

- Visegrad Fund

Ukrainian refugees in Czechia

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Czech immigration policies

Five stages of Czech migration policy:

1990-1996: The migration policy was not among Czechia's priorities; the first Czechoslovak migration law was adopted in 1992 (Act no. 123/1992 Coll.) and granted anyone the right to settle in Czechoslovakia and apply for long-term visas and permanent residence permit

1996-1999: Institutionalization of the migration policy as a reaction to illegal migration; adoption of the new Aliens Act (no. 326/1999 Coll.)

2000-2004: The convergence of Czech and EU laws and further institutionalization of the migration policy; initialization of the regulated migration with a project focusing on support of migration of qualified workers from Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, and Croatia

2005-2007: neoliberal period, accession to the EU, economic rise; however differentiated approach to the EU citizens and the third-country nationals (TCNs)

After 2008: neo-restrictive period; the revision of the Asylum and Migration Law (no. 314/2015 Coll.); in 2017 adopting a new, more restrictive migration law including the strict integration component

Current Czech migration policy

Czechia has been among the most active **anti-immigrant countries** within the EU, refusing to accept refugees during the so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015.

V4 rejected any attempts by the EU to introduce mandatory **quotas** on the acceptance of migrants

Czechia has been also among the countries having the lowest naturalization rates in Europe

Czechia generally is only “halfway favorable for migrants” who have to deal with issues in education and political participation in particular

Politicization of migration in Czechia

The migration was **politicized and securitized** at that time both by politicians and various initiatives including e.g. Block against Islam (Blok proti islámu).

Before 2015, migration was rarely the subject of news in the media and did not appear in the public discourse. During and after 2015, it started to appear not only in the media but also became a part of political parties' campaigns and was very often politicized.

As for **public opinion** on migrants, Czechia is among the bottom 10 countries in the Migrant Acceptance Index

Negative or skeptical reactions even among parliamentary **political parties** (Freedom and Direct Democracy, SPD, Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, KSČM, ANO, or negative tendencies in Czech Social Democrat Party ČSSD)

Institutional context



The **Ministry of Interior** is responsible for the asylum and migration policy of Czechia

The **Department for Asylum and Migration Policy** (DAMP) was established in 2000 (merge of two different departments of MI) and is responsible for the implementation of these policies. The most significant increase in the Department's role was between 2009 and 2011. The department gained more powers which were delegated from the Police of the Czech Republic.

DAMP (central offices in Prague and most of the regional centres (<https://www.mvcr.cz/migrace/clanek/struktura-odboru-azylove-a-migracni-politiky.aspx>))

Border protection management is coordinated by the **Analytic Centre for Border Protection and Migration** (ANACEN); its activities are managed through the Coordination Body for Managing the Protection of State Borders and Migration.

The **Refugee Facilities Administration** of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the reception, accommodation of migrants, and management of asylum facilities

Other actors: State Security Council of the Czech Republic, the Directorate of the Foreign Police Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, other ministries, the National Central Unit for Combating Organised Crime, Regional Security Councils and Local Security Councils (in some municipalities) Crisses Staffs at different levels of public administration, international organizations such as IOM or UNHCR, and NGOs.

Migration in Czechia since 2015

	World																					
Year	2015			2016			2017			2018			2019			2020			2021			
Group	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	
Temporary	126178	79831	206009	135750	87264	223014	148 503	95 576	244 079	168 733	107 519	276 252	183 084	112 113	295 197	199 131	126 051	325 182	203 872	135 085	338 957	
Permanent	137704	123849	261553	143912	129487	273399	149 091	133 641	282 732	153 430	137 249	290 679	158 635	142 049	300 684	163 205	146 403	309 608	169 591	152 301	321 892	
both	263882	203680	467562	279662	216751	496413	297 594	229 217	526 811	322 163	244 768	566 931	341 719	254 162	595 881	362 336	272 454	634 790	373 463	287 386	660 849	
	UA																					
Year	2015			2016			2017			2018			2019			2020			2021			
Group	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	F	M	ALL	
Temporary	16515	11901	28416	16520	12516	29036	19 444	14 548	33 992	27 498	19 215	46 713	35 619	22 969	58 588	47 497	29 679	77 176	65 801	40 298	106 099	
Permanent	39639	37964	77603	41607	39602	81209	43 016	40 472	83 488	43 894	41 102	84 996	44 830	42 100	86 930	45 478	43 000	88 478	46 507	44 269	90 776	
both	56154	49865	106019	58127	52118	110245	62 460	55 020	117 480	71 392	60 317	131 709	80 449	65 069	145 518	92 975	72 679	165 654	112 308	84 567	196 875	

