


Political institutions and society reaction to the Ukrainian war refugees in Romania

 Cristian Incaltarau ^a✉, Alexandru Mocernac ^b

^aAlexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania; ^bBabes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Abstract

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has triggered significant asylum flows, with Romania emerging as a primary corridor for Ukrainian refugees due to its extensive border shared with Ukraine. Against this backdrop, the study examines the actions taken by the Romanian Government and NGOs in response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees. Relying on documentary research, our findings revealed that most refugees sought temporary protection, while only a minority also pursued asylum. Although the Romanian state's response to the refugee crisis was effective, it faced initial delays, indicating both centralized power and unpreparedness for unexpected events. However, the civil society's active involvement compensated for governmental shortcomings. Nonetheless, for a smoother immigration and refugee integration process and a swift reaction, clarifying the current legislation in Romania is essential. Furthermore, the strong EU citizen support for both a common European Policy on migration and a common European Asylum system indicate that this is an opportune moment for such discussions.

Keywords: refugees, Ukraine, immigration, civil society, public opinion

1. Introduction

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022 led Europe towards facing one of the most significant refugee movements in recent history. Ukraine's neighbours, including Romania, experienced important hurdles regarding border management, as well as in terms of legislation and humanitarian support. This was particularly important for Romania, a country which has been facing large emigration flows over the last two decades and which is still at the beginning of a migration transition pattern experienced by other countries along with development (e.g. Zelinsky, 1971; Skeldon, 1997). With limited experience in attracting and integrating immigrants, over the last several years, Romania has become a key entry point to Europe on the Balkan route with both regular and irregular flows surging. The number of asylum applications

✉ Cristian Incaltarau, Researcher, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania; e-mail: cristian.incaltarau@uaic.ro.

increased from 2,590 in 2019 to 12,355 in 2021 (Eurostat, 2024a). The reported migration/refugee flows crossing/attempting to irregularly cross the Romanian border also increased 9.3 times between 2019 and 2021, from over 9,767 to 91,014 persons caught by the Romanian Border Police (Romanian Border Police, 2021; 2022). However, while the irregular migration flows seemed to be halving in 2022 (dropping to about 44 thousand) the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine has also triggered important flows of Ukrainian citizens (Romanian Border Police, 2023a). An evaluation of the Romanian Border Police estimates that starting from 10 February 2022 (pre-conflict period), until 1 October 2023, 6,244,726¹ Ukrainian citizens entered Romania (Romanian Border Police, 2023b). There were about 4935 asylum applications from Ukrainian citizens in 2022 and about 5 thousand Ukrainian citizens detected in illicitly crossing/crossing attempts of the Romanian border (Romanian Border Police, 2023b).

The recent context has forced Romania to refine its political and legal basis for the reception of refugees, as well as to facilitate their integration into the Romanian society. Given that Romania's experience as a host country for both economic immigrants and refugee is still limited (Bejan, 2021), it is interesting to evaluate the response of both political institutions and society to the new migration context. The concept of the 'migration cycle' emphasizes the general idea that a country's society and legal system adapt to a new situation and develop mechanisms to manage new or evolving migration circumstances (Fassmann and Reeger, 2012). Besides the refugee flows, pushed by the different conflicts in the source countries, there are also important pull forces exerted from the Romanian domestic economic context which attract more and more economic immigrants. While the current labour shortage hinges the potential of the Romanian economy (PwC, 2023), it becomes clear that the Romanian institutions and society are in urgent need to adapt to a future immigration context. Consequently, as also argued by the domestic policy approach within the international immigration policies (Meyers, 2000), the internal context also plays a fundamental role in shaping the design of immigration policies.

Considering the new emerging migration context in Romania, this study endeavours' to investigate the manner in which the Romanian state is addressing the influx of Ukrainian refugees. Furthermore, it delves into the reactions and efforts of both the Romanian authorities and civil society in addressing the flight of these refugees affected by the conflict in Ukraine. To successfully achieve our goal, we have developed specific research questions focused on identifying the elements that have aided in accommodating Ukrainian refugees: How did Romania handle migration prior to February 24, 2022 and how well-equipped was it to address the Ukrainian refugee crisis? What were the factors that prompted alterations in

¹ One needs to mention that the UNHCR continuously updating data estimated about 5.49 million entries of Ukrainian citizens in Romania, but also 3.36 million border crossing from Romania to Ukraine (UNHCR, 2024).

Romania's migration policy post-February 24, 2022? How effective have the measures taken to manage the significant influx of Ukrainian refugees been?

In methodological terms, the paper relies on documentary research that involves the exploration of a variety of sources, such as journal articles, working papers from universities, reports from governmental organizations and NGOs, and documents from international bodies like the UN. In addition, the study gathers secondary data from the Romanian Institute for Statistics, Eurostat database, or the Eurobarometer to assess the dynamics of the migration and refugee flows in Romania and the population's opinion regarding these issues.

In order to respond to these questions, our attention will be directed towards understanding the traits of the Ukrainian diaspora in Romania, both prior to and following February 2022. We will also examine the response of the Romanian Government and its civil society to the Ukrainian refugee crisis that began on February 24, 2022. Additionally, we will explore how Ukrainian refugees were viewed by the public opinion of the Romanian citizens.

2. The Romanian context in dealing with migration and refugees

2.1. Migration and labour market dynamics

The evolution of the immigration policy is often strongly correlated with the migration context of a country. Subsequent transformations triggered by development, such as the demographic transition, urbanization, or economic dynamics, which are among the main determinants of migration, are also shaping the migration policy (de Haas, 2010). Romania makes no exception and understanding the particularity of the Romanian context is essential for explaining the immigration/refugee policy dynamics.

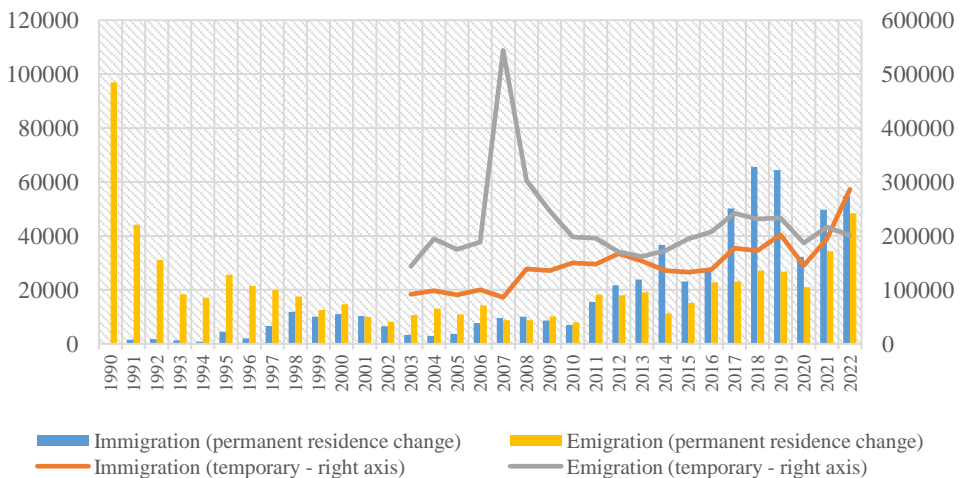
The post-communist period triggered important structural shifts in the Romanian economy, leading to mixed effects on the labour market. The migration and labour market interaction led to distinct evolutions (Incaltarau et al., 2021). During the early transition years over the 90s, the pathway of the Romanian economy was mostly characterized by recession. The privatization of state-owned companies was rather slow, but it still led to an abundant labour supply and pushed unemployment to high levels.

Unlike the exploratory migration flows that occurred during the early transition years, the EU membership perspective and the simplification of the Schengen Area access for Romanian citizens allowed the migration outflows to surge during the 2000s. This is also visible in Figure 1, where temporary emigration reached 544 thousand in 2007 and 303 thousand in 2008. The upsurge of temporary emigrants from 188 thousand in 2006 to 544 in 2007 is also related to the Romanian accession to the EU on the 1st of January 2007. Some of the EU member states continued to apply transnational restrictions for Romanian citizens' access to

the labour market up to 7 years after the accession. However, other states liberalized it ever since 2007, which determined a formalization of the existing informal work agreements.

Along with the international migration outflows, the ‘reruralisation’, triggered by the high urban unemployment and the high inflation, also ‘drained out the unemployment pool’, and the exceeding labour supply turned into a labour shortage during the mid-2000s. The Great Recession tempered both labour demand and migration, as it also reduced the attractiveness of destination countries. However, the labour shortage started to intensify again along with the economic recovery. This is also noticeable in the measures implemented by the Romanian Government which tried to encourage the return of Romanian citizens working abroad (The Romanian Government, 2008, February 20).

Figure 1. International migration flows dynamics by year and typology (permanent and temporary flows)



Note: Emigrants by legal residence change are the persons (Romanian citizens) who emigrate abroad. Permanent migration measures migration flows that translate into permanent residence change. Temporary migration is measuring flows that imply temporary residence changes for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months.

