOMIES DURING THE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

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DOI 10.32342/2074-5354-2023-1-58-18

Keywords: *migration from Ukraine, emigration, immigration, war, European economies*

JEL: *E00, F22, J11, J61*

The war in Ukraine may hinder the economic recovery of Europe. The Russian invasion has caused a large-scale humanitarian crisis - almost seven million Ukrainians have left the country. The conflict and related sanctions have disrupted the region's exports of goods such as metals, food, oil and gas, pushing inflation to levels unseen for decades. Real economic growth in the European Union is expected to fall well below 3% in 2022, down from the 4% estimated by the European Commission before the war. Further trade disruptions or increased economic sanctions could plunge the European economy into recession. The slowdown in growth is particularly noticeable in the countries that are in close proximity to Ukraine, Poland and Hungary – countries that also host large numbers of Ukrainian refugees. Poland plays the most important role among the countries receiving war refugees from Ukraine, with an estimated 3.5 million people who arrived in Poland between 24 February and mid-May 2022. This is due not only to the geographical factor (shared border), but also to the long-standing tradition of labor migration between Ukraine and Poland. Despite this, the unprecedented flow of war refugees clearly raises questions about future events and problems related to the stay of Ukrainian citizens in Poland. In this article, we have estimated the possible future number of immigrants from Ukraine to other countries, and in particular to Poland, and pointed out the related problems. The presented scenarios indicate that regardless of the developments on the front line, it should be taken into account that the number of immigrants from Ukraine to Poland would be significantly higher in the coming months (or possibly years) than at the beginning of 2022, and this creates certain problems for public services and public institutions in Poland.

Forecasting the future situation according to the pessimistic scenario predicts the continuation of the conflict with varying intensity over the next few years. This will mean that large parts of Ukraine will still be at risk for the next 18 months. This will lead to a constant flow of refugees as well as economic migrants to Poland. In addition, it is predicted that the ban on leaving Ukraine for men aged 18-60 will be significantly liberalized or even abolished. According to the pessimistic scenario, about 3.1 million Ukrainians will live in Poland in the medium term (economic migrants who arrived in Poland before the start of the war and refugees from the war).

According to the optimistic scenario, a quick conclusion of peace is expected, which will stabilize the situation in the near term, and will bring relatively favorable conditions for Ukraine (territorial, reparations, the possibility of joining the EU, etc.) in the medium and long term. This could lead to a relatively large reduction (within 12 months after the signing of the peace agreement) in the number of women and children, a certain outflow of men (including those who lived in Poland in the pre-war period).

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Одержано 19.12.2022.