

СОЦІАЛЬНІ РЕАЛЬНОСТІ В ЕМПІРИЧНИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯХ

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Status Characteristics and Peculiarities of Accommodation of Ukrainian War Refugees in Germany (Konstanz)

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The crisis of forced migrants from Ukraine due to the war became one of the biggest in Europe in the 20th–21st centuries. A large increase in the number of refugees due to the war in Ukraine occurred after the start of the active phase of hostilities on February 24, 2022. Germany remains one of the countries that received the largest number of forced migrants from Ukraine. It is relevant to study the living conditions, employment, lifestyle, leisure time, well-being and future plans of forced migrants from Ukraine in Germany (using the example of the city of Konstanz). We conducted an exploratory web survey: respondents were interviewed using a formalized questionnaire with a series of open-ended questions implemented on the LimeSurvey online platform. Based on the results of the analysis, the main problems faced by Ukrainian refugees in the city of Konstanz were identified: living conditions and the lack of places in kindergartens. Both problems are characteristic of this city for many years before the war in Ukraine. Among the main features that distinguish forced migrants from Ukraine in connection with the war is a large share of highly qualified persons and persons with completed higher education. Plans for further stay in Germany or return to Ukraine deserve special attention – almost half of the respondents said that they plan to stay in Germany forever, and almost all the rest - to return to Ukraine as soon as it becomes possible. This information also brings new challenges for the country's migration policy and needs further discussion.

In addition, a high sensitivity to questions about the property and financial status in Ukraine before the start of the Russian attack in 2022 was revealed.

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Сидоров Микола, Ковальська Єлена. Статусні характеристики та особливості проживання українських біженців війни в Німеччині (Констанц). Криза вимушених переселенців з України у зв'язку із війною стала однією з найбільших у Європі у ХХ–ХХІ ст. Велике зростання кількості біженців через війну в Україні сталося після початку активної фази бойових дій 24 лютого 2022 р. Німеччина залишається однією з

країн, що прийняла найбільшу кількість вимушених переселенців з України. Актуальним є вивчення умов життя, зайнятості, побуту, дозвілля, добробуту та планів на майбутнє вимушених переселенців з України в Німеччині (на прикладі м. Констанц). Нами проведено розвідувальне вебдослідження: респондентів опитано за допомогою формалізованої анкети з низкою відкритих запитань, реалізованої на онлайн-платформі LimeSurvey. За результатами аналізу виявлено основні проблеми, які постають перед українськими біженцями у м. Констанц: це умови проживання та відсутність місць у дитячих садках. Обидві проблеми є характерними для цього міста протягом багатьох років до війни в Україні. Серед основних особливостей, що вирізняють вимушених переселенців з України у зв'язку з війною, є велика частка висококваліфікованих осіб та осіб із закінченою вищою освітою. На особливу увагу заслуговують плани на подальше перебування в Німеччині або повернення в Україну. Так, близько половини респондентів відзначило, що планують назавжди залишатися в Німеччині, а всі інші – повернутися в Україну, щойно це стане можливим. Ця інформація також приносить нові виклики для міграційної політики країни та потребує подальшого обговорення.

Крім того, виявлено високу чутливість до запитань стосовно майнового та фінансового статусу в Україні до початку нападу росії у 2022 р.

Ключові слова: російсько-українська війна, українські біженці, онлайн-дослідження.

INTRODUCTION

The war in Ukraine, the active phase of which began on February 24, 2022, sent a powerful flow of Ukrainian refugees to many countries of the world, especially to Europe. The forced migration of Ukrainian refugees is one of the largest migration crises in the world in the 21st century. As of August 16, 2022, more than 11,3 million Ukrainians were forced to flee the country (Ukrainian Refugee Situation, 2022) from the war and about $\frac{4}{8}$ was registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe. Thus, this migration crisis was the largest resettlement in the European region since the Second World War.

The main migration destinations for Ukrainian refugees are neighboring countries to the west of Ukraine: Poland, Germany, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

For the first time in history, officials of the European Union and individual states have discussed the application of the «Temporary Protection Directive» so that refugees do not have to go through the standard asylum procedure in the European Union.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of November 22, 2022, 1,021,667 Ukrainian refugees were registered in Germany (Ukrainian Refugee Situation, 2022). According to § 24 «Granting the right to stay for the purpose of temporary protection» of the law on the stay of foreign citizens (AufenthG), Ukrainian refugees in Germany receive social benefits and guarantees, as well as the right to work on a level with citizens of the country (Questions and answers about..., 2022). This paragraph is unprecedented for war refugees in Europe. In many ways, its adoption was facilitated by the general policy of full support for the European course of Ukraine (Bosse, 2022). Railway companies in several countries, including Germany and Austria, allow Ukrainian refugees to travel by train for free.

Despite the large number of Ukrainian refugees in Germany, the features of their psychological state, living conditions, employment, life, leisure, well-being and plans for the future remain unexplored or little studied, in contrast to studies in Poland (Ociepa-Kicińska, & Gorzałczyńska-Koczkodaj, 2022; Duszczuk, & Kaczmarczyk, 2022) and others.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1. Research Issue and aim

In the study, we consider the following questions:

- How has the type of employment of Ukrainian refugees changed;
- How has general well-being changed;
- What were the main problems faced by Ukrainian refugees in Germany;
- Features of the life of Ukrainian refugees;
- Plans for further stay in Germany or return to Ukraine.

Aim of study: the study is aimed at identifying the peculiarities of the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany (on the example of the city of Konstanz and the surrounding area), their social status (employment status), psychological state, living conditions, life, leisure, well-being and plans for the future.

1.2. Design and Data Collection

Method: online survey with self-completion questionnaire.

For a holistic study of the characteristics of the life of Ukrainian refugees in Konstanz, respondents were interviewed using a formalized questionnaire implemented on the LimeSurvey online platform. To implement a quantitative study, participants in the Telegram group «Help Ukraine – Konstanz» (1886 participants) were interviewed.