Source: Romanian Institute for Statistics, 2024

In 2020, the Romanian diaspora was estimated to reach around 4 mil. persons, the equivalent of approximately 20 percent of the Romanian population (UN, 2020). Along with migration, the labour supply was also eroded by aging² and a relatively

² Working age population share aged between 15 and 64 years decreased from 68.2% in 2000 to 64.3% in 2022 (Eurostat, 2023a).

low employment rate³, which exacerbated the labour shortage the Romanian economy is facing. The desperate need for labour is also revealed by the evolution of the work permit requests for foreign workers made by the private sector which increased 24 times over the last 6 years, reaching 138 thousand in 2022. The requests overreached the annual quota of work permits for immigrants admitted to the labour market set by the Romanian Government (100 thousand in 2022⁴ and the same threshold was adopted for 2023).

The struggle to recruit new employees is also enlarging the gap between the potential and actual economic output. The estimations are pointing out a labour shortage of 145,000 people in 2022 causing a loss in productivity of about 4.4 billion Euro⁵ (PwC, 2023). Against this backdrop, in line with the migration transition theories (e.g. Zelinsky, 1971; Skeldon, 1997; Fassmann & Reeger, 2012), Romania seems to be consolidating its shift to a positive net migration balance. Figure 1 reveals a migration transition pattern for both permanent and temporary migration flows.

2.2. Legal grounds and friendliness of the migration/refugee policy

In line with the labour market needs, the legal framework in Romania and the immigration policies need to adapt as well to the newly occurring migration context. In Romania, the management of migration exhibits a high degree of centralization, with the General Inspectorate for Immigration – Directorate for Asylum and Integration (IGI), which functions under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior (MAI), serving as the principal state body that oversees all migration matters, ranging from integration services to border control and asylum-related procedures. Unlike its Western European counterparts, Romania's approach to migration management lacks a functional multi-layered structure involving national, regional, and municipal levels (Bejan, 2021).

When it comes to legislation, both migration and refugee flows are already regulated. In terms of labour mobility within the EU common market, the national legal framework is mainly represented by Government's Emergency Ordinance no. 102/2005 regarding the free movement on the territory of Romania of the citizens of the member states of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and the citizens of the Swiss Confederation, with subsequent amendments and additions (The Romanian Government, 2005, July 14).

With regard to the migration of foreigners (citizens outside the EU, EEA, and the Swiss Confederation), this is regulated by the Government's Emergency

³ In 2022, the employment rate was estimated to reach 63.1% in Romania, compared with 69.8% in EU27 (Eurostat, 2023b).

⁴ This figure was supplemented to reach almost 109 thousand work permits granted in 2022.

⁵ The estimations rely on an average labour productivity rate of 30,000 Euro/worker, without accounting for differences in terms of economic sectors, which may display different productivity ratios.

Ordinance no. 194/2002 regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania (The Romanian Government, 2022, December 12), republished, with subsequent amendments and additions. There is also the Government's Ordinance no. 25/2014 (The Romanian Government, 2014, August 26) regarding the employment and secondment of foreigners on the territory of Romania and for the modification and completion of some normative acts regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania, as well as Ordinance no. 25 (The Romanian Government, 2016, August 24) to amend certain immigration laws.

Also, asylum is regulated by Law No. 122/2006 on asylum which establishes the legal status of the foreign nationals who are applying for protection in Romania and of persons granted subsidiary or international protection. Government Ordinance no. 1521/2006 (The Romanian Government, 2006, September 13) to approve the methodological norms for the enforcement of Law no 122/2006 regulates the rights, obligations, and assistance for asylum seekers and persons granted protection (The Romanian Parliament, 2006, May 4).

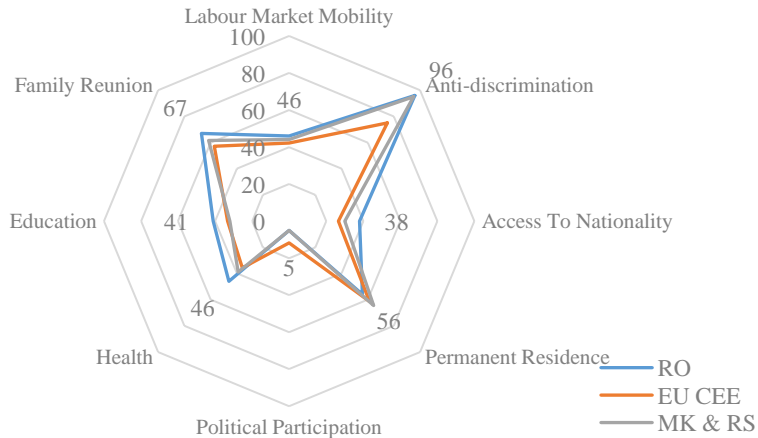
The Government's Ordinance No. 44/2004 on social integration ensures that the beneficiaries of international and subsidiary protection have access to employment, housing, medical and social assistance, social security, and education (The Romanian Government, 2004, January 29). It also established an integration programme consisting of cultural adaptation activities, counselling, and Romanian language classes. There is also the Government's Ordinance no. 1483/2004 (The Romanian Government, 2004, September 9) to approve methodological norms for the enforcement of Government's Ordinance no. 44/2004. It also describes the role of state institutions and local public administrations.

When it comes to the temporary protection of the refugees, the Romanian Asylum Act (The Romanian Government, 2006, May 4) ensures access to the asylum procedure to any foreign national or stateless person who is on Romanian territory or at the border if the person manifests his or her intention to request protection from the Romanian state (verbally or in writing) (ECRE, 2023). Within this law, regulations are set forth governing foreigners applying for international protection in Romania, delineating the terms for validation, exclusion, and cessation of temporary protection. The General Inspectorate for Immigration – Directorate for Asylum and Integration (IGI) needs to register asylum applications within a maximum of 3 working days if the application was made within this institution, 6 working days if the application was made with another associated authority or 10 working days in the case of a mass influx of applications for international protection.

Overall, the migration integration policies in Romania are characterized as *halfway favourable* according to the MIPEX index, with a score of 49 from a maximum of 100 (see Figure 2). The score is slightly higher than that of the newer EU member states from Central and Eastern European countries (EU CEE) - that display a score of 43 - or the score of North Macedonia (42), but lower than Kosovo (50). Similar to numerous CEE countries, immigrants residing in Romania enjoy

basic rights and halfway favourable long-term security, but they still face unequal opportunities. According to the MIPEX assessment, immigrants in Romania appear to be encountering significant barriers when it comes to engaging in politics and gaining nationality.

Figure 2. Migrant integration policy assessment according to MIPEX index



Source: Solano and Huddleston (2020) - Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020

Notes: EU CEE refers to the newer EU Member States from Central and Eastern Europe. MK stands for North Macedonia and RS for Kosovo.

The future pathway adopted by Romania also hints towards a more favourable approach to migration. By embracing a motto aiming at tolerance and integration (“Migration is a process to be managed and not a problem to be solved”), Romania has adopted a national immigration strategy for the period 2021 – 2024 (The Romanian Government, 2021) and two subsequent Action Plans (2021-2022 and 2023-2024). The National Strategy establishes the principles and guidelines for the regulation of national policies regarding admission, stay, and labour market integration of immigrants, as well as granting some forms of protection to people in need and, subsequently, their integration into Romanian society. Overall, the strategy expresses the ambition to attain efficient management of the migration phenomenon by strengthening the response capacity of the state to future immigration/refugee flows, consolidating the national asylum system, and acquiring the capabilities needed to implement policies in the field of migration, asylum and integration of foreigners.

3. Theoretical frameworks explaining the evolution of migration policies

The literature emphasizes that migration policy design is an ongoing process closely related to the migration context. Undoubtedly, the Romanian state's capacity to host and integrate refugees is closely intertwined with its past encounters in managing immigration and promoting the assimilation of newcomers within Romanian society. Once the specific legislation has been put in place for immigration, this may facilitate refugee reception and integration as well. The migration experience displayed by different countries along with development, such as South Korea (DeWind et al., 2012) or Southern European states (King et al., 1997; King, 2015), emphasizes that former source countries have experienced a migration transition pattern to become countries of destination (a migration shift from net sending to a net receiving status). Whilst the same trajectory is envisioned for other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (see Fihel et al., 2023; Incaltarau and Simionov, 2018), these need to strengthen their legal framework regarding migration/refugee inflows.

In light of this context, the first fringe of theoretical models grounding this study include the migration transition models. These argue that, on the one hand, social modernisation is expected to induce a diversification of human mobility patterns (Zelinsky, 1971). Similarly, Skeldon (1997) further elaborated Zelinsky's work by applying the transitional model to local, regional, and global levels by defining more development tiers. He argued that mobility is rather regional than global and that specific mobility patterns are associated with the different development tiers that characterize the regions (old and new core regions, core extensions and potential cores, labour frontiers, and resource niche). However, on the other hand, the dynamics of this transition largely depend on the way the catching-up regions manage to embrace development. As also argued by the world systems theory, migration is a process that naturally occurs along with the disruptions and inequalities that characterize the core-periphery structure of the capitalist world economy (Wallerstein, 1974). Along with the transformations induced by development, immigration may also trigger some significant changes as well. According to the migration cycle theory, amidst the immigration flows, the state sees itself facing a new migratory context that needs to be handled (Fassmann & Reeger, 2012). Whilst in the early stages, emigration is the dominating flow and neither does public opinion, nor the legal system pay too much attention to immigration; during the adaptation stage, public acceptance grows and, at the same time, efforts are made to address immigration through legal channels.