Source MVČR (<https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/cizinci-s-povolenym-pobytem.aspx?q=Y2hudW09Mg%3d%3d>)

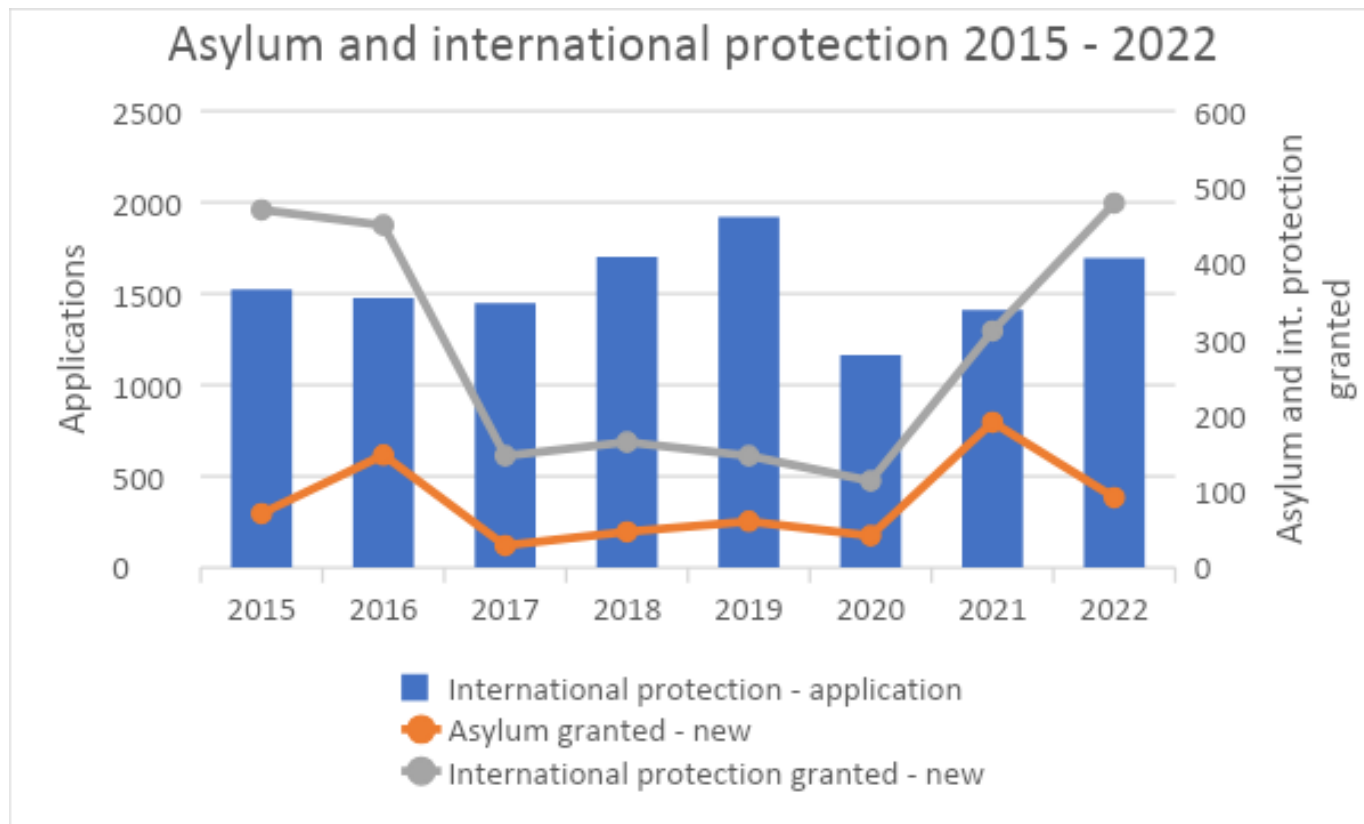
Počty žádostí o mezinárodní ochranu v jednotlivých letech (1992 - 2022)