The field stage was held 6.10–28.10.2022. Recruiting took place in the main group of telegrams and subgroups, in which parents, women and groups of buying and selling goods and services among forced migrants communicate. A total of 376 questionnaires were received, among them 264 were valid, which is a good indicator in the absence of complete information about the general population to build a fairly objective picture of relationships, trends and opinions. The research method we have chosen assumes a certain spontaneity of the sample, since invitations were not sent personally to the participants, but the respondents themselves were invited to participate in the study by general appeals in Telegram channels. The level of participation is also explained by the high sensitivity of the research topic, the emotional state of the respondents and informs of the representation, mainly, of the most active part of forced migrants from among those who received information about the survey. On the other hand, the results obtained allow us to identify the main trends, characteristics, problems in a qualitative field and outline ways to solve them, thus, the study is representative in relation to the purpose of the study.

Given the sensitivity of the research topic, at the preparatory stage of the research, it was decided to receive support from one of the largest social organizations helping refugees in Germany – Caritas (<https://www.caritas-konstanz.de/>). The support of such an organization of research allowed increasing the level of trust of the survey and attracting respondents to sincere answers. As a result of the negotiation process (2 months), official permission was obtained for the use of Caritas logo in the questionnaire and the support of volunteers in the recruiting process was received.

At the pre-test stage of the questionnaire, a very high level of sensitivity of questions about income, financial situation and housing conditions was revealed before the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Respondents reacted sharply negatively to such questions because of the memories of the loss of work, property and a possible decrease in status in Ukraine – therefore, it was decided to refuse them.

1.3. Features of the Population and its Conditions of Stay

The general population, in addition to the set of registered refugees from Ukraine in the city of Konstanz, includes: a) persons registered and living in satellite cities, whose leisure practices are closely related to the city of Konstanz; b) persons who were in Konstanz, but have already left for Ukraine or other countries; c) persons who only plan to travel to Konstanz. The study of the opinions of all these categories makes it possible to obtain deeper qualitative knowledge about the peculiarities of the stay of Ukrainians in forced migration in Germany.

The disadvantage of this structure of the general population is the almost complete absence of forced migrants from Ukraine living in refugee camps. Often this category does not have a permanent Internet, mobile Internet is unstable or too expensive, they communicate within their closed group inside the camp, do not subscribe to information channels for Ukrainian refugees, do not attend events organized by Caritas for Ukrainian refugees in Konstanz. To reach this group of refugees, it is proposed to conduct separate CAPI or PAPI surveys.

Thus, the general population of our study includes Ukrainian refugees living in Landkreis Konstanz (a territorial unit in Germany, Konstanz (German: Konstanz) is a district in Germany. The center of the district is the city of Konstanz. The district is part of Baden-Württemberg). The state of Baden-Württemberg as of November 2022 remains one of the two states in Germany that still accepts Ukrainian refugees, while the city of Konstanz itself is closed for accepting refugees. This means that upon arrival at the distribution centers, Ukrainian refugees will be further identified in the first stage of temporary resettlement – refugee camps, in lands currently open for acceptance. At the same time, camps in large cities and district centers (which include Konstanz) are already overcrowded, the situation in them remains tense, and living and living conditions are not always satisfactory.

For Konstanz, a typical problem is the lack of housing for the population. For many years, Konstanz has been a leader in the ranking of rental prices in Germany – this is due, on the one hand, to the geographical features of the city's location, on the other hand, to history. Konstanz (German Konstanz) is a city in Germany, on the Bodensee, on the border with Switzerland. The city of Konstanz is located on the banks of the Bodensee at the source of the Rhine from Lake Superior on the border with the Swiss canton of Thurgau and forms a single urban space with the Swiss city of Kreuzlingen with a total population of more than 115,000 people (in Konstanz, according to data for 2011, there are about 85,000 inhabitants, which makes Konstanz one of the 100 largest cities in Germany by population) (Destatis, 2022). Thus, the city is surrounded, on the one hand, by Switzerland, and on the other by the Bodensee, which makes it much more difficult to build new houses and expand living space. On the other hand, due to the unique climatic conditions, Konstanz is traditionally considered a resort town, which, accordingly, means a large constant flow of tourists. Another important feature of the city is the opening in 1966 of the University of Konstanz, which is considered one of the 9 elite universities in Germany - this creates an additional load on the residential areas of the city by students and university staff. And to this problem will be added the issue of resettlement of refugees.

2. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Gender and Age Distribution

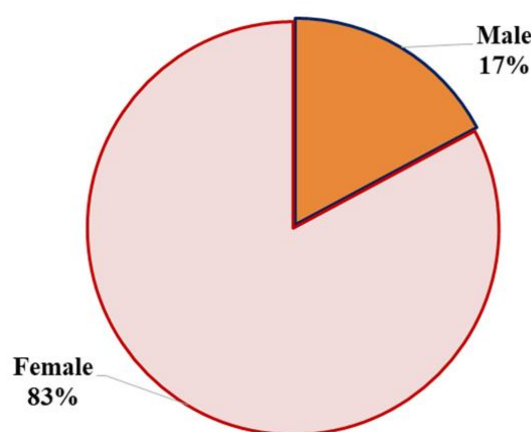


Fig. 1. Gender Distribution, %

Source: author's data analysis.

The ratio of females and males among the survey participants was 83 % to 17 % (fig. 1). This ratio, in general, is confirmed by statistical data obtained earlier: as of the end of August, about 162,000 Ukrainian men aged 18 to 60 were entered into the register (data from the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) provided by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and for Community of Germany at a request by the populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party (Ausländervereinsregister, 2022). In April, this figure was about 94 thousand people. Before the start of Russia's military attack on Ukraine, about 39 thousand Ukrainian men of military age were listed in the Central Register of Foreigners.

Among others, the database includes young people who have reached the age of majority after they left Ukraine. There are 468,652 registered women from Ukraine in Germany, which is 72 % of the total number of adult Ukrainians included in the register. From February to August of this year in Germany, according to the Federal Statistical Office, 952,000 Ukrainian refugees were registered. One third of them are children (Ausländervereinsregister, 2022).

This gender distribution is primarily due to the fact that, according to Ukrainian military law, men aged 18 to 60 are prohibited from leaving the country (Letter, 2022). An exception applies to fathers of three or more minor children. In addition, departure is possible for single fathers with young children and children with disabilities, as well as for men who are not fit to serve in the army for medical reasons.

In May, the Ukrainian authorities also made exemptions for non-conscripted athletes and humanitarian drivers. Some men who do not belong to these categories are trying to get around the ban.