A second fringe of literature relates to international immigration policies (Meyers, 2000). In line with the domestic policy approach (as well as the migration cycle approach), the internal and international context is also shaping the design of immigration policies. In Romania, the labour market shortage has forced the Romanian Government to facilitate foreign labour recruitment. For instance, the Emergency

Ordinance no. 194/2002 regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania required they be paid at least the equivalent of the national average salary in Romania (The Romanian Government, 2002, December 12). The increasing need for labour made the Government allow foreign labour to be paid at the minimum wage level (The Romanian Government, 2007, June 20) and thus boost foreign recruitment. During the financial crisis that erupted in 2008, a measure was enacted to protect native workers. This measure was reversed in 2011 (The Romanian Parliament, 2011, July 11) but, reinstated in 2018 (The Romanian Parliament, 2018, November 5).

Along with the internal economic conditions, the domestic political environment might also play a role in shaping immigration policy. According to the domestic politics models (Meyers, 2000), the immigration approach is the result of negotiations among diverse societal interests that influence the state apparatus. Whereas ethnic minorities account for more than 9 percent of the population (Population and Housing Census, 2022) and they are represented in the Romanian Parliament⁶, they had the leverage to elaborate legislative initiatives and support the rights of ethnic minorities. This might facilitate the openness of the Romanian society towards the foreign population.

Besides the national context, the evolution of migration policies is subject to some international impacts that cannot be ignored. The globalization theories emphasize the global influences on immigration policy exerted by the internationalization of the economies, as well as by the establishment of an international human rights regime backed by global organizations advocating for its enforcement. As a member of the EU, Romania had to adopt the *acquis communautaire*. It also needs to actively transpose the EU directives into the national law. In addition, Romania is a UN member and has accessed the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol. As such, it had to elaborate specific legislation regulating the labour mobility from other EU Members, immigration, as well as refugee flows in order to be able to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons.

In a nutshell, both the national and international circumstances explain the forces shaping the legal framework in Romania and the evolution of its immigration/refugee policies. As also hinted by the migration transition theories, a newly occurring migration context, such as the acute urban shortage or the Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war, may push traditional sending countries like Romania towards becoming receiving countries.

⁶ Each party and cultural association of ethnic minorities in Romania is provided with a seat in the Chamber of Deputies by the Romanian Constitution.

4. The characteristics of the Ukrainian diaspora in Romania

The border region of Romania and Ukraine was historically situated at the crossroads of Europe's great empires - Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman, which caused a lot of border instability and important migration flows, that made some of the regions become a *mélange* of different cultures and ethnicities (e.g. see the case of Bukovina in Bureiko et al. (2021) or the case of the history of Bessarabia in Cusco et al., 2017). The Ukrainian diaspora in Romania holds the status of a national minority and is entitled to all the rights extended by the Romanian state to its various minority groups. With a population of 45,835 individuals, as indicated by the most recent census conducted in 2022 (Population and Housing Census, 2022), the Ukrainian community stands as the third-largest minority in Romania. As a result of this demographic significance, the Ukrainian community is officially represented before public authorities by the Union of Ukrainians in Romania and holds representation in the Romanian Parliament.

Ukrainians residing in Romania are successfully integrated into the Romanian society, benefiting from various facilities provided by the state. These include opportunities for education in their mother tongue, the ability to communicate with central authorities in their mother tongue (where the percentage of ethnic Ukrainians exceeds 20 percent)⁷ or dedicated spaces within state education for individuals of Ukrainian ethnicity.

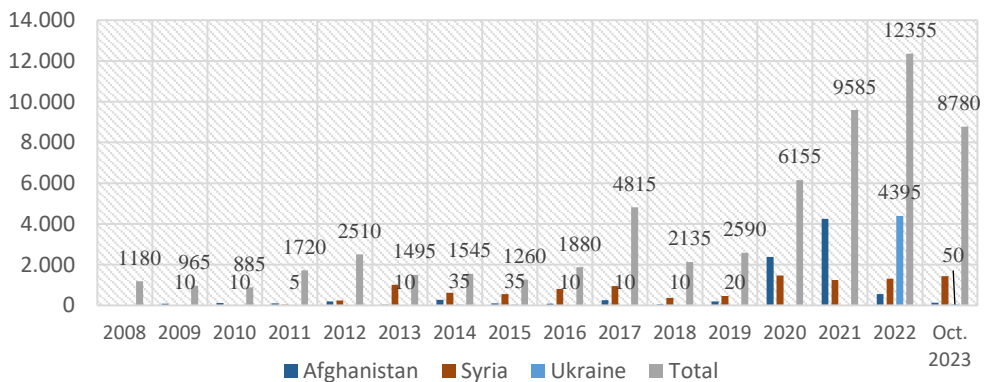
In order to better understand the prospects for the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania due to the war initiated by the Russian Federation, it is necessary to understand their profile. The UNHCR's study, focusing on profiling Ukrainian refugees in 10 countries, has successfully identified the main characteristics of the Ukrainian refugees settled in Romania. The study found that 85% of the respondents were female, with an average age of 45 years and that 94% of them applied for Temporary Protection in Romania (UNHCR, 2023). Additionally, 84% had attained some form of higher education and 48% were employed in Ukraine before the conflict but only 35% of the respondents are currently employed in the host country (UNHCR, 2023). The high percentage of females is expected given that men can only leave Ukraine under special conditions. However, the high percentage of respondents who have completed higher education in Ukraine reveals the need to adapt integration policies for Ukrainian refugees in Romania. The recognition of diplomas and their professionalization should be considered in the medium and long term. On the other hand, the relatively small percentage of people who managed to find a job by the time of the study indicates a difficulty in adaptation, perhaps highlighting a lack of intervention by the Romanian state.

When looking at the evolution of the refugee application, the recent surge becomes noticeable (Figure 3). If during the 2008-2016 period, the number of

⁷ The Romanian Government (2019, July 3).

refugee requests remained below two thousand, the conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine pushed the number of asylum requests to almost 5 thousand in 2017⁸, 9 thousand in 2021⁹ and 12 thousand in 2022. The number was kept high in 2023, with almost 8.8 thousand applications being submitted by October 2023. Whilst the number of asylum applications from Ukraine was negligible before the conflict¹⁰, the number increased to more than 4 thousand in 2022. While the Ukrainian citizens were benefiting from temporary protection since March 2022 and they may also have applied for gaining a refugee status. Thus, while the number of asylum applications only reached 78,743 by February 2024, the number of temporary protected Ukrainian citizens reaches 157,222 (UNHCR Operational Data Portal, 2024).

Figure 3. Asylum applications reported by Romania by citizenship of the applicant and year



Source: Eurostat, 2024a

Nevertheless, despite the significant flows, the number of Ukrainian war refugees staying in Romania remains rather low¹¹. In terms of labour market integration, there are just 6,954 Ukrainian citizens being placed on the labour market¹² since the start of the Russian military aggression (Ministry of Labour and

⁸ More than half are for the citizens of Iraq amidst the war between Iraq and its allies and the Islamic State.

⁹ Amidst the US and the Taliban agreement on the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan by April 2021, and the immediate return to power of the Taliban in 2021 (NATO, 2022), Afghan asylum requests in Romania were dominant in 2020 and 2021.

¹⁰ There seem to be no applications from Ukrainian citizens in 2020 and 2021.

¹¹ A hint for the temporary plans relating Romania also comes from the less than 100 property registrations in favour of Ukrainian citizens according to the data sent by the National Agency for Cadastre and Real Estate Advertising at the request of HotNews (2023).

¹² One needs to mention that, according to the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), only 1,890 Ukrainian citizens were placed on the labour market as a result of the employment

Social Solidarity, 2023). Given the large labour shortage the Romanian labour market is facing, more efforts of the Romanian institutions are needed to ease labour market integration by facilitating their access to employers or by helping them deal with different barriers such as language or child care (Deliu & Trifan, 2023). Studies regarding the future intentions of the Ukrainian citizens in Romania have shown that their interest for staying in Romania, even if the war ends, is not negligible. In 2022, about 42% of Ukrainian citizens prefer to stay in Romania, 31% plan to return to Ukraine and just 16% aim to relocate to another host nation (UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, 2022). In the same line, in 2023, 39% of citizens from Ukraine have future plans to stay in Romania, even after the conflict ends, indeterminately or permanently (Deliu & Trifan, 2023).