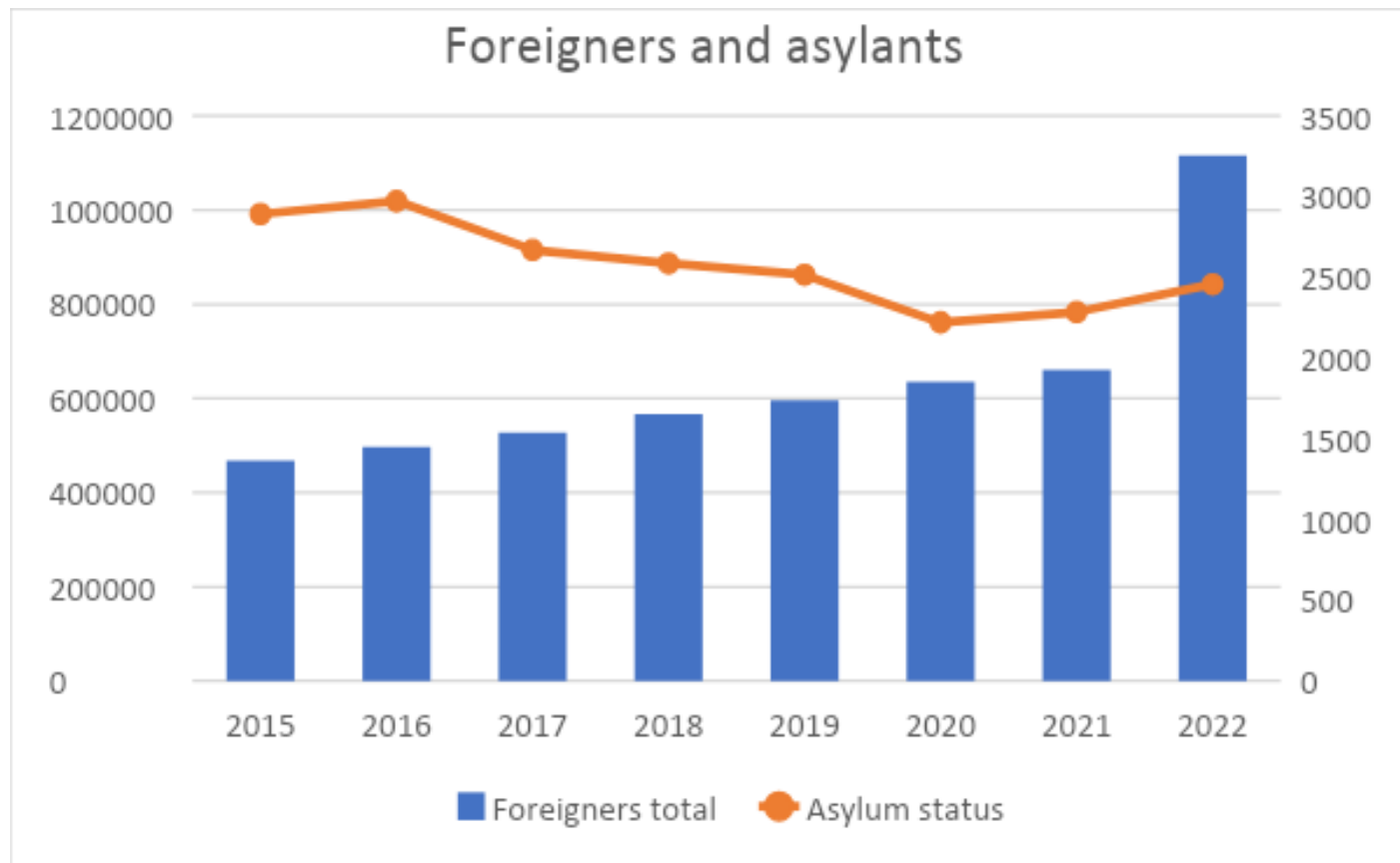
Numbers of applications for international protection by years (1992 - 2022)

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rok year	ŽÁDOSTÍ CELKEM APPLICATIONS TOTAL	z toho of which	
		nové žádosti new applications	opakované žádosti repeated applications
1992	841	-	-
1993	2 207	-	-
2015	1 524	1239	285
2016	1 478	1215	263
2017	1 450	1142	308
2018	1 702	1361	341
2019	1 922	1578	344
2020	1 164	798	366
2021	1 411	1061	351
2022	1 694	1339	355

Source: <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/souhrnna-zprava-o-mezinarodni-ochrane-za-rok-2022.aspx>





