

# The Socio-Economic Impact of Migration in the EU: In the Case of Ukraine Refugees<sup>1</sup>

ALINA LIGIA DUMITRESCU  
Centre for European Studies Department  
Institute for World Economy  
Calea 13 Septembrie No.13  
ROMANIA  
alinaligia@gmail.com

VALENTIN CONSTANTIN  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
ROMANIA  
valentin.constantin@gmail.com

*Abstract: The paper analysis the new and old challenges of the migration phenomenon in the Member States and their socio-economic impact. The authors are focused on the implications of the waves of Ukrainian refugees caused by the war in Ukraine and on EU member states' response to the crisis. A special attention is dedicated to Romania as a destination country for Ukrainian refugees. It is analysed the process of integration of refugees from Ukraine in Romania. From the quantitative analysis of the statistical data and the qualitative research of the migration policies from EU and Romania, a series of vulnerabilities are highlighted, but also possible opportunities for the Romanian labor market, which are summarized based on the SWOT analysis.*

*Keywords: Migration, refugees, Covid-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, employment impact, SWOT*

*JEL Classification: J16, J18, H75, I38, O52*

## 1. Introduction

The development of effective migration policies has been based on the successful implementation of measures to integrate migrants not only into the labour market but also into the host society. Katseli (2006) points out that managing migration has become a priority for policymakers in both developed and developing countries and is indeed a difficult challenge. Excessive immigration flows relative to the number of native populations can have a strong impact on every aspect of a society: family structures, community life, education and health systems, labour markets, security systems, governance, and public institutions. Despite the deficiencies inherent in developing migration policies, there is a growing awareness that, if the management of the system of integration improves, significant gains will take place for both migrant host countries and migrant countries of origin.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the "essential workers" who play a key role in the continued functioning of basic services, especially health services, welfare, and food supply chains were immigrants. Existing studies highlight how the employment of migrant workers in essential services is determined by the interests of employers, sectoral policies, and national institution. Experts point out that the analyzes of how immigrants can influence systemic resilience of essential services in a pandemic or similar crisis are insufficiently in-depth, not only in policy making but also in research (Anderson & Poeschel & Ruhs,2021).

According to the same authors, regarding "shortages" of labor or skills, there is no universally accepted term as a definition and no "optimal" policy response. From the point of view of employers of migrant workers, "labor

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shortage" usually refers to labor demand exceeding supply, wages, and conditions of employment on the market. Some employers may be reluctant or unable to meet demand and pay higher salaries. However, the central role of wages, employment conditions and structural constraints in stimulating employment growth must not be neglected. Such considerations probably apply in the context of essential services; for example, employment conditions can simultaneously create flexibility for employers (which could contribute to resilience), but also temporary employment of workers (which could undermine companies' resilience to asymmetric shocks).

## **2. The impact of migrant integration in the EU**

In 2005 the European Commission adopted the Communication "A Common Agenda for Integration. Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals into the European Union ", that expresses a view to establish a "coherent European integration area" based on implementing the " common basic principles ", through a series of EU support mechanisms (European Commission, 2005). In addition, on 3 March 2010, the European Commission's Communication entitled "Europe 2020, a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", emphasized the need to set a new agenda for the integration of migrants to enable them to capitalize on their full potential.

In July 2011, the Commission proposed a "New European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals", focusing on actions to increase the economic, social, cultural, and political participation of immigrants and on the direct actions of the local authorities. This new agenda highlights the challenges that need to be addressed if the EU wants to reap the full potential of migration and the value of cultural diversity and explores the role of countries of origin in the success of the integration process. A support working document provided by the Commission is attached to the Communication and contains a list of EU initiatives that support the integration of third-country nationals (European Commission, 2011).

On 7 June 2016, the European Commission adopted an "Action Plan on Integrating Third-Country Nationals" (European Commission, 2016). The action plan provides a comprehensive framework to support Member States' efforts to develop and strengthen their integration policies and describes the concrete measures that the Commission is implementing in this regard. Although it targets all third-country nationals in the EU, it contains specific actions to address the specific challenges facing refugees. The plan includes actions in all areas of migration policy that are essential for their integration:

- pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, including actions to prepare migrants and local communities for the integration process;
- education, including actions to promote language training, the participation of immigrant children in early childhood education and care, teacher training and civic education;
- employment and vocational training, including actions to promote early integration into the labor market and migrant entrepreneurship;
- access to basic services such as home insurance and health care;
- active involvement and social inclusion, the participation of migrants in socio-cultural life and the fight against all forms of discrimination are also tools for strengthening coordination between the various actors responsible for integration at national, regional, and local levels. For example, the European Integration Network, which promotes mutual learning between Member States and a more strategic approach to EU funding for integration, has a special role to play.