The increasing pace of applications also increased the pressure on the Romanian institutions. Between 2008 and October 2023, there were about 60 thousand applications submitted (12 thousand in 2022 and about 9 thousand in the first ten months of 2023 – see the yearly distribution in Figure 3) and just about half of them received a decision¹³. When analysing the number of asylum applications which received a decision, the approval rate reached approximately a third (31%). The three main sources displayed in Figure 4 represent only about 32% of the processed applications, but around 63% of the positive decisions. One needs to notice the low approval rate (in the first instance) within the application from Afghanistan (18%) (Figure 4).

In terms of gender distribution, the share of women applications is 4.3 times lower compared to males. The share of women applying for asylum is the lowest among citizens from Afghanistan, namely 6%. Yet, when looking at the analysed requests, they benefit from three times higher favourable first-instance decisions (68%, compared with just 23% for male applications – Figure 5). The exception comes from Ukraine, where the percentage of female applications is higher (58%). This can also be explained by the fact that, under the martial law enforced in Ukraine, men aged 18-60 years were forbidden to leave the country.

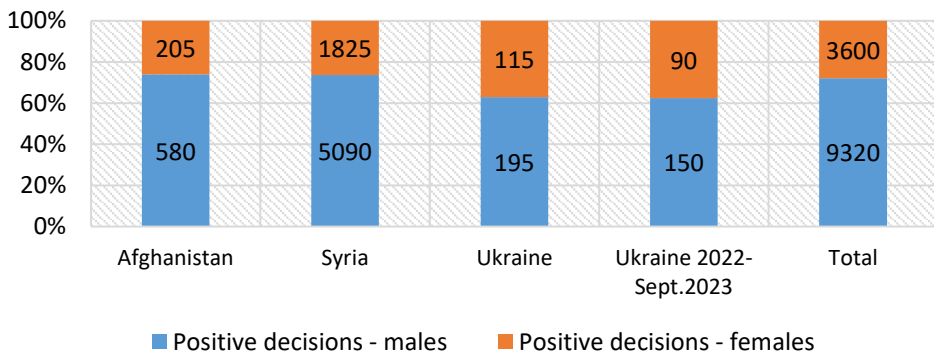
The applicants may appeal the first decision on their application in a two-instance judicial review procedure. As shown by the Eurostat data, between 2008 and 2022, approximately a third of decisions were in appeal or review by the Regional Courts or the County Tribunal, Administrative Litigation Section (Administrative County Court). If this is the case, there is also a second instance review procedure (ECRE, 2023). The Regional Court has jurisdiction as first-instance judicial review. The County Tribunal, Administrative Litigation Section

services provided by this agency (ANOFM, 2023). The number of Ukrainian citizens registering to benefit from information, professional counseling, and labour mediation services is higher, 19,396, but this was a condition to benefit from financial assistance for accommodation and food since May 2023 (The Romanian Government, 2023, April 26).

¹³ The figure refers to the first instance decisions and may be appealed until a final decision is reached.

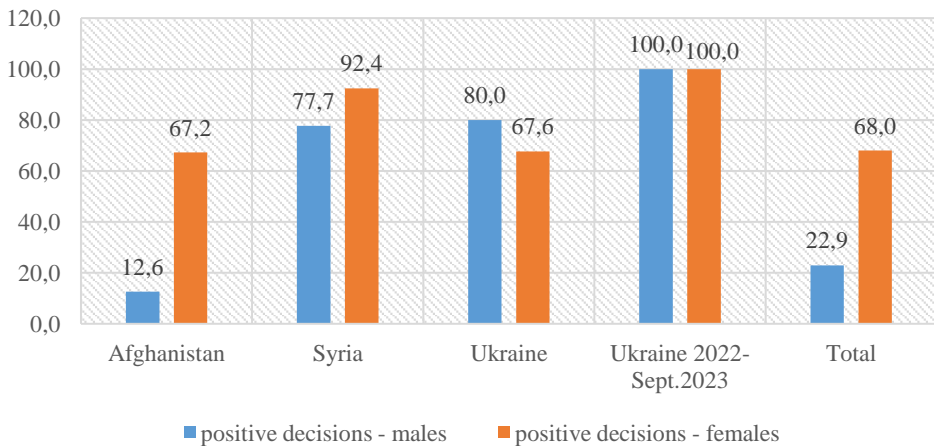
(Administrative County Court), has jurisdiction over the area of the Regional Court whose decision is appealed. Neither of these courts, involved in review, are specialised in asylum.

Figure 4. First-instance decisions on asylum applications by the citizenship of the applicant (reported by Romania, aggregated over the 2008-Sept.2023 period)



Source: Eurostat, 2024b

Figure 5. Acceptance rate (first instance positive decisions) on asylum applications by the citizenship of the applicant and gender (reported by Romania, aggregated over the 2008-Sept. 2023 period)



Source: Eurostat, 2024b

Given the surge in flows received by Romania after the Russian aggression on Ukraine, as well as the limited experience of the Romanian institutions in dealing with immigration, the next section will focus on the political and social reaction in addressing this new refugee context.

5. Political institutions' reaction

The rapid progression of events, combined with the significant scale of incoming refugee flows, required Romanian institutions to respond across multiple levels. While the central government initiated various legislative actions, local and regional institutions were compelled to implement distinct measures aimed at supporting refugees, particularly in the regions bordering Ukraine.

5.1. Government and its agencies

The response of institutional actors in Romania unfolded progressively, beginning with an immediate reaction followed by a series of supporting measures that required additional time for development and implementation.

Short and medium-term reaction

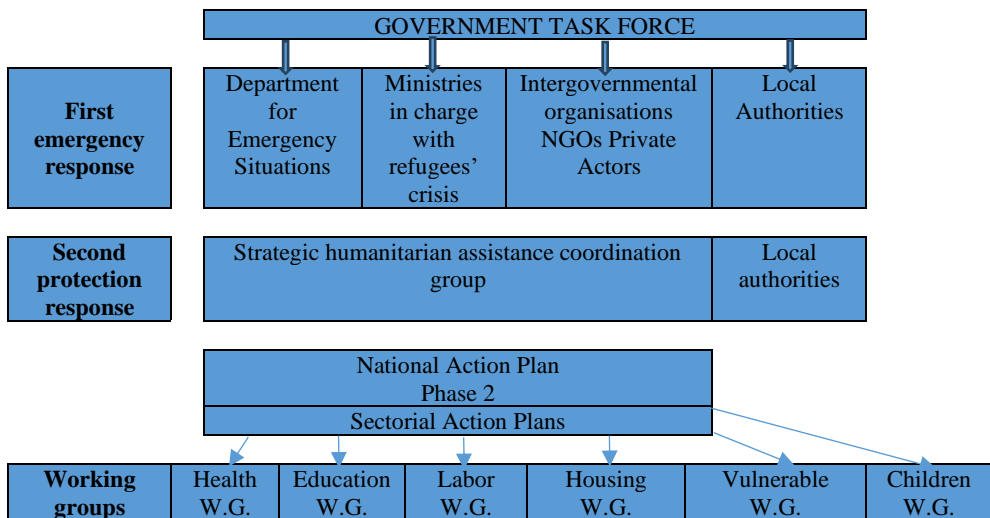
Since the morning of 24 February 2022, through the voice of President Klaus Iohannis, Romania has strongly condemned “the completely unjustified, illegal and unprovoked aggression of the Russian army against Ukraine, which endangers countless human lives” (Romanian Presidential Administration, 2022). This action was to be expected given the cooperative relationship between Romania and Ukraine. However, its requirement arises from the imperative to strategically align with partner nations against the aggressor. The Romanian President’s reaction was soon followed by a similar stance by the Prime Minister at the time, Nicolae Ciucă, as well as other high-level political leaders.

In the first days of the conflict, there were no political statements that broke the pattern set by the president of the state regarding the condemnation of the Russian Federation for the illegal invasion of Ukraine. This alignment was facilitated by the unusual coalition formed between the Social Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party, which holds the parliamentary majority in Romania and governs the country. Moreover, even the Russian national minority in Romania, constituted in the “Community of Russian Lipovenes in Romania” and represented in the Romanian Parliament, issued a press statement in the first days of the conflict, asking “insistently to stop the aggression!” (Community of Russian Lipovenes in Romania, 2022). At the high political level, there was an alignment regarding the condemnation of Russia’s illegal actions in Ukraine. However, after the initial tumultuous phase of the conflict, dissenting voices within the Romanian Parliament emerged. These voices criticized Ukraine and called on the Romanian Government to cease its support. The individuals in question belong to the far-right Alliance for the Union of Romanians party, whose leadership has faced allegations of collaborating with Russian intelligence services (Defense Romania, 2023). Despite

their efforts to launch an anti-Ukraine campaign, it had no impact on the Romanian Government's unwavering support for Ukraine.

In addition to openly opposing the Russian Federation's actions in Ukraine, the Romanian Government has taken swift steps to empower border authorities in Romania to handle the significant wave of Ukrainian refugees. The Romanian Government's reaction, conducted by the then prime minister Nicolae Ciuca, as we can see in Figure 6, was twofold: an immediate crisis intervention, followed by a medium to long-term strategy emphasizing the protection and integration of refugees.