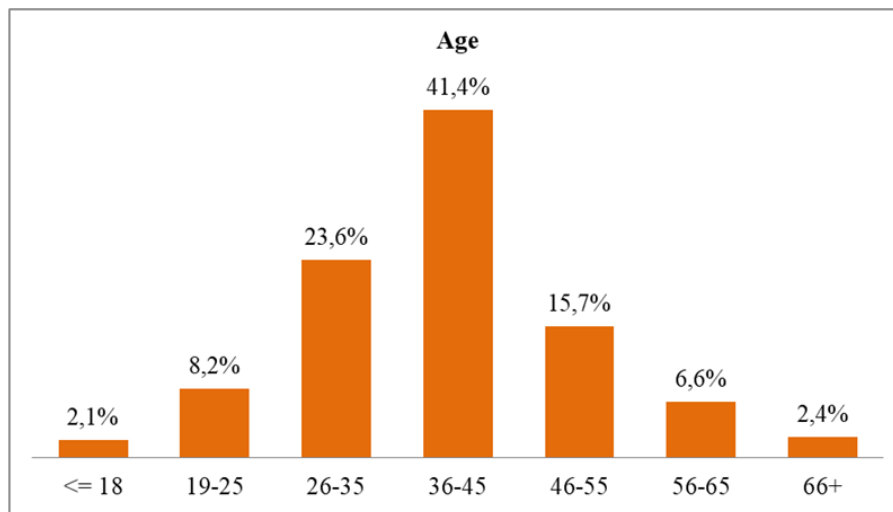


Fig. 2. Age Distribution, %

Source: author's data analysis.

We assume that such a distribution (fig. 2), similar to normal, is due to the fact that the majority of Ukrainian refugees in Germany are women of working age, with minor children and no grandchildren, which allows them to take an active position in solving issues of everyday life and have time to participate in the study.

2.2. Residence

As described earlier, the city of Konstanz is characterized by a difficult situation with the residential real estate market: demand many times exceeds supply. This situation is also reflected in the peculiarities of the living conditions of Ukrainian refugees in Germany (fig. 3): 21,5 % are currently at the first stage of refugee resettlement – a refugee camp; 19 % stay at the second stage – hostels; 14,8 % also live with German families, with relatives or friends – all three categories are characterized as «temporary housing» (55,3 %) and require further relocation to permanent housing. Many Ukrainians are looking for housing on their own or through social and city services. The problem of refugee crisis on the housing market in Poland was analyzed in (Trojanek, & Gluszak, 2022).

Due to the high competition in the residential real estate market in the region, respondents note the following problems with finding housing (div. fig. 4): 58,5 % cannot find housing at all, 4,9 % find premises unsuitable for living (basement or semi-basement premises, damp premises, moldy premises, etc.), 35 % find offers that are too expensive, 24,4 % are refused landlords due to lack of permanent employment and income or rental history in Germany, 6 % refuse housing due to the presence of animals.

Thus, Ukrainian refugees in the area of the city of Konstanz find themselves in a difficult situation due to the inability to find a permanent place of residence.

2.3. Child Care Facilities

A separate aspect of the life of Ukrainian refugees is the organization of the lives of children.

As noted earlier, according to German statistics, about a third of Ukrainian refugees are children. According to the data of our study, 27 % of Ukrainian refugees live with children under 6 years old and 45 % with children from 7 to 16 years old (fig. 5). For successful integration and subsequent employment of Ukrainian refugees, a holistic organization of the life of children in Germany is required: kindergartens, schools, additional sections and circles.

So, according to the data received, the majority of Ukrainian refugees are provided with a school for their children (80 % – (fig. 6)).

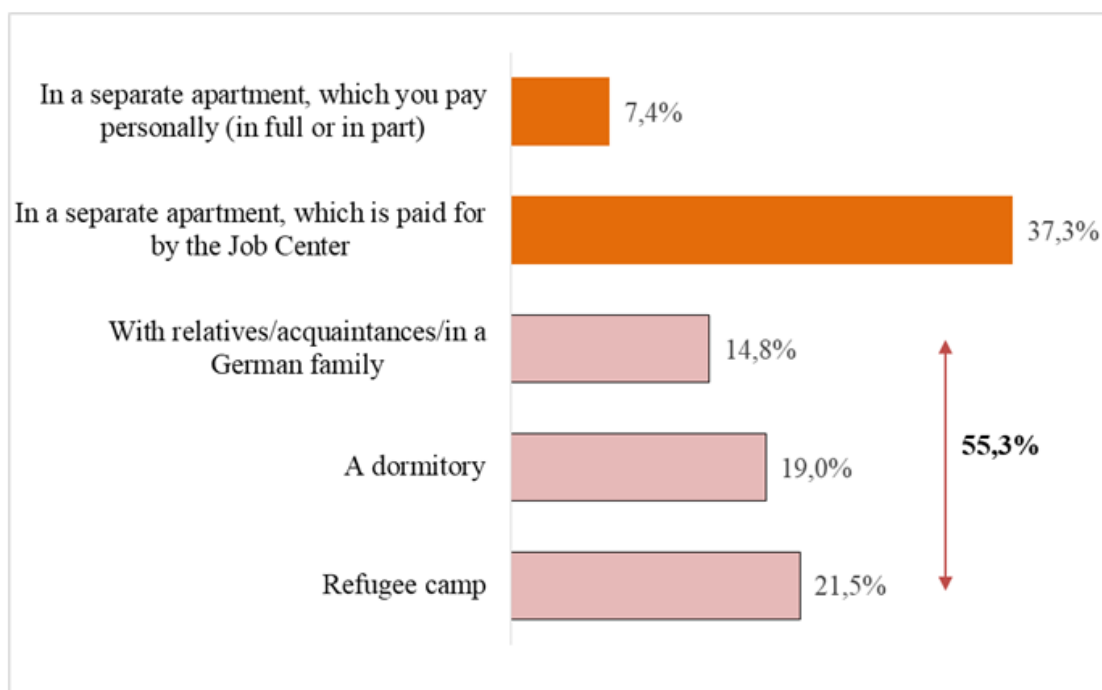


Fig. 3. Accommodation, %

Source: author's data analysis.