European Migration Network (2019) has pointed that the integration into the labor market of third-country nationals legally residing in EU Member must follow complex issues:

- most Member States have implemented specific integration policies targeting many of the migrant groups, including newcomers, as well as first-generation third-country nationals. These policies are usually a component of more general policies for the integration of disadvantaged groups;
- current labor market integration policies are usually driven by a lack of labor and the need to quickly support new workers to become self-employed;
- member States shall combine basic and personalized labor market integration measures. While the main integration activities contribute to ensuring equal access to general services (public employment). It is underlined that customized measures can address some of the problems faced by newcomers from the third countries compared to other groups, including lack of language skills and low level of familiarity with the new society culture;

- the most common obstacles faced by Member States in supporting third-country nationals are the accreditation of professional qualifications / skills assessment of non-EU nationals, combating discrimination in recruitment processes and ensuring the different levels of language skills required in integration activities. These difficulties are more pronounced for immigrant women or vulnerable groups, such as the elderly;
- among the most innovative measures is the development of intergenerational links, bringing together people of different ages or ethnicities, not only to facilitate the integration of immigrants into society, but also to strengthen social cohesion;
- employment agencies and non-governmental organizations appear as key partners in implementing labor market integration measures. Most of the funding is from the national and / or community level, but there are examples of private funding, including new instruments, such as social impact bonds and sponsorships;
- measures taken by the private sector are aimed at integrating workers (immigrants) into the workplace;
- The good practice examples that have been largely implemented by large companies have focused mainly on continuing education, training, professional qualification.

Based on the progress made since 2016, the European Commission has presented a new Pact on Migration and Asylum in September 2020 (European Commission, 2020a). It aimed to provide new tools for faster and more integrated procedures, better management of the Schengen area and borders, as well as flexibility and resilience to any crisis. The new Pact on Migration and Asylum sets out a fairer and more coordinated approach to managing migration and asylum. It aims to implement a comprehensive and sustainable policy, providing an effective long-term response to the current challenges of illegal migration, the development of legal migration routes, better integration of refugees and other newcomers and the deepening of migration partnerships with countries of origin and transit for mutual benefit. A new "good governance" mechanism will ensure a more equitable sharing of responsibilities and effective solidarity between Member States, with national migration management systems increasingly integrated into a common Community space.

An Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 (European Commission, 2020b) was adopted in November 2020, emphasizing that the digitalization of governments at all levels can facilitate access to digital public services. However, if not used in an inclusive way and not accessible, digitization of services may extend inequalities instead of narrowing them down. The Covid-19 crisis has revealed the potential for digitization of services in areas such as continuing education and language courses. Many Member States have had to adapt their services for integrating immigrants into socially remote conditions by providing online training courses. In any case, this change has also highlighted that immigrants and EU citizens from outside the EU often face obstacles in accessing digital courses and services due to lack of infrastructure, language barriers, lack of electronic identification and reliable digital services (such as electronic signature) or lack of digital skills to use these services. Online services can also be particularly effective in the pre-departure phase to help immigrants learn the language and acquire skills that can accelerate their integration upon arrival and connect them more easily with institutions in the host communities (European Commission, 2020).

### **3. The implications of the waves of Ukrainian refugees caused by the war in Ukraine over European Union**

According with the European Economic Forecast Spring 2022, because of the war in Ukraine the outlook in the EU is now for lower growth and higher inflation, especially for 2022. "Real GDP growth in both the EU and the euro area is now expected at 2.7% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2023, down from 4.0% and 2.8% (2.7% in the euro area), respectively, in the Winter 2022 interim forecast ... In turn, the projection for inflation has been revised up significantly. In the EU, HICP inflation is now expected to average an all-time high of 6.8% in 2022, before declining to 3.2% in 2023. In the euro area, inflation is projected at 6.1% in 2022 and 2.7% in 2023. This compares with 3.5% and 1.7%, respectively, in the Winter 2022 interim forecast" (European Commission, 2022a).