Figure 6. Structure of political decision



Source: Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania, 2022

The Department for Emergency Situations under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, together with the Ministries in charge of the refugee crisis, local authorities, and civil society, managed the emergency response, implementing actions to address the urgent needs of Ukrainian refugees which included providing transportation, food, shelter, and healthcare. The Government's Emergency Ordinance No. 15/2022 (The Romanian Government, 2022, February 27) bolstered the efforts of these bodies by ensuring the Romanian state's provision of personal care items, food, complimentary medical aid, transportation, and financial assistance to Ukrainian nationals during their time in Romania.

The immediate response saw a remarkable mobilization of emergency personnel at Romania's border points with Ukraine. These initial emergency teams have offered diverse assistance to Ukrainian nationals, ranging from issuing

identification papers to those who departed Ukraine without any, to delivering medical care and other urgent services to those in distress.

A notable advancement in ensuring the safety of Ukrainian citizens has been the government's proactive stance against human trafficking integrated into its action plan. This preventive approach was put into action on 9 March, just 13 days after the onset of the crisis, and incorporated a public security layer in the identification process of the Ukrainians. To elaborate, any Ukrainian citizen crossing Romania was mandated to showcase not only their personal ID (if any) but also the identification of any individual (apart from those they travelled with from Ukraine) they intended to leave the customs checkpoint with, especially if they chose not to stay in the facilities provided by the authorities. This measure was an effort to monitor and curtail potential trafficking or exploitation situations, ensuring that everyone entering the country did so under genuine and safe circumstances.

The medium and long-term response of Romanian authorities towards the Ukrainian refugee crisis emerged in Emergency Ordinance no. 100/29 June 2022 in which the Romanian Government adopted 35 action plans (The Romanian Government, 2022, June 29). These plans include various measures aimed at Ukrainian refugees from the war, such as facilitating access to official information, preventing risks of abuse and exploitation, facilitating access to the labour market, offering language courses at the workplace, providing advice on starting a business or a start-up, ensuring access to unoccupied housing for Ukrainians, continuing education for Ukrainian children and students, providing a pool of Ukrainian teachers, including Ukrainian refugees in national public health programmes, protecting Ukrainian children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and all forms of violence, registering Ukrainian children in the national child protection system or identifying the needs of vulnerable persons displaced from Ukraine. As we can see, the Romanian Government (2022, June 29) implemented a wide range of action plans since mid-2022 in order to facilitate the stay and integration of Ukrainian refugees who decided to remain in Romania. The inclusion and protection policy measures have been put in place by the relevant institutions and monitored by the crisis cell set up in the early days of the conflict in Ukraine. These actions underscore Romania's commitment to ensuring the well-being and safety of Ukrainian refugees within its borders.

Temporary protection and other support measures

The Romanian Asylum Act also provides that temporary protection is granted in case the Council of the European Union establishes the existence of a massive flow of displaced persons. Between March and September 2022, the scope of persons eligible for temporary protection in Romania was similar to that of the EU Council decision. The scope was broadened in September 2022 to include all Ukrainian

nationals regardless of when they arrived in Romania and their family members (ECRE, 2023).

The beneficiaries of temporary protection are issued a residence permit and may apply for asylum. In case the asylum application is denied, they continue to benefit from temporary protection (ECRE, 2023, p. 14). In addition, they are provided with full access to education, labour market, and health services (The Romanian Government 2022, March 7). The right to education is ensured for children under 18 fleeing Ukraine under the same conditions and with the same funding as Romanian pre-schoolers and school-aged children. Access to health care is also ensured similar to Romanian citizens who are insured, without paying contributions to the social health insurance system, the personal contribution for the medicines granted in the outpatient treatment, and with exemption from co-payment¹⁴. They are also provided with housing benefits. The government instituted the '50/20' programme, which foresees RON 50 (EUR 10) / per person/day provided for accommodation and RON 20 (EUR 4) / per person /day for food, to be distributed to the hosting person/family. These come as monthly cash payments. However, one needs to mention that the '50/20' programme was modified into the 2000/600 programme (The Romanian Government, 2023, April 26) starting from May the 1st 2023. They could now benefit 4 months (and up to 1 year) from 2000 lei (EUR 400) /per month / for families for accommodation (750 lei (150 EUR) / per month for one member household) and 600 lei (120 EUR) food allowance. The money could now be received directly by the refugees, but they had to quickly comply with the new conditions, including a bank account in Romania. Given that the legislative modification was published on April 26th and that the refugees had to apply for financial support in the first 5 days of the month, they were left with just 8 working days to comply with the new legal procedures and apply for this financial support. The short period of time until the legal enforcement was not sufficient for proper clarifications on the new conditions and led to important implementation bottlenecks (for instance, the banks were reluctant to create new bank accounts for Ukrainian refugees - Despa, 2023). It is also worth mentioning that after one month, in order to keep receiving the financial benefits (which can be received for up to 1 year), the refugees need to prove they are willing to integrate into Romanian society. Thus, after one month of financial support, in the following 2-4 months (this period can be extended to 1 year), working-age adults need to either work in Romania or prove

¹⁴ According to the data provided to PRESShub by the National Health Insurance Agency, 16,674 refugees benefited from medical services covered by the social health insurance system in Romania (Chiruta, 2023). The expenses were covered by the national sources and are estimated at 23 million lei (4.6 million Euros) for 2022, with another 26.4 million lei (5.28 million euros) being available for 2023.

that they are looking for a job, by registering for the employment agencies, while their children also need to be registered in some form of education in Romania¹⁵.

The swift shift of the Romanian legislation was also accompanied by long delays in reimbursement¹⁶ from the Romanian Government which eroded the relationships and agreements between the refugees and the owners/hosts, while forcing some of the refugees to leave Romania for Ukraine or other EU countries (Nistoroiu, 2023). These delays had important detrimental effects, as the hosts were also receiving the food allowances which were supposed to be given to the refugees. The lack of preparedness for the change in legislation and the absence of a verification mechanism has also led to sufficient space for the illicit behaviour of the hosts, as well as fake reimbursement applications (Burla, 2023).

The Ukrainian refugees have also been granted several transport benefits (The Romanian Government, 2022, March 12). During their period of temporary stationing or transiting the territory of Romania, they benefited from free rail transport, as well as free national or international road transport. Moreover, in exceptional circumstances (when rail or road transport is impossible), with the help of the destination state, the transport of the respective refugees can be organized, by organizing charter flights, through the Department for Emergency Situations, within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This facility stopped at the end of 2022. Although a draft of a new legal initiative was published by the Romanian Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure in January 2023¹⁷, a new facility was not yet implemented, nor was the previous facility extended.

5.2. Regional and local government

In addition to the response from central authorities, it is crucial to analyse the response of local public authorities to the Ukrainian refugee crisis because the measures adopted at the central level often need to be effectively implemented and tailored to local needs.

Local public administrations play a vital role in the on-the-ground execution of policies and services that directly impact Ukrainian refugees residing in specific regions or municipalities within Romania. Their response can influence the overall success of integration efforts and the well-being of refugees. Therefore, examining the

¹⁵ The condition regarding employment does not apply to persons enrolled in higher education in Romania, persons with disabilities, elderly (people over 65 years), or persons who are raising or caring for a child aged up to 2 years, respectively 3 years, in the case of a disabled child.

¹⁶ In June 2022, the reimbursements were only covering 23.5% of the 87.3 million lei requested at the national level, with Bucuresti-ilfov, Suceava, Constanta, Cluj, and Sibiu being the main applicant regions (about half of the total amount) (Oncu, 2022).

¹⁷ Check the draft of the Government Ordinance at: <https://www.mt.ro/web14/transparenta-decisionala/consultare-publica/acte-normative-in-avizare/4400-hg06032023dtf-2>.

reactions and initiatives taken by local public authorities provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the overall support system for the Ukrainian refugees in Romania. However, in our analyses, we need to make a difference between the local government who are located near the border crossing points with Ukraine, and the rest of the administrations across the country. To this end, we will start by analysing the general measures taken by the local administrations from all over the country and, afterwards, we will run into details about the specific measures that were implemented by the local governments near the border crossing points with Ukraine.

Aligned with government policies, the measures adopted by local governments from all over the country are divided into two stages. The initial phase involves a swift response, characterized by the establishment of refugee centers where Ukrainians without accommodation in Romania can find shelter. Those centers were supported by the local authorities who made sure that the Ukrainians residing there received essential supplies for a dignified life, funded through local government resources. At the same time, especially where the local governments were far from the border crossing points with Ukraine, donation centers were opened. The main goal of these centers was to gather essential supplies and transport them to collection centers in Ukraine, where they are distributed to those in need. Additionally, local authorities have organized the transportation of donations to refugee centers within Romania, ensuring that displaced individuals receive the necessary support and resources.