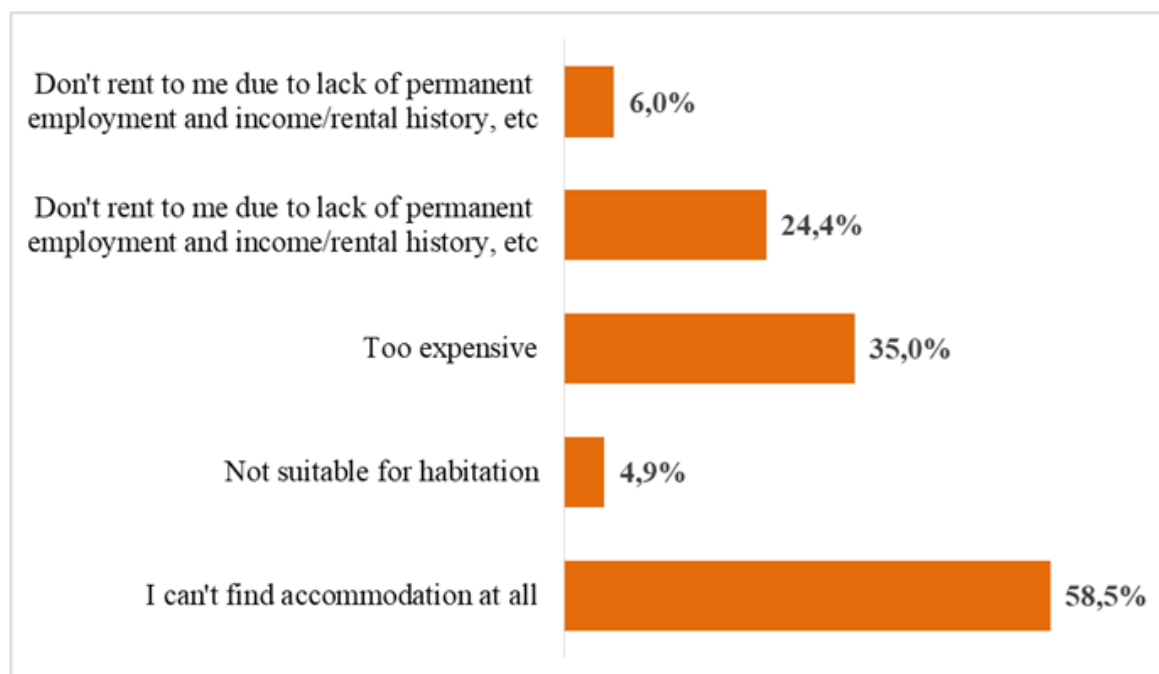


Fig. 4. Difficulties in Finding Separate Housing, %

Source: author's data analysis.

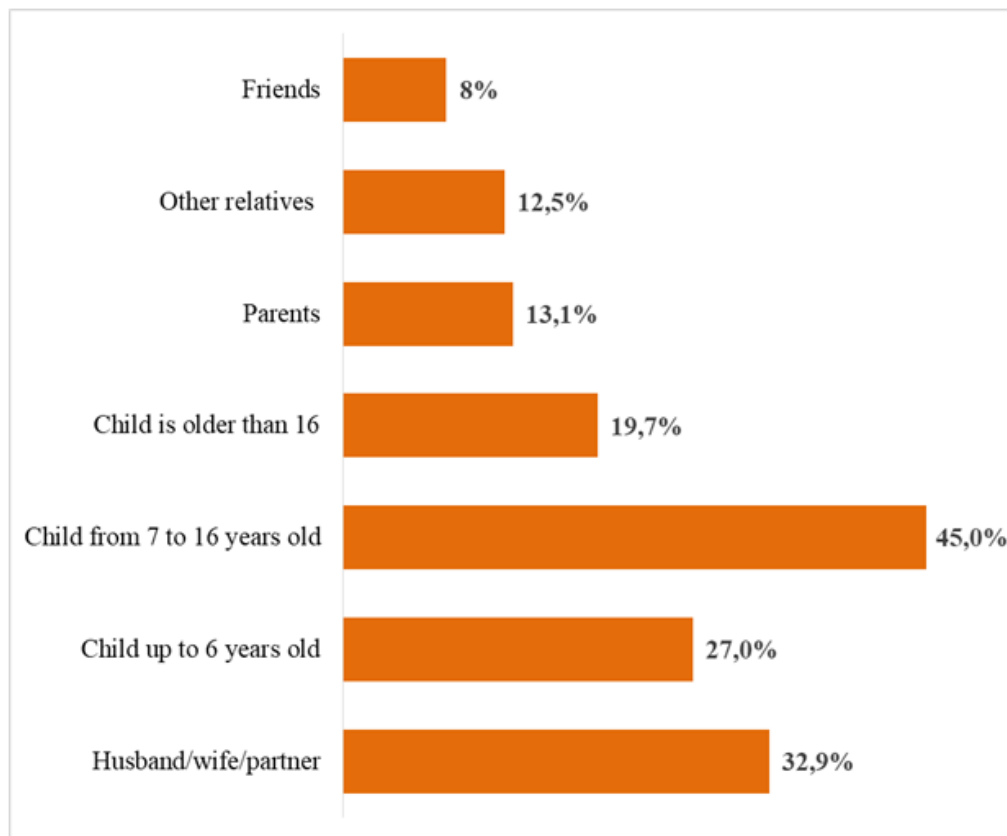


Fig. 5. *With whom Lives Respondents, %*

Source: author's data analysis.

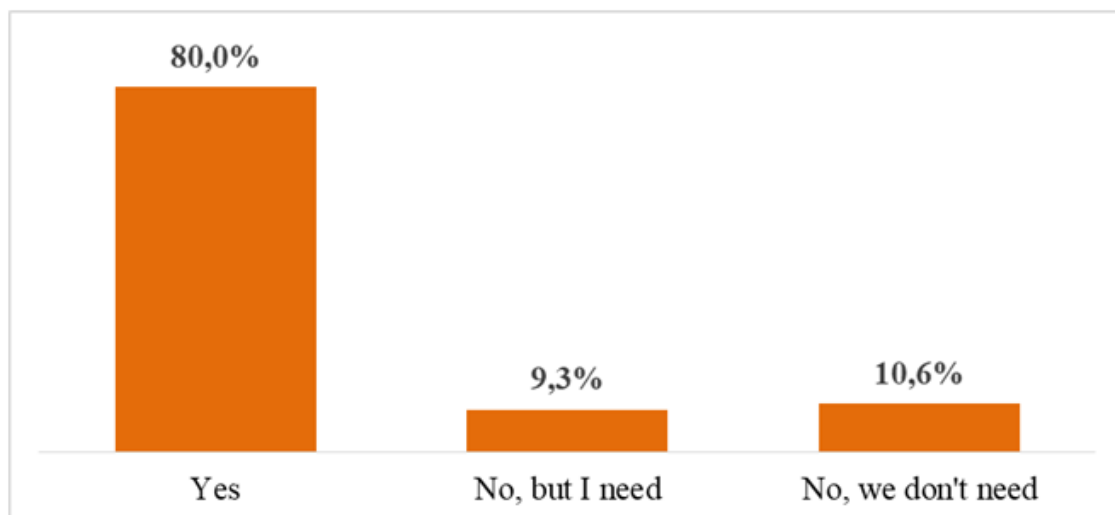


Fig. 6. *School Provided for Children, %*

Source: author's data analysis.