#### **3.1. Synthesis of relevant statistical data**

According with European Commission - Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs- Directorate for Migration & Asylum, around 5.45 million people arrived at the EU from Ukraine through Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania border crossing points (Graph 1). One of which on 5 May around 41,298 arrived, 2% less than on the previous day (41 960) (European Commission, 2022). The United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees data show that on 23 May 2022, the number of refugees amounted about 5.6 million people (UNHCR, 2022).

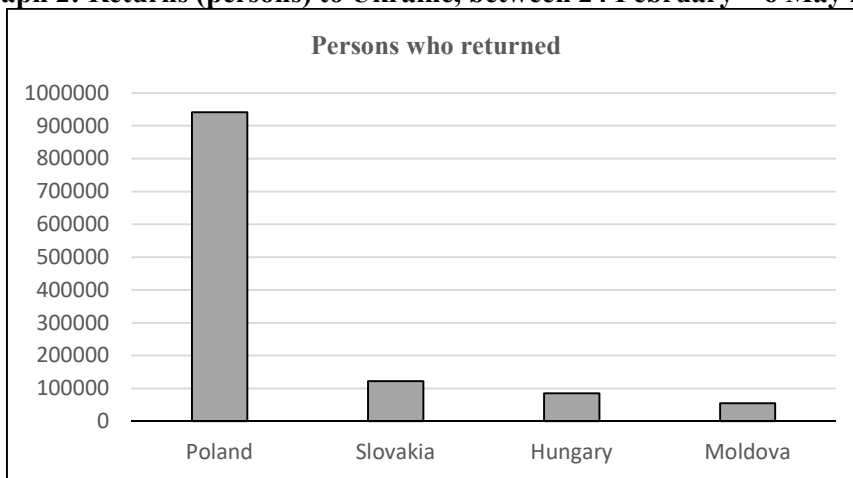
**Graph 1: Arrivals (persons) to Ukraine Neighbouring Countries, between 24 February – 6 May 2022**



Source: Authors based on data published by the European Commission (2022).

The State Border Guard Service (SBGS) of Ukraine reports that there are people who return to Ukraine. This would bring the total, as of 5 May, to almost 1.5 million citizens returned to Ukraine since the beginning of Russia’s military invasion on 24 February (European Commission, 2022b)

**Graph 2: Returns (persons) to Ukraine, between 24 February – 6 May 2022**



Source: Authors based on data published by the European Commission (2022).

According with the European Commission, as reported in the context of the Solidarity Platform with the Ukrainian citizen , as of 6 May, the below represents the current status regarding reception capacities in the EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries. Out of 17 Member States and 3 Schengen Associated Country reporting: 12 Member States (report occupancy rates between 70 and 100%. 4 Member States (Hungary, France, Romania, and Bulgaria) have 100% occupancy. And 16 Member States and 2 Schengen Associated Country report the possibility to upscale reception capacity. France reports to be capable of increasing their reception places up to 200 000, while Romania up to 500 000 places.

### 3.2. The EU's response to the refugee crisis in Ukraine

On 2 March 2022, the European Commission proposed granting temporary protection for up to three years to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, which includes a residence permit and access to employment and social assistance. On 3 March, the proposal was approved by EU interior ministers, with a majority of at least 15 Member States. The Dublin Convention, which requires the first country of entry to assess the asylum applications of immigrants has been abolished.

The protection measure includes access to housing and medical care and will be provided to war refugees without them having to go through lengthy asylum procedures. Protection status can last up to three years and can be extended for another year unless the situation in Ukraine stabilizes faster and enough for people to return home.

There were also about 75,000 foreign students in Ukraine (many studying medicine, engineering, and military affairs), and nearly a quarter of them were Africans from Morocco, Egypt, Nigeria, and Ghana (Notes from Poland, 2022). They also left Ukraine, but many of them, unlike Ukrainians, were restricted from entering the EU.

Member States will focus their efforts on integrating refugees into society and the labor market. According to migration experts Sandilya and Deleva (2022), an influx of human capital could be extremely beneficial for many EU economies, provided that the relocation process is properly managed. First, they point out that, unlike Western European countries, the new EU Member States still have very little experience with large-scale immigration. Secondly, the influx of Ukrainians into these countries was largely made up of women and children, as men of fighting age keep behind, and therefore inclusion mechanisms will have to take gender and age into account.