When it comes to the second stage of the response of the local governments from all over the country, it consisted of supporting, complying with, and implementing the above-mentioned action plans set out in Emergency Ordinance no. 100/2022 (The Romanian Government, 2022, June 29). The cooperative approach of the local public authorities has eased the execution of plans endorsed at the central level. Local leaders have taken a proactive role, specifically in preparing schools for Ukrainian students, locating social housing for refugees, and collaborating with county employment agencies to pinpoint employment prospects for Ukrainians (Dincă et al., 2023).

In the case of the local governments near the border crossing points, the involvement was much greater than in other public administrations in the country. Therefore, the local governments of Sighetu Marmatiei (Maramures County), Halmeu (Satu Mare County), Siret (Suceava County), and Isaccea (Tulcea County) must be treated separately from the rest of the public authorities. Of course, there are more border crossing points between Romania and Ukraine, but the larger flows of refugees have passed through points in the cities mentioned above. The mobilization of local authorities in these cities was much more complex because, in addition to the measures adopted at the national level, they had to ensure the proper functioning of border crossing points and manage the large influx of Ukrainians entering the territory of Romania while simultaneously ensuring the sustainable delivery of services to its own population (Dincă et al., 2023).

At the same time, these local public authorities have had to realign their priorities due to their failure to anticipate a crisis of this scale when distributing investment funds. Consequently, they needed to reconsider their strategies and reallocate funds from specific investment categories to address the refugee crisis (Dincă et al., 2023). Considering the fact that the budgets of the mentioned local authorities are not among the largest, compared to the budgets of other authorities in the country, they had to resort to other sources of funding. The study carried out by Dincă et al. (2023) reveals that the main sources of funding used by the local governments in the migrant crisis were donations and sponsorships (40.98%), local budget funds (27.87%) and European funds (13.11%). The capacity of the local public authorities to adapt to the crisis and the efficiency in identifying funding opportunities contributed to a rather good management of the refugee crisis.

6. Receiving the society reaction

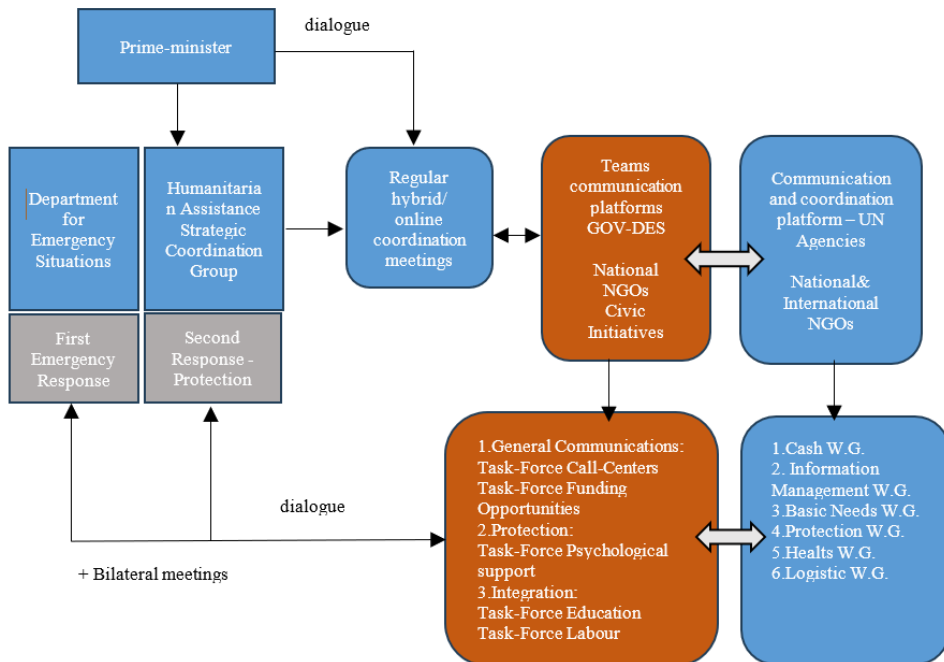
6.1. Civil society

In our study, civil society played a crucial role alongside public authorities in addressing the refugee crisis. During the initial phase of the crisis, before the public authorities could fully organize and respond to ensure optimal conditions for receiving Ukrainian refugees, various components of civil society, including NGOs, businesses, and regular citizens, demonstrated exemplary mobilization at all border crossings between Romania and Ukraine, as well as in cities that became focal points for refugees. According to a report by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania in April 2022, approximately 160 national non-governmental organizations and over 2,000 volunteers were consistently active at Romania's border crossings with Ukraine (Dincă et al., 2023).

In the early stages of the crisis, the civil society actively engaged in establishing mobile emergency services, encompassing accommodation, transportation, food, translation, and information (Petrescu et al., 2023). The large number of volunteers facilitated the access, accommodation, or transition of Ukrainian citizens. However, lacking organization, the efforts of the volunteers may become disorderly or less effective amidst the increasing number of Ukrainian refugees. This situation gave rise to the need for coordinating civil society assistance. Consequently, just four days after the outbreak of the crisis, on February 28, 2022, the first meeting between the Romanian government and civil society representatives was convened in response to a request from a coalition of NGOs. During this meeting, representatives from civil society advocated for the establishment of a collaborative national-level steering group, the development of tools to address logistical challenges in aid distribution and the inclusion of civil society representatives in the management of refugee camps (General Secretariat of the Government of Romania, 2022). As a result of this meeting, a permanent dialogue channel between central public authorities and civil society was

established, as described in Figure 7. Through this channel, the activities of NGOs, companies, or volunteers involved in supporting Ukrainian refugees could be coordinated. Another advantage of opening this channel of communication has been the facilitation of public-private partnerships that have streamlined the implementation of beneficial measures for refugees.

Figure 7. Inter-agency communication matrix



Source: Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania, 2022

With the creation of public-private partnership arrangements and a central body to organize civil society support, the efforts of thousands of volunteers were streamlined and extended to encompass medium and long-term measures. This shift was also influenced by the passage of time and the substantial number of refugees—significantly higher compared to other waves—choosing to remain in Romania.

The new medium and long-term measures on which civil society started to focus from the second half of 2022 were in line with the Romanian government's strategy for the integration of Ukrainian refugees, with a focus on facilitating access to education, providing psychological support and facilitating their entry into the labour market (Petrescu et al., 2023). To implement these measures, non-governmental organizations, in collaboration with other entities comprising civil society and dedicated to supporting Ukrainian refugees, have mobilized efforts to

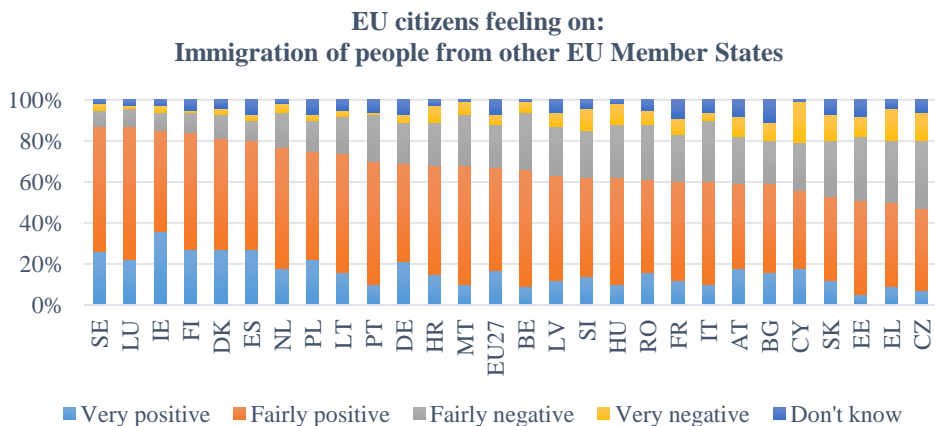
establish vocational training or retraining centers, educational hubs for children, and centers where Ukrainian citizens can learn the Romanian language.

The prompt and positive response that civil society in Romania has provided since 24 February in the Ukrainian refugee crisis, which continues to this day, has been an example of good practice and has given legitimacy to the Romanian public authorities to take immediate action to support the accommodation of refugees and the provision of rights during their stay in our country.

6.2. Public opinion reactions

The ‘immigration threat’ has been among the main EU citizens’ concerns over the last decade. According to the Eurobarometer data, between 2015 and 2019, immigration has been perceived as the leading issue the EU is facing¹⁸. Yet, the trend has descended and the conflict in Ukraine does not seem to reignite the EU’s fear of immigration. If the Eurobarometer 95 (European Commission, 2021, September) reported an average of 25% of the EU population considering that this is the most important issue facing the EU at the moment, the percentage dropped to 24%, as shown by the Eurobarometer 99 (European Commission, 2023, July). In Romania, the percentages are below the EU average, with 15 and 14 percentage points displayed in the same Eurobarometer.