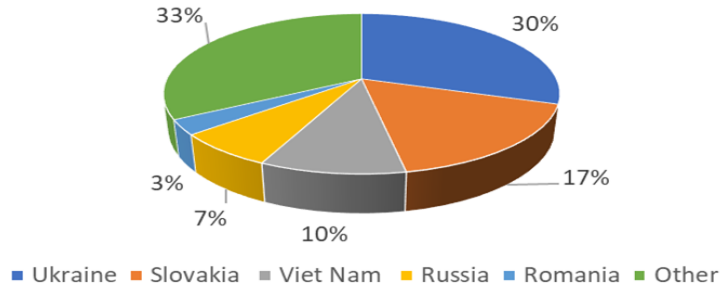
Ukrainians in Czechia before 2022

Ukrainians constituted one of the biggest immigrant communities in Czechia

Only rarely asylum seekers, the majority were voluntary, economic migrants

The number of persons granted temporary or permanent residence permission was gradually increasing.

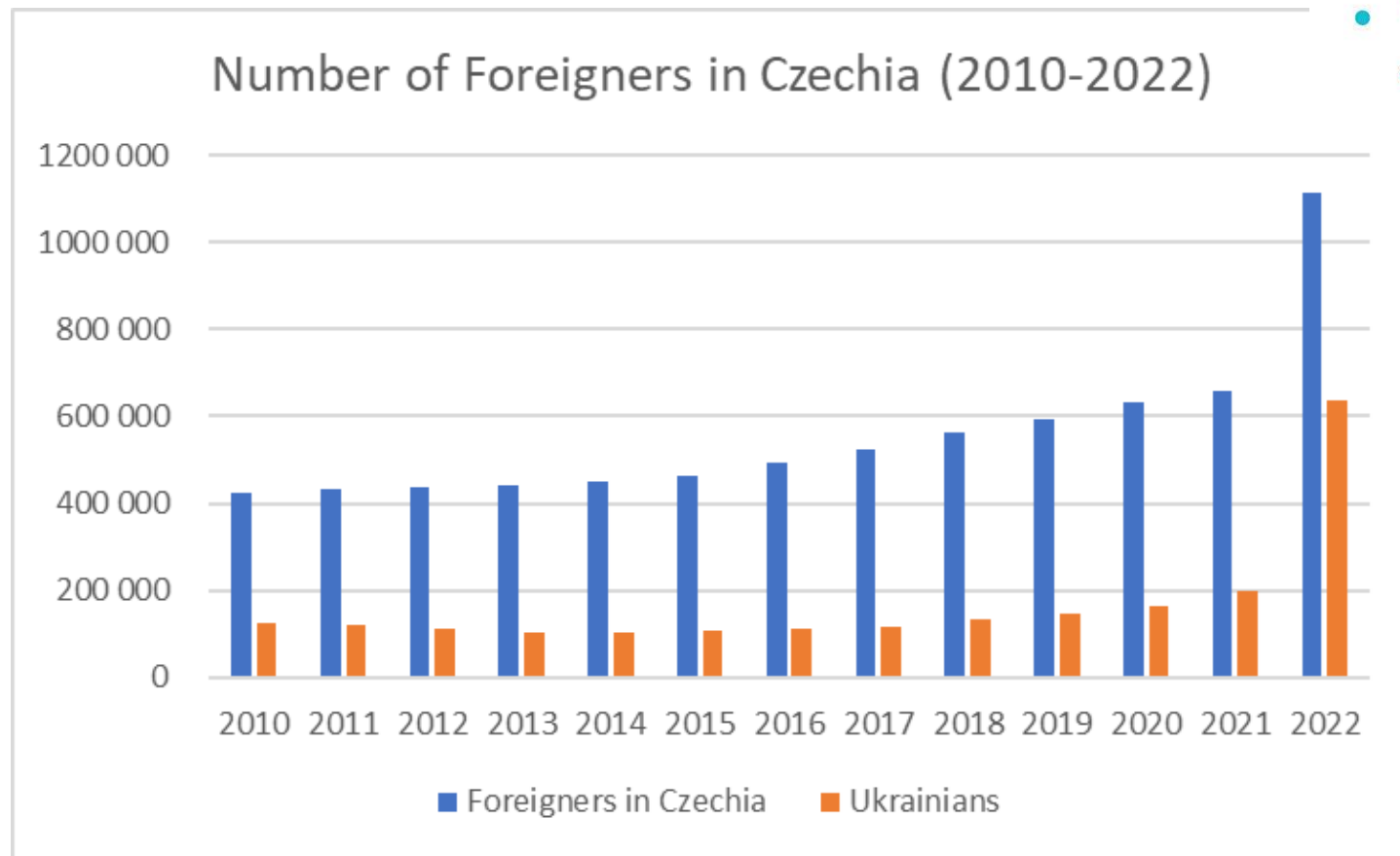
The most frequent citizenships of foreigners
(31.12.2021)



Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Temporary	28 416	29 036	33 992	46 713	58 588	77 176	106 099
Permanent	77 603	81 209	83 488	84 996	86 930	88 478	90 776
Both	106 019	110 245	117 480	131 709	145 518	165 654	196 875

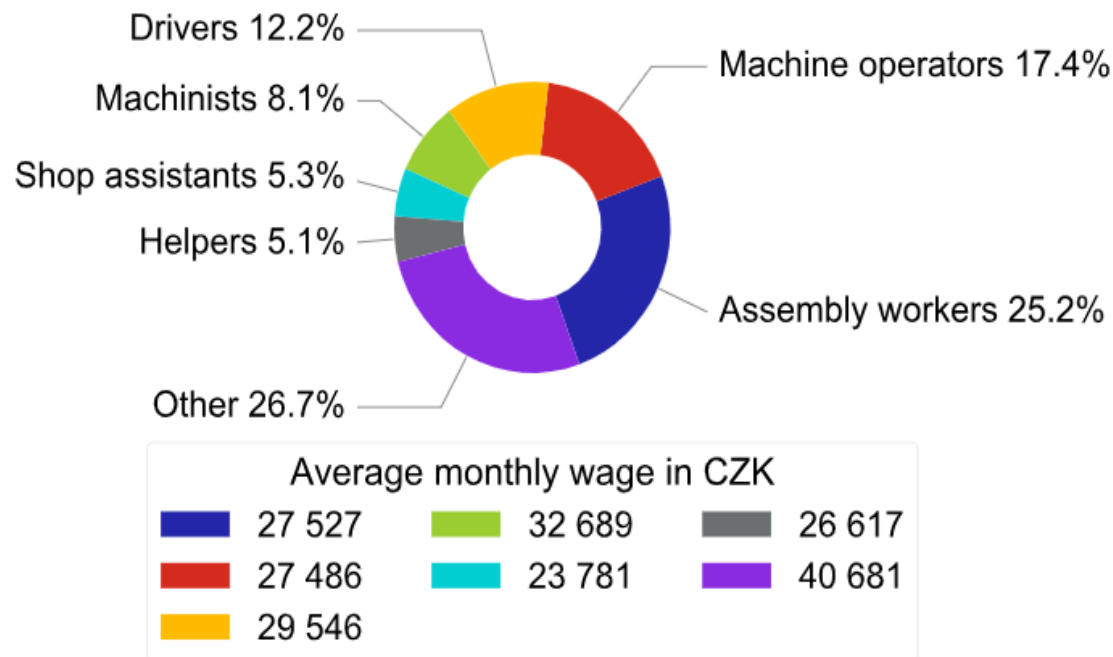
Source MVČR (<https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/cizinci-s-povolenym-pobytem.aspx?q=Y2hudW09Mg%3d%3d>)

Data source: <https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/165384708/290027221g2.jpg/d4a09289-8525-4791-a7f9-0d83802d9a2a?version=1.1&t=1668761081997>