Less optimistic are the results regarding kindergartens - two thirds of the respondents say that they are not provided with kindergartens for their children (fig. 7). The district of Konstanz is characterized by a situation with a shortage of places in kindergartens. On the one hand, the high demand for kindergartens is associated with a large number of young scientists and university staff, as well as students, on the other hand, such categories of workers as nurses, teachers and kindergarten employees are often chosen the main place of work is neighboring Switzerland, where salaries for these categories of employment are several times higher than the level of Germany. All this led to the queue of more than 500 families in kindergartens at the beginning of 2022.

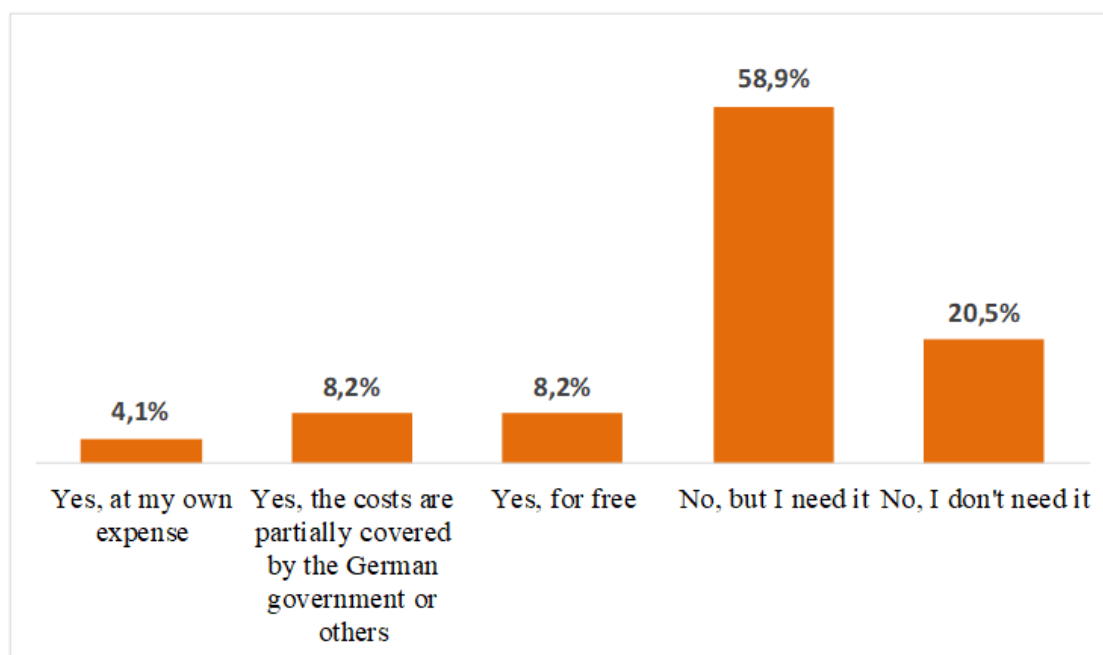


Fig. 7. Kindergarten Provided for Children, %

Source: author's data analysis.

For Ukrainian refugees with small children, the situation is complicated by the lack of support from family, friends and husband – in this situation, the level of stress increases, which affects all spheres of life.

2.4. Educational Level of Ukrainian Refugees

The professional structure, as well as the level of education, is considered by the German authorities in the field of migration, first of all, as a feature and a distinguishing feature of Ukrainians among other waves of war refugees in Germany. Never before, among the flow of military refugees in Germany, there were so many people with higher education (fig. 9) (57 % and 4,3 % have an academic degree), and also did not have such a number of people in its structure (fig. 8) employed in higher administrative work (5,5 %), as professionals (30,7 %) and employees (6,2 %).

For these categories of military refugees, it is necessary to organize alternative integration algorithms that involve the use of the potential of highly qualified specialists (doctors, engineers, scientists, programmers, etc.), including those with a low level of German language proficiency; offer them alternative schemes for teaching the language in the workplace; attach to working groups with knowledge of English, etc. So, for example, the level of English language proficiency at level A2 and above, according to our study, is 38,2 % (against 11,8 % German language proficiency at a similar level).

At the moment, 12,4 % of Ukrainian refugees are employed in the Konstanz region, of which only 3,9 % are employed in their specialty (fig. 10).