In addition to providing housing, education and financial support, governments will also need to facilitate the entry of Ukrainian women into EU labor markets. In addition to providing training on skills and entrepreneurship, EU governments should focus on eliminating bureaucracy that prevents refugees who are able and willing to work. The European Ministries of Labor should work closely with companies, recruiters, and job search services to ensure that skilled workers find jobs quickly. Translation based on artificial intelligence can help in the process of recognizing diplomas and technical qualifications. Similarly, the universities and the technical training institutions will need to be flexible to facilitate access to education without the necessary documents, and courses can be presented in several languages. This will help refugee women gain the knowledge and experience they need to get jobs. Finally, refugees who want to become entrepreneurs will need sustained technical support, access to finance and - perhaps most importantly - mentors to guide them through the process of starting a business (Sandilya and Deleva, 2022).

#### 4. Romania as a destination country for Ukrainian refugees

To counteract the negative impact on the Ukrainian refugees, has been launched a Regional Plan for Refugees for the situation in Ukraine, for the period March-August 2022, implying the participation of 12 partners (including the UN Non-Governmental Organization, international and civil society), for six months working with refugee host governments. According to this plan, the preliminary sum of 550.6 million dollars is allocated for the countries of the EU are on the border with the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary (in the West) and Romania (South-West). destination destinations for reimbursements in Ukraine.

##### 4.1. Analysis on border transit - Ukrainian citizens

From the beginning of the conflict on February 24 until May 7, 919,217 inflows of Ukrainian citizens and 830,915 outflows were registered at the Romanian border crossing points. Currently, 88,302 Ukrainian citizens remained in Romania (9.61%) of which 4,345 applied for asylum, and for 17,779 temporary residence permits were issued (Ministry of Interior Affairs, 2022a).

According to statistical statistics, the daily average inflows and outflows of Ukrainian citizens are as follows (Table 1):

**Table 1: The daily average inflows and outflows of Ukrainian citizens between 24 February-7 May 2022 (persons)**

DATE	INFLOWS	OUTFLOW	ASYLUM APPLICATIONS	RESIDENCE PERMITS
28.02.2022	23.514	13.785	225	
01.03.2022	22.596	15.877	321	
02.03.2022	23.862	17.783	289	
03.03.2022	25.294	19.575	387	
04.03.2022	28.563	22.011	409	
05.03.2022	28.235	22.813	489	
06.03.2022	31.628	23.180	472	
07.03.2022	33.969	26.632	463	

08.03.2022	29.636	26.551	228	
09.03.2022	28.888	25.506	60	
10.03.2022	23.546	24.475	53	
11.03.2022	21.003	23.653	51	
12.03.2022	16.348	21.659	67	
13.03.2022	16.676	16.858	65	
14.03.2022	14.475	14.954	52	
15.03.2022	13.769	13.425	97	
16.03.2022	15.212	13.350	69	
17.03.2022	15.286	13.176	45	
18.03.2022	13.000	13.206	40	x
19.03.2022	11.182	11.779	64	
20.03.2022	10.699	10.704	57	
21.03.2022	9.582	10.576	28	
22.03.2022	8.601	9.366	46	
23.03.2022	9.295	8.453	17	14
24.03.2022	8.910	8.916	11	113
25.03.2022	9.995	9.349	25	152
26.03.2022	8.975	8.670	15	165
27.03.2022	8.943	9.144	-	74
28.03.2022	7.776	8.367	1	24
29.03.2022	7.625	7.647	2	331
30.03.2022	8.261	8.241	6	390
31.03.2022	8.650	8.380	-	316
01.04.2022	8.277	8.813	-	459
02.04.2022	7.365	7.772	4	445
03.04.2022	7.820	8.104	-	38
04.04.2022	6.729	6.955	-	15
05.04.2022	7.189	6.639	1	449
06.04.2022	7.524	7.205	9	479
07.04.2022	8.894	7.436	3	468
08.04.2022	9.165	9.198	-	471
09.04.2022	8.623	8.323	4	454
10.04.2022	10.025	8.631	-	26
11.04.2022	7.915	8.226	-	10
12.04.2022	8.350	8.293	1	507
13.04.2022	9.429	8.012	-	490
14.04.2022	9.385	9.035	-	585
15.04.2022	10.092	9.703	1	555
16.04.2022	7.691	7.971	-	537
17.04.2022	8.648	8.509	-	67
18.04.2022	6.750	6.779	-	15
19.04.2022	6.602	6.246	-	543
20.04.2022	7.349	7.302	-	362
21.04.2022	7.704	7.695	-	362
22.04.2022	7.608	8.165	-	455
23.04.2022	6.743	7.226	-	56
24.04.2022	5.130	5.869	-	37
25.04.2022	3.189	3.636	-	4
26.04.2022	4.412	3.722	-	25
27.04.2022	6.629	5.141	-	576
28.04.2022	8.635	7.340	1	706
29.04.2022	8.590	8.224	-	732
30.04.2022	8.364	7.857	-	826
01.05.2022	10.569	9.486	-	327
02.05.2022	7.648	8.453	-	44
03.05.2022	6.747	7.103	2	814
04.05.2022	7.767	7.104	-	814