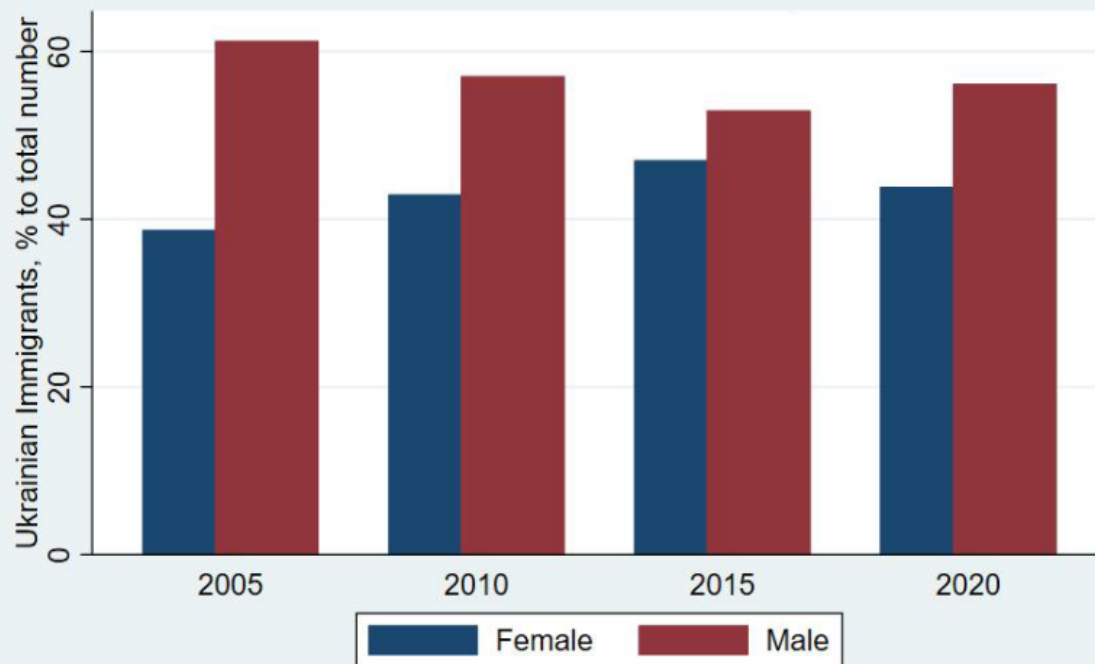
Workers from Ukraine mostly hold less skilled and lower-paid positions in the Czechia

shares of occupation categories in Ukrainians' employment in % and Ukrainians' earnings; data for 2021;
source AEIS (MLSA)



Source: <https://www.cnb.cz/en/monetary-policy/monetary-policy-reports/boxes-and-articles/Ukrainian-nationals-on-the-Czech-labour-market/>

Figure A4 **The Gender Composition of the Ukrainian Diaspora in the Czech Republic (2005–2020)**



Source: Based on data from the Czech Statistical Office (2021).

Source: (Adunts, Kurylo, and Špeciánová 2022).

Ukrainian refugees after 2022

The majority of Ukrainian war refugees (80 percent) arrived in Czechia before April 15, while the largest number (more than 93 thousand) arrived during the second half of March

Czechia has become one of the main destination countries for fleeing persons, by the end of 2022, 473,216 persons have received temporary protection

68% of refugees from Ukraine in Czechia are of working age, of which 65% are female and 35% are male.

Since 2022, Ukrainian refugees are concentrated mainly in metropolitan areas

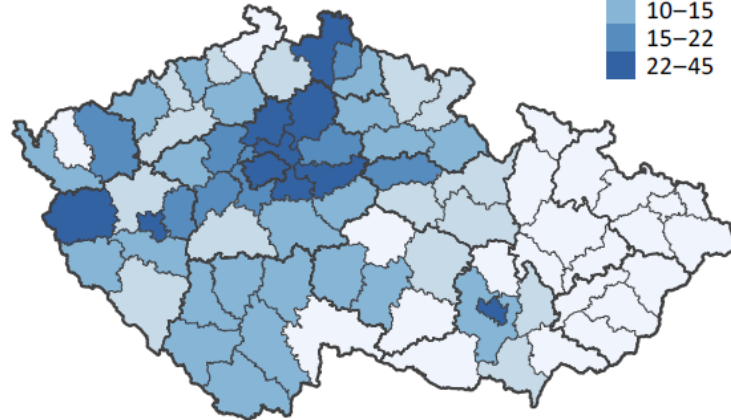
Prague, Pilsen, or the Tachov district received numbers corresponding to 7% of their population

Identified a positive association between the population of Ukrainian immigrants living in Czechia before the war and the number of Ukrainian refugees