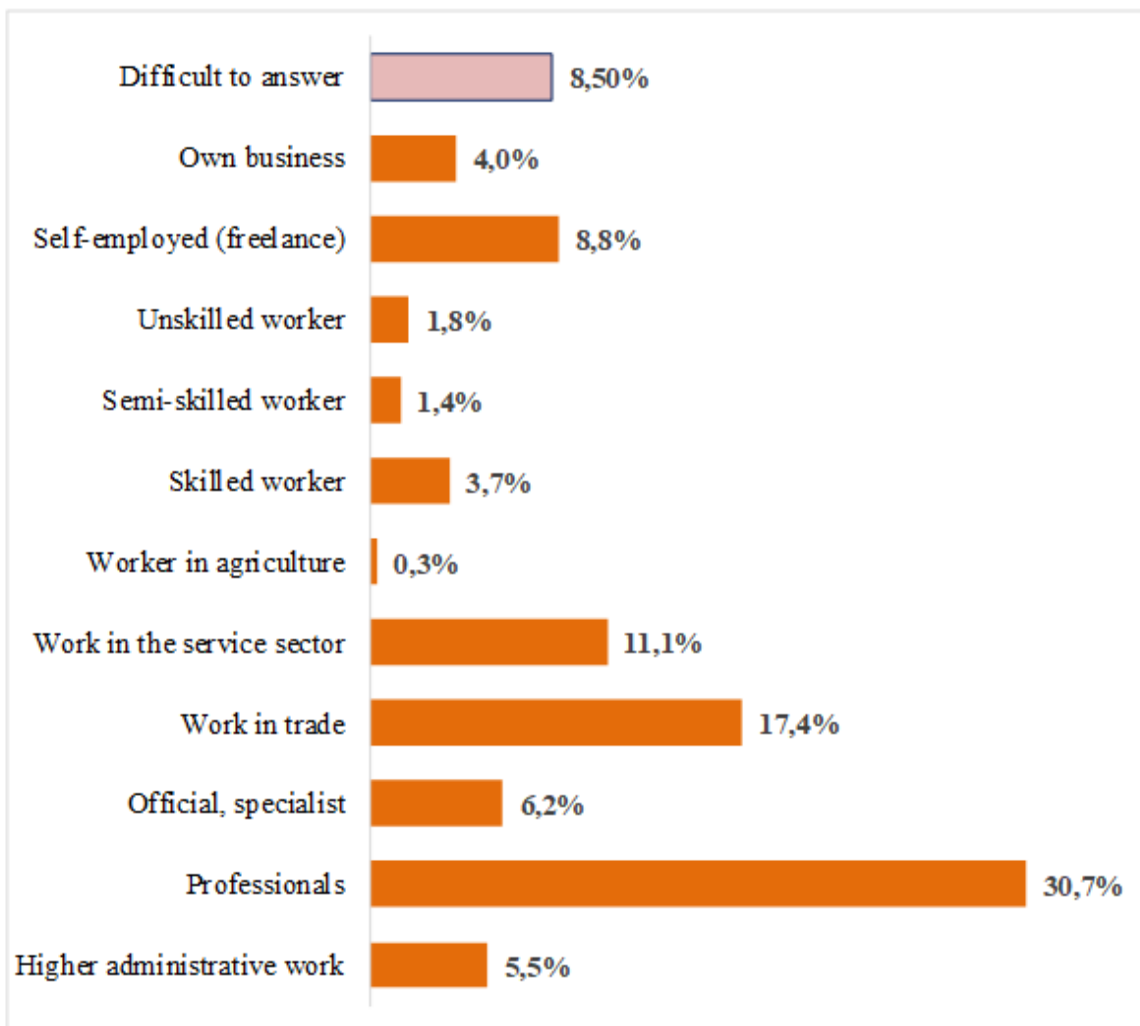


Fig. 8. Occupation in Ukraine, %

Source: author's data analysis.

2.5. Material Situation Before and After

As for the financial situation, an interesting result is the change in the material situation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany compared to their situation in Ukraine before the war. And here we see the filling of the category «Money is enough only for food» due to the almost complete absence of the filling of the categories «Purchasing most durable goods does not cause difficulties» and «Money is enough to deny yourself absolutely nothing» (fig. 11).

This means that people with above-average incomes have somewhat lowered their social status (fig. 12). This process can be explained by the fact that about 81% of Ukrainian refugees in Konstanz (fig. 10) are only on social benefits for unemployment. These payments are aimed precisely at covering the basic necessities.

Also, we find it interesting, the decrease in the level of the answer «Difficult to answer» from 22 % to 7 % – this may be due to the fact that in Germany it has become easier for Ukrainian refugees to determine their material status or there is no need to hide unofficial income due to its absence, or difficulty of identification.

Despite the downward trend in social status, 45 % of Ukrainian refugees in the Konstanz region say they would like to stay in Germany forever (fig. 13).

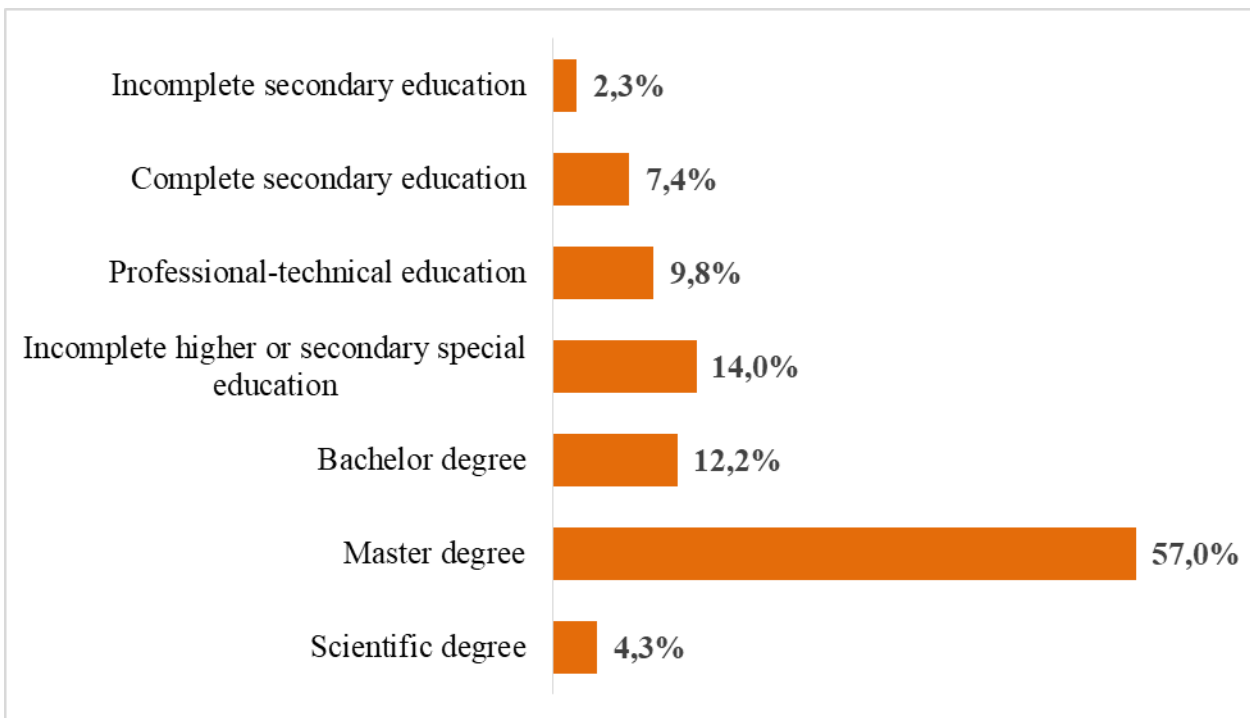


Fig. 9. Education, %

Source: author's data analysis.