Figure 8. EU citizens’ feelings on immigration of people from other EU Member States

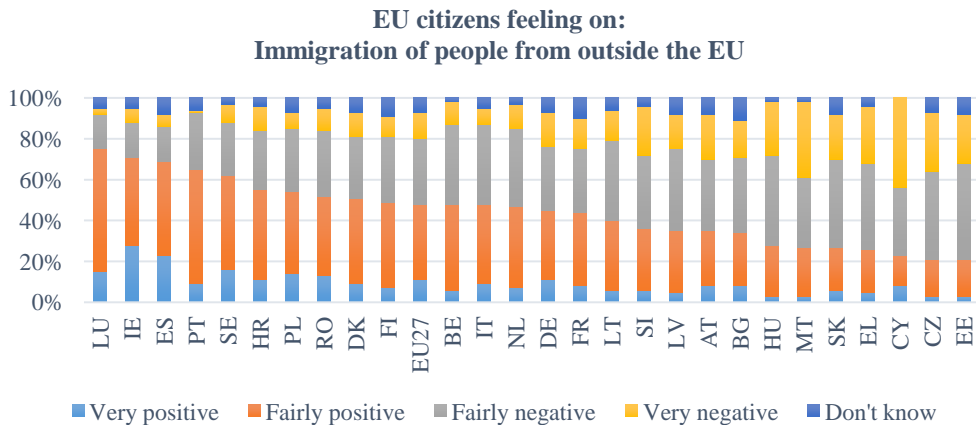


Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question B10.1 (European Commission, 2023, July)

¹⁸ Eurobarometer 84 (European Commission, 2015, December) reported the highest concern regarding migration, with an average of 58% of the EU population considering that this is the most important issue facing the EU at the moment. The EU was facing large refugee flows following the Arab Spring revolutions in the North African countries.

When looking at the general opinion of EU citizens on immigration, we notice a high heterogeneity (Figure 8). On average, 67% of citizens manifest a very positive or fairly positive attitude toward immigrants coming from other EU member states. The positive feeling drops to 45% if they come from outside the EU (Figure 9). It is generally the Central and Eastern European Member States (except for Poland, Croatia, and Lithuania) along with the Southern European ones that seem to be more reluctant to immigration. At the other end lie the Nordic countries, Luxembourg and Spain. Romania places itself slightly below the average (61%) when it comes to the flows from the EU and above the average regarding the flows from tertiary countries (52%). The placement of Romania at the EU border and facing flows from outside the EU, particularly from the Republic of Moldova, might partially explain the smaller gap.

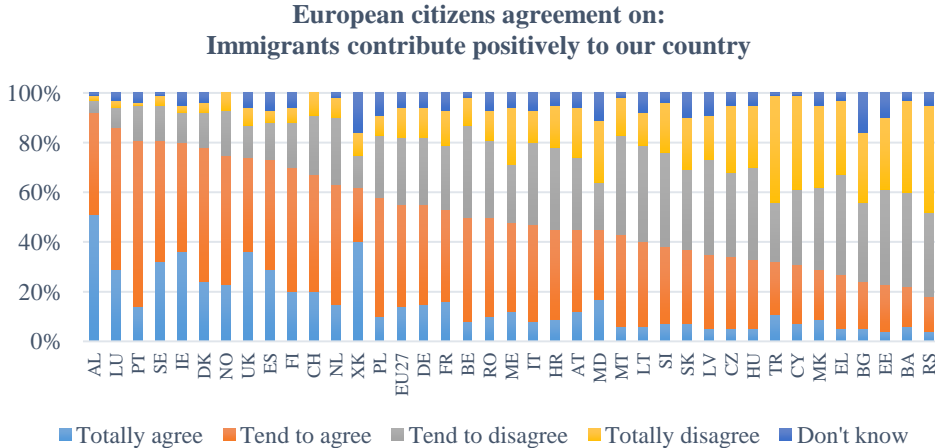
Figure 9. EU citizens' feelings on immigration of people from outside the EU



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question B10.2 (European Commission, 2023, July)

It is generally the citizens who adopt a positive attitude on immigration that also agrees on their positive impact on the economy. This is also confirmed by a correlation coefficient higher than 0.8 between the share of citizens displaying a very positive attitude regarding immigrants and the share that totally agrees with their positive contribution to the host country's economy. The citizens from Luxembourg, Nordic Europe, as well as Portugal and Spain, are among the most confident about the benefits of immigration (Figure 10). Besides the EU countries, Albania reports the highest support for foreign labour (92%), while Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are the most immigrant-skeptic populations. The Romanian citizens' position on the economic effects of immigration is quite divided, with about half of the population showing support for a positive contribution.

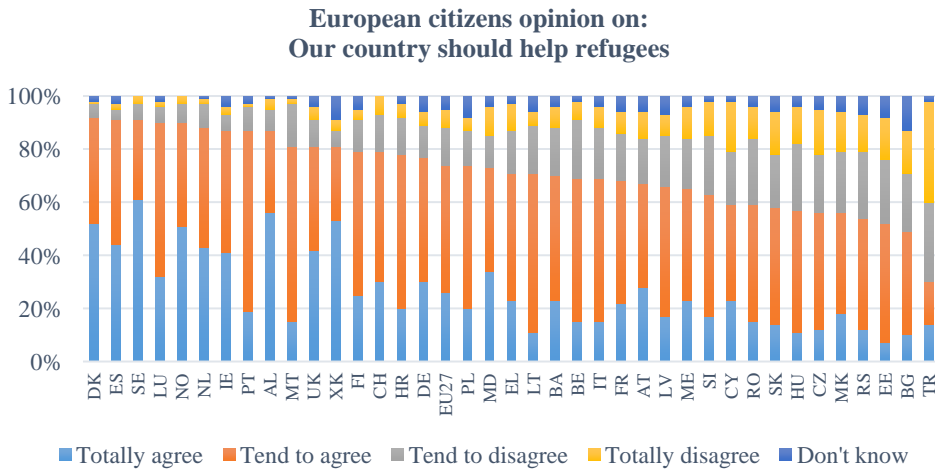
Figure 10. European citizens' agreement on the contribution of immigrants to their country



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question B11.1 (European Commission, 2023, July)

The EU citizens also appear to agree on helping the refugees (74%). There is a positive correlation between sharing a positive feeling about immigration (Figures 9 and 10) and the agreement on helping refugees (0.85 and 0.77) (Figure 11).

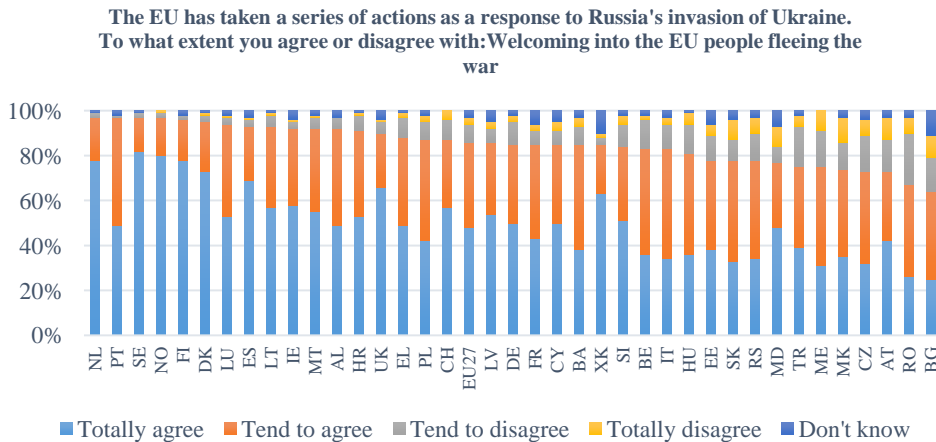
Figure 11. European citizens' agreement on helping refugees



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question B11.2 (European Commission, 2023, July)

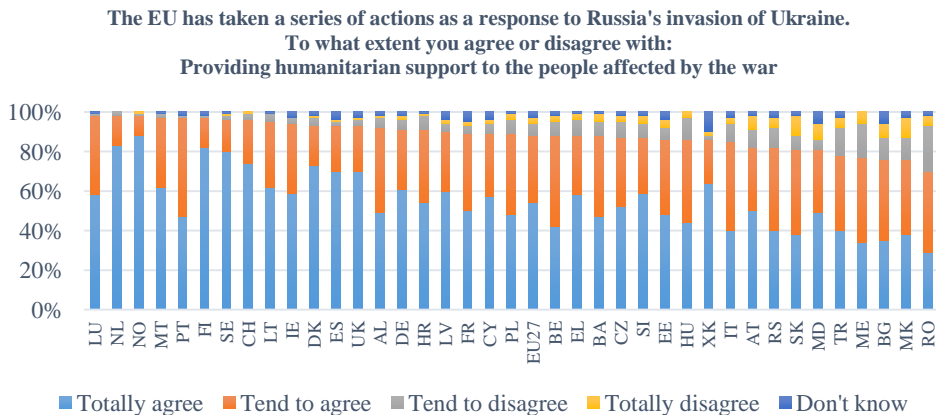
It is interesting to note that the support for the people affected by the war in Ukraine appears to be even stronger than the agreement on the need to help the refugees, in general, as displayed in Figure 1. Thus, approximately 86% of EU citizens agree to welcome refugees from Ukraine (Figure 12) and 88% agree to provide them with humanitarian support (Figure 13).