Ukrainians in districts before the war and war refugees

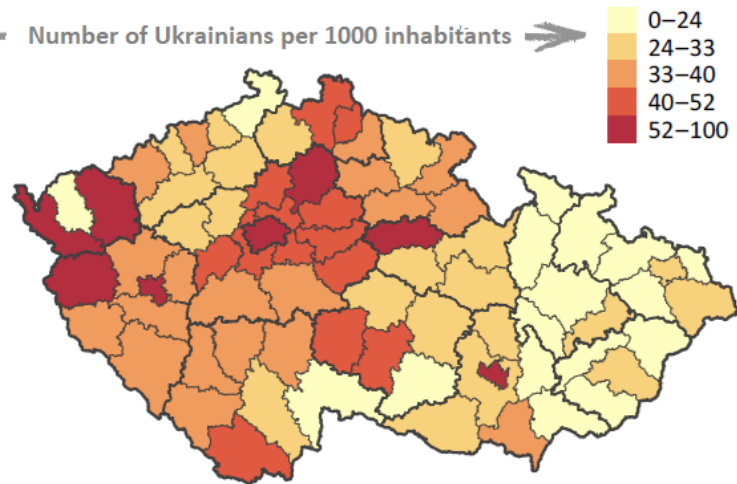
Ukrainian minority before the war

Total in Czechia : 165 195



Newly arrived refugees until November 2022

Total in Czechia : 424 985



Source: IDEA <https://ideaapps.cerge-ei.cz/Imigrace/>

Source: (Münich and Protivínský 2023)

Economic position of Ukrainian refugees

PAQ research survey in June 2023:

67% of economically active refugees have a job in Czechia

58% of refugees work in **less skilled** jobs in Czechia than in Ukraine, mainly due to poorer knowledge of the language and the absence of pre-school education and childcare

The average **net hourly wage** is **167 CZK**, which is still under the average

The average net hourly wage of men is CZK 190, while women receive an average of CZK 157 per hour. 47% of men and 27% of women have a salary higher than CZK 150/hour.

Women in Czechia more often perform **less qualified jobs** than in Ukraine

Czech government's reaction and policies implemented



Czech government – 1st of March 2022 - stop processing applications for visas, long-term or permanent residence permits submitted by citizens of Russia or the Republic of Belarus, which were submitted at the Embassies and Consulates.

Czech government – 4th March 2022 – state of emergency

Diplomatic relations with Russia have been worsening during the last years (Disputes over a statue of Red Army general Koniev, the Vrbětice incident, a decrease of people working at the Czech Embassy in Moscow or Russian Embassy in Prague)

EU adopted the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) through the Council Directive 2001/55/EC activated on March 4

Refugees from Ukraine were offered temporary residence and work permits in any EU country for one year, with the possibility of being granted an extension of two additional years.

TPD also granted access to healthcare and education for children from Ukraine

Czech government's reaction and policies implemented



Actors: Ministry of Interior - Department for Asylum and Migration Policy; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports; MFA

Lack of coordination at the beginning

Czechia opened its borders for displaced persons and established an easy pathway to obtain a formalized status in the form of **temporary protection**.

March 17, 2022 - LEX UKRAINE 1

June 2022 - LEX UKRAINE 2

Currently – LEX UKRAINE 5

Lex Ukraine 1

Three directives for helping refugees

The law proposed by the Ministry of Interior regulates the allocation of **temporary protection**, the **legal status** of refugees, and **access to health care**, the law proposed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, **employment**, **social benefits**, and **childcare**, and the law proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture access to **education**.

Employment: free access to the labor market

Humanitarian allowance: 5,000 CZK (= approx. 200 EUR) per month - universally provided to all refugees from Ukraine

Solidarity contribution for accommodation providers: 3,000 CZK (= approx. 120 EUR) per person and month, max. 12,000 CZK

Regional and local government

Regional assistance centers to help Ukraine - provide: registration of citizens of Ukraine with the Foreign Police; arrangement of temporary protection; assistance in dealing with further stay in the Czech Republic
Working groups consisted of the workers of the Foreign Police, DAMP, fire brigade of the Czech Republic, Office of Labour, administrative staff of the state health insurance company, and the Czech Red Cross

In Prague: The Center for Follow-up Support for Ukrainian Refugees (CNPUU)

Housing, health, education, and child protection assistance

NGOs' reaction

Czech **Red Cross** – among the first NGOs – internet page, providing information, issuing help, and communication with DAMP