05.05.2022	8.148	7.885	-	927
06.05.2022	7.733	8.256	-	881
07.05.2022	8.072	7.143	-	889
07.05.2022	9.065	8.067	-	314

[1] Sources: Ministry of Interior Affairs (2022a) Note: \* Last available data.

For the effectively management and coordination of the massive influx of refugees displaced by the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict, The General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations has operationalized 15 Centers of Temporary Transit (12 assets, 2 suspended and 1 in administration of the local public authorities) in counties on the border with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with a capacity of 2,943 accommodation places of which, , 65 were occupied, and from the moment of operationalization, which have been assisted 694,435 people, in the date under analysis between 24 February-17 May.

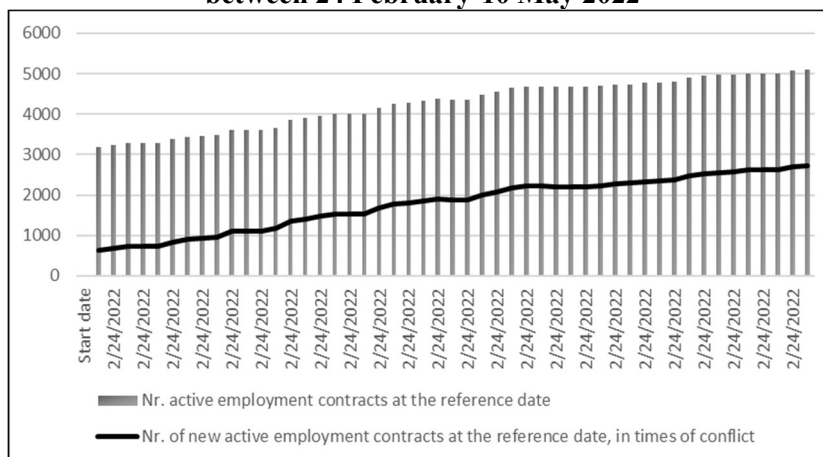
According with the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and National Intervention Coordination and Management Centre (2022), the costs for the civil protection in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict have been 6,869,510 RON (1,387,779 EUR), of which 1,699,430 RON (343,319 EUR) for accommodation and 5,170,080 RON for food (1,044,460 EUR) (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2022b).

#### 4.2. The process of integration of refugees from Ukraine in Romania

Romania, measures have been taken to integrate Ukrainian refugees into the labor market. According to the Minister of Labor, the legislation has been amended so that all Ukrainian citizens who enter Romania and wish to be employed can do so without any notice or restriction but based on a statement on their own responsibility. Through this statement, they assume that they meet the conditions of professional training and experience necessary for the position they are to be employed and that they do not have a criminal record incompatible with the activity they are to carry out in Romania. Also, citizens from Ukraine will have the opportunity to work without having to obtain a residence visa for work from Romania's diplomatic missions in Ukraine.

According with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection data, on 10 May 2022, several 5,101 active contracts of Ukrainian citizens are registered, out of which 2,731 are contracts that have a start date after the beginning of the conflict. So, the number of active contracts that started on February 24, has increased by thirty-eight persons compared to 10 May 2022 (Graph 3, Table 2).