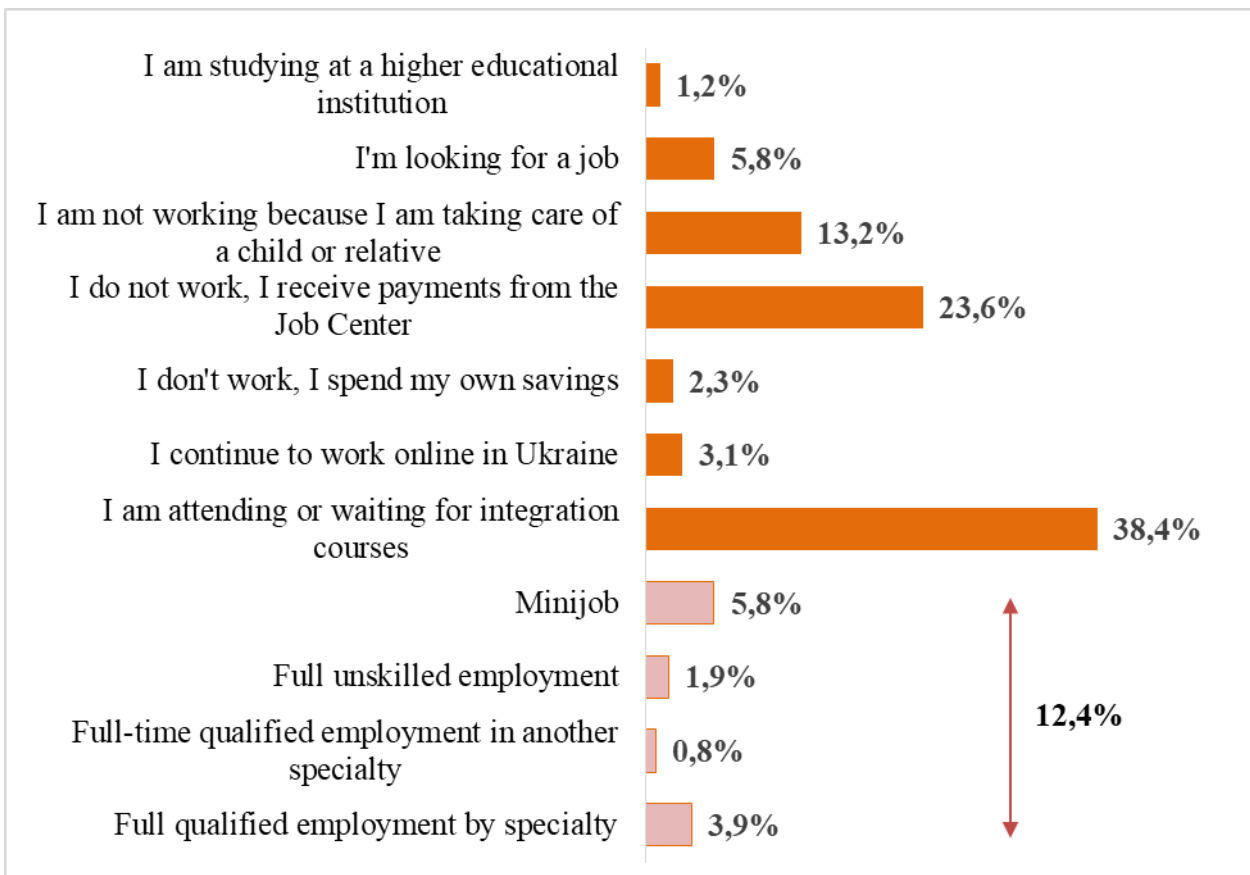


Fig. 10. Occupation in Germany, %

Source: author's data analysis.

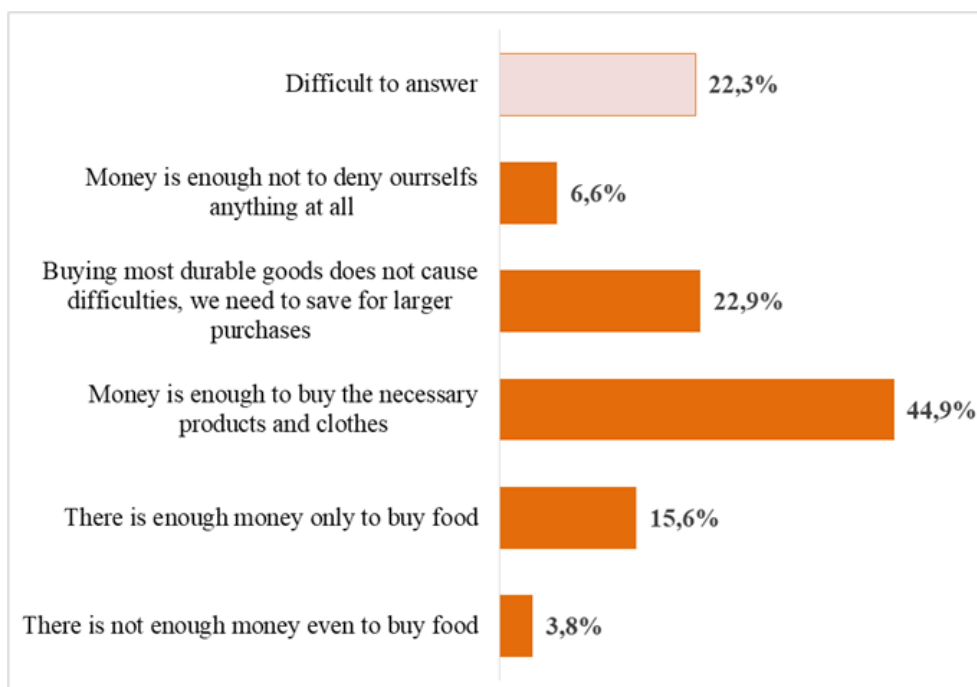


Fig. 11. *The Material Situation of Family in Ukraine Before War, %*
Source: author's data analysis.