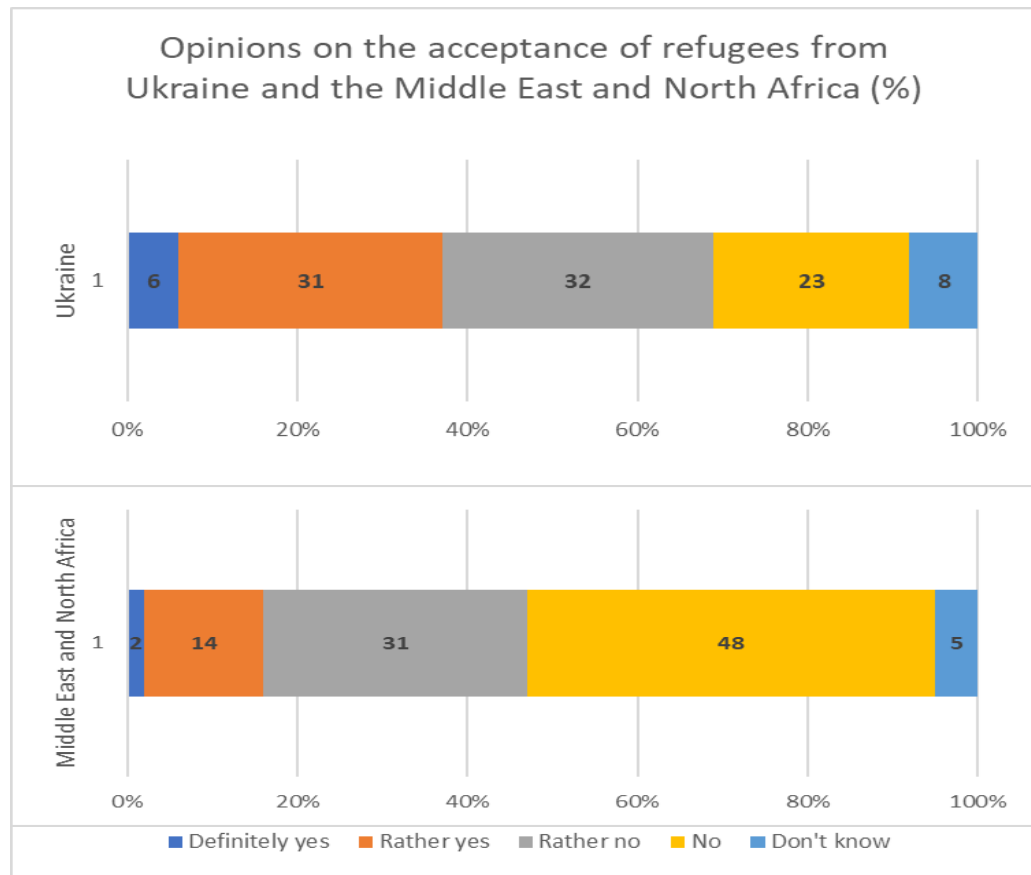
Člověk v tísní (People in Need) – several large meetings to protest against Russian aggression and coordination of help.

Christian organizations – The Charity of the Czech Republic, Adra

Public opinion on Ukrainian refugees

Centre for the Public Opinion Research (2018)

Question wording: The conflict in Eastern Ukraine has also caused an increase in the number of Ukrainian refugees. Should the Czech Republic accept Ukrainians from areas affected by the war conflict? Definitely yes, rather yes, rather no, definitely not.'



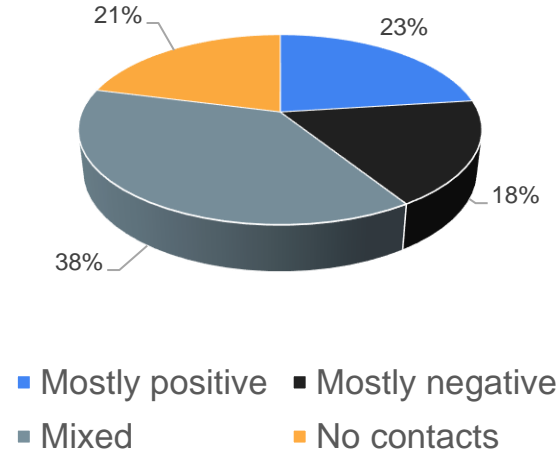
Source: https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a4643/f9/pm180608.pdf

Public opinion on Ukrainian refugees

STEM survey in 2023: After an initial surge of solidarity, there has been sobriety among some of the public, with two-fifths (42%) of people saying their attitude towards UA refugees has worsened since the start of the war.

The change in Czech society's attitudes over time was related to the gradually declining interest after the outbreak of the conflict and the initial shock.

Experience with Ukrainian refugees



Public opinion on Ukrainian refugees

STEM public survey published in August 2023: total support for Ukrainian refugees remains stable and slightly more than half as of summer 2022.

June 2023: 56%- agree or rather agree that Czechia should continue to allow Ukrainian refugees to stay.

40% of the public (10% definitely and 31% more likely) think that these people should be allowed to stay here even after the end of the war (rather an altruistic motive)

the rest (60%) are against it

Concerns: about the impact on the economy, the availability of places in schools, or the security situation.

Thank you for your attention

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