**Graph 3: The evolution of the working contracts of Ukrainian citizens, between 24 February-10 May 2022**



Source: Authors based on data published by Ministry of Labour and Social Protection - *National Employment Agency* (ANOFM 2022).

**Table 2: Information for the Interinstitutional Working Committee on Ukraine**

Period	No. of companies that have declared vacancies available for Ukrainian citizens	Number of places declared vacant	Number of Ukrainian job seekers in Romania registered with AJOFM / ANOFM	Number of jobs held by Ukrainian citizens in Romania	New contracts registered in REVISAL of Ukrainian citizens

24.02.2022- 10.05.2022	270	4075	756	451	2731
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Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Protection - *National Employment Agency*. (ANOFM 2022).

Occupations of employed Ukrainian citizens are: car wiring manufacturers, car industry specialists, textile industry workers, construction workers, violinist, driver, workers in hotels and restaurants, sales representatives, fishermen, confectioner, pedagogue, car mechanics, IT, pastry chefs, packers, chefs, data processing operators, hairdressers, manicurists, beauticians, green space caretakers, cargo handlers, food industry workers, unskilled in the field of electricity, unskilled road maintenance, textile chemist, car sales worker, car operator, social worker, translators, workers in aircraft industry, dental technician, engineer, architect manager, design engineer, unskilled worker in non-ferrous metal casting, ship engineer, sales manager, quality controller, plastics operators.

Between 24.02.2022 and 05.05.2022, 250,790 minor Ukrainian citizens entered through the border crossing points and 211,940 minor Ukrainian citizens left. Currently, in Romania, there are 38,850 minor Ukrainian citizens left, of which 33,087 are under 14 years old, 24,107 are under 10 years old, and 11,380 are under 5 years old.

Because of the large number of children among refugees, there were taken a set of measures Ukrainian children protection. All Ukrainian children who are on Romanian territory, including those who do not apply for protection, according to the Asylum Law, will benefit from the right to free education in Romania, as well as Romanian students. Refugee children in Ukraine will be entitled to free accommodation in boarding schools, food allowance, supplies and textbooks.

From the study of the statistical data and of the migration policies from EU and Romania, a series of vulnerabilities are highlighted, but also possible opportunities of the Romanian labor market, which are summarized based on the SWOT analysis in the following table:

**Table 3: The impact of migration in the EU: A SWOT analysis**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member States have implemented specific integration policies targeting many of the migrant groups in general and in special of the Ukraine.</li> <li>- A well organised system for coordination and management of refugees' crisis at national and local level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An inadequate supply of migrant labour, due to lack of qualifications or inadequate training for the host country's labour market demand.</li> <li>- Arduous process of accreditation of professional qualifications / skills assessment of non-EU nationals.</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immigrants could play an important role in the continued functioning of basic services, especially health services, welfare, and food supply chains.</li> <li>- Increasing labour supply and employment in the host countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An increased social spends in host countries.</li> <li>- The risk elevated level of unemployment between the immigrant population, due to the imbalance between demand and supply of skills.</li> </ul>

Source: Authors

Of the estimated about 6 million refugees expected to arrive in EU countries following the war in Ukraine, some will decide to stay in the host countries. In this context, the capacity of host states to integrate refugees and build social cohesion with them is a win-win process: the immigrants will have better opportunities to work and live and the in EU will increase the employment, that will contribute to the economic growth and economic development of the Member States.

## 5. Conclusion

In the years before the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the Member States of Central and Eastern Europe were facing a labor shortage due to the free movement of labor from these states to more economically developed countries. A major challenge is the integration of immigrants into the host countries labor market. The European Union encourages the integration of immigrants into the Member States through a series of programs to facilitate



their access to the labor market, programs to learn the language of the host country and retraining and continuous education to make the demand match the supply of labor. The latest challenge is the refugee crisis in Ukraine. The first phase requires humanitarian aid, livelihood assistance and second phase, and the integration of children into the education systems of the host Member States and adults into the labor market.

The liability of Ukrainian migratory phenomenon is that most refugees are women and minor children, because the men stayed in Ukraine to fight on the front. So social integration will have to focus mainly on these two vulnerable categories. The legislative framework and the Community and international institutions support the process of strengthening the resilience of host communities and social cohesion with refugees.

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