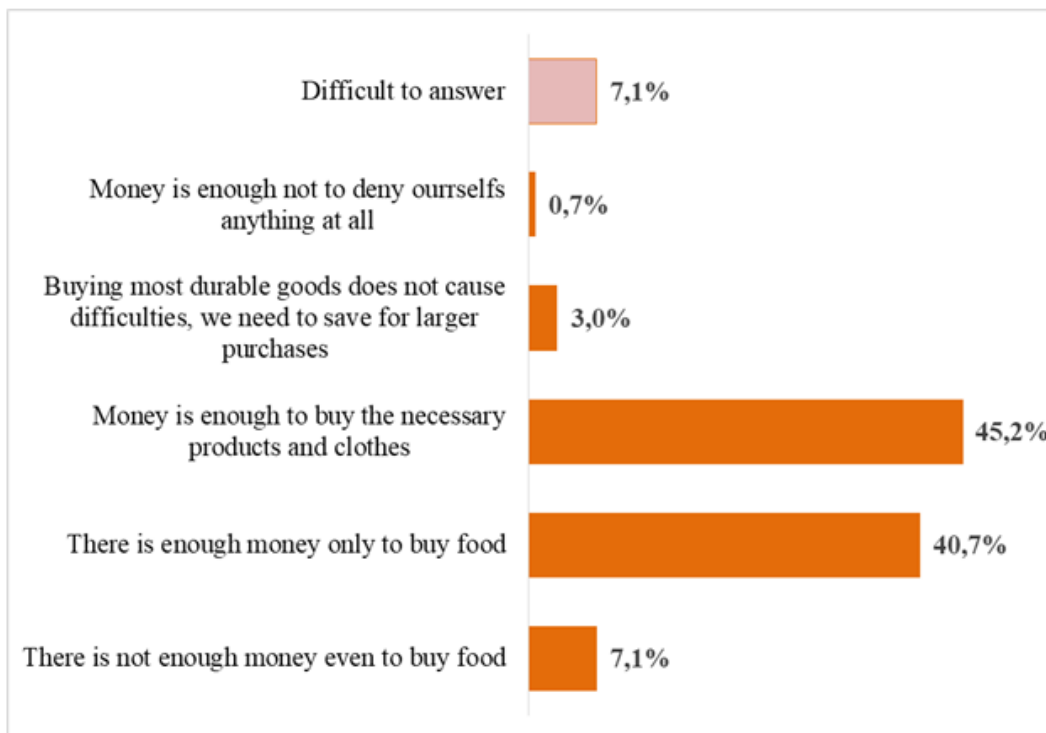


Fig. 12. *The Material Situation of Family in Germany, %*
Source: author's data analysis.

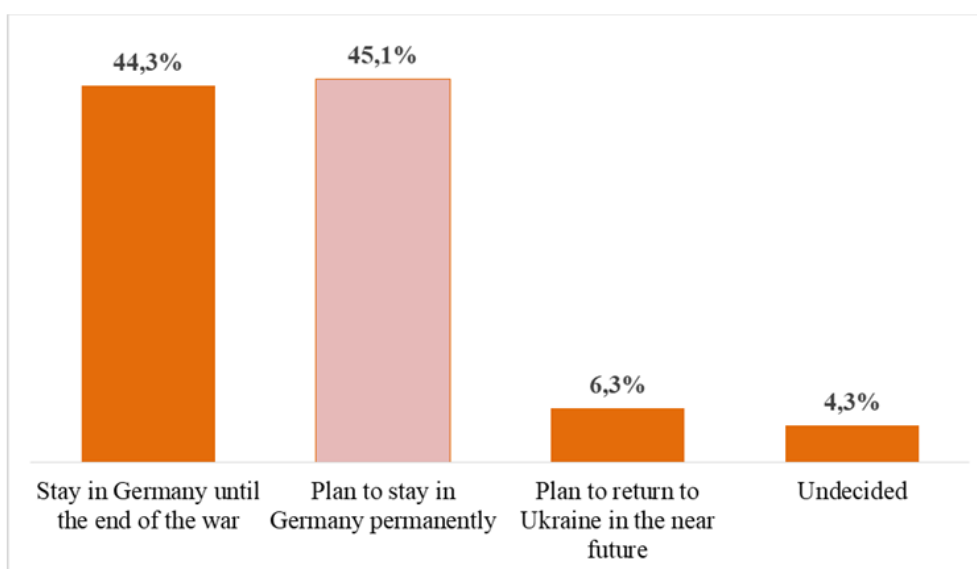


Fig. 13. *Plans to Stay in Germany, %*

Source: author's data analysis.

An interesting methodological feature in the process of a quantitative web-based survey of internally displaced persons from Ukraine was the high level of answers to the open question of personal problems, experiences or questions related to life in Germany. This question was optional on the questionnaire and was the last one. Respondents gave great feedback on this issue - the answers are detailed, the problems and experiences are described in detail. 114 questionnaires out of 376 have answers to an open question.

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Thus, the study helped to describe the main features of the life of Ukrainian refugees in Germany (on the example of the city of Konstanz). The main methodological results of the study were the active filling of an open question in a third of the questionnaires, and as a result of the pre-test, a high level of sensitivity for Ukrainian refugees to questions about income, financial situation and housing conditions before the start of the war was revealed. The results of the analysis of open questions will form the basis for additional research by qualitative methods.

Among the problems that Ukrainian refugees had to face in the Konstanz region, the main ones are problems with finding permanent housing and getting a place in kindergartens. Both problems are typical for the region, have existed for many years and the migration crisis has only exacerbated them. Accordingly, the solution of these problems requires a dialogue between the government, social organizations and representatives of Ukrainian refugees. The purpose of our study, among other things, is to promote cooperation between these actors on the basis of reliable data from a survey of Ukrainian refugees on the current situation.

A study of the professional structure of Ukrainian refugees showed that they are employed in higher administrative work (5,5 %), as professionals (30,7 %) and employees (6,2 %). This means that among Ukrainian refugees there is a high proportion of highly qualified specialists, whose integration may involve integration algorithms that are alternative to those in Germany.

Plans for further stay in Germany or return to Ukraine deserve special attention – for example, 45 % of respondents noted that they plan to stay in Germany forever. This information also brings new challenges to the country's migration policy and requires further discussion.

In order to compare the life situation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany, we will conduct an additional web-based research using the same methodology in another region of Germany. We also plan to conduct research using qualitative methods (in-depth interviews) with the aim of a deeper study of the motivation for migration, adaptation features and related problems.

This study is valuable not only as a separate survey of the life of Ukrainian refugees in Germany, but can also be used in further larger German or European comparative studies to research the dynamics of changing the situation and problems of Ukrainian refugees.

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