Figure 12. European citizens' agreement on welcoming people fleeing the war in Ukraine



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question E2.5 (European Commission, 2023, July)

Figure 13. European citizens' agreement on providing humanitarian support to the people affected by the war in Ukraine

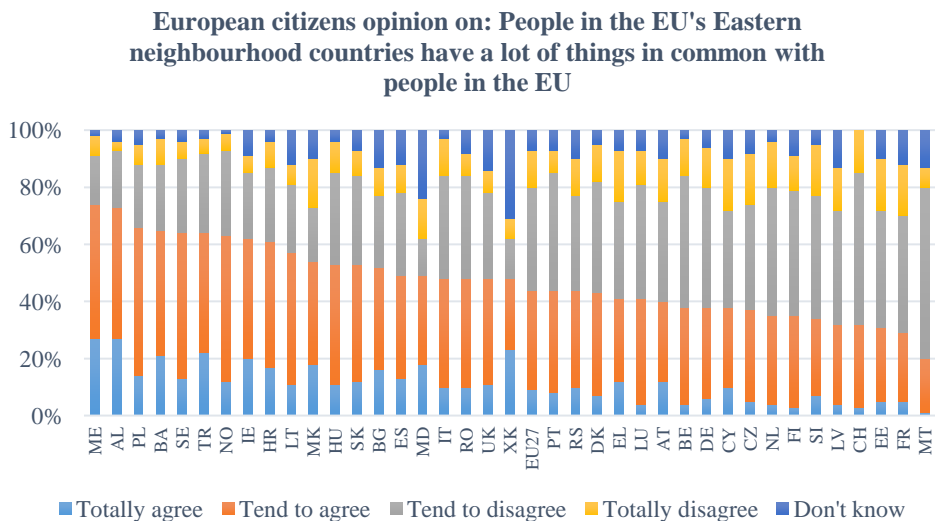


Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question E2.4 (European Commission, 2023, July)

It is also interesting to note that, among Ukraine's neighbouring countries, Poland appears to be the most supportive of welcoming refugees from Ukraine (87% - Figure 12) and providing them with humanitarian support (89% - Figure 14). At the other end lies Romania, which displays the highest reluctance, but with more than two-thirds of the population backing such a statement.

The overall higher support for the people in Ukraine fleeing the war (86% - Figure 13) compared with the approval of the refugee support in general (74% - Figure 12) may also come from the perception that the people in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood countries have a lot of things in common with people in the EU¹⁹. The figures show that, on average, 44% of European citizens agree with the similarities between the two groups, with Montenegro, Albania, Poland, and Bosnia displaying the strongest support (over 64% - Figure 14).

Figure 14. European citizens' opinion on the people in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood countries



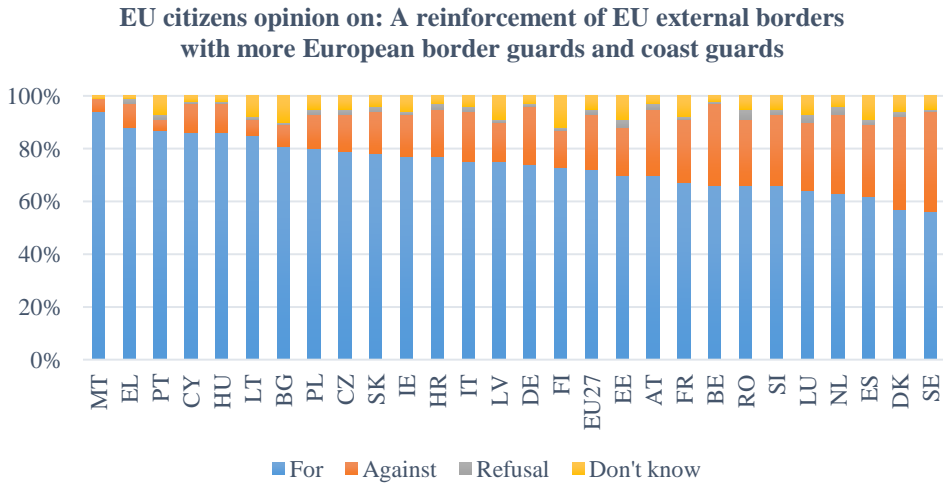
Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question D5.3 (European Commission, 2023, July)

There also seems to be a strong approval for the reinforcement of EU external borders (Figure 15) and on a common European Asylum system (Figure 16). On average, 72% of European citizens agree that more European border guards and coast guards are needed, with some of the Mediterranean countries at the front fore (Malta, Greece, Portugal, and Cyprus). In addition, there is a 69% general backing for a

¹⁹ Although the correlation between answers displayed in Figures 12 and Figure 14 seems to be very small.

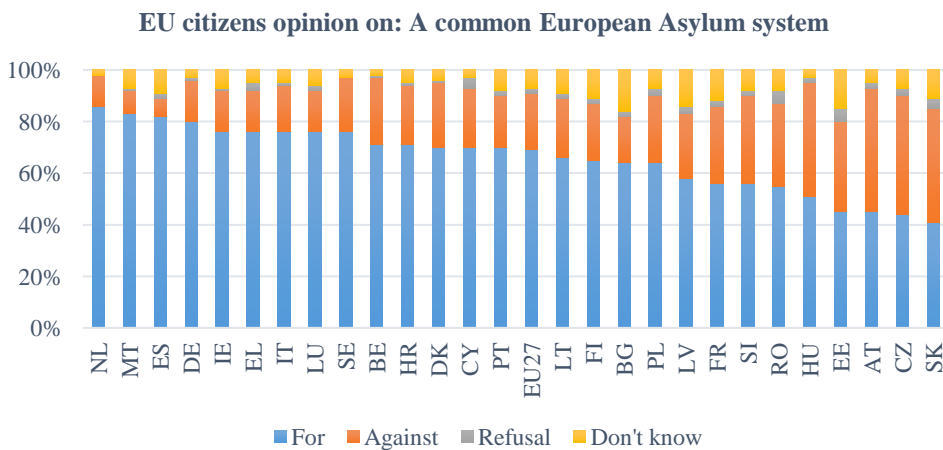
common European Asylum system. The lowest approval appears to be in Slovakia, Czechia, Austria, and Estonia, where less than half of the population is bracing for the enforcement of a common EU asylum system.

Figure 15. EU citizens’ opinion on: A reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question B9.2 (European Commission, 2023, July)

Figure 16. EU citizen’s opinion on a common EU migration policy and a common European Asylum system



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring 2023, question B9.1 (European Commission, 2023, July)

Conclusions

The aggression of Russia on Ukraine has generated large asylum flows. The long border shared with Ukraine made Romania one of the main corridors for Ukrainian refugees. Benefiting from temporary protection, most of them applied for residence permits (under the temporary protection regime), while only a small fraction submitted for an asylum application as well. Those having applied for asylum, in case this is denied, continue to benefit from temporary protection, as long as it continues to be extended by the Romanian Government. Under the temporary protection status, Ukrainian citizens are issued a residence permit and are provided with access to education, labour market, and health services.

The response of the Romanian state to the refugee crisis was effective, albeit with a delayed onset during the initial days of the conflict. The evident challenge in the swift mobilization of public institutions indicates both a concentration of power and an unpreparedness for unforeseen events. The example of local authorities that did not have funds foreseen for such crisis situations is representative of our case study. Such situations can considerably hamper the response of public authorities to crises such as the one that began in February 2022. However, the active participation of civil society in assisting Ukrainian refugees has compensated for the deficiencies arising from the delayed response of public authorities. At the same time, the willingness of citizens to embrace Ukrainian refugees has given legitimacy to the Romanian state, enabling the adoption of extraordinary measures to address the varied needs related to the reception, stay, or transit of Ukrainian citizens (e.g. the Ukrainian citizens were provided with housing, food, and transport benefits).

In line with the EU citizens, the Romanian people are reporting strong support for the people affected by the war in Ukraine, although smaller in magnitude. They appear to be prone to both welcoming and providing humanitarian support to refugees from Ukraine, despite a lower positive attitude toward immigrants coming from outside the EU compared with the ones from the EU member states. The civil society support gave legitimacy to the Romanian state, enabling the implementation of measures supporting the integration of Ukrainian refugees in the medium and long term. This has been proved by the swift adoption of European directives which provided for facilitating the accommodation and integration of Ukrainian refugees as well as simplifying bureaucratic obstacles. The situation described is a positive development for Romania which, in the past, did not show much interest in the long-term integration of refugees (Porumbescu and Cosciug, 2023).

In line with the migration transition theories prediction, Romania will also follow the same transition path. The high emigration rate that has drastically reduced the labour supply, along with aging, leaves no other economically reasonable alternative for reducing the potential output gap than to become attractive for foreign labour. The refugee crisis emerged as a timely humanitarian and economic opportunity both to improve its regulatory framework regarding migration /

refugees, as well as to recruit foreign labour. There still seem to be some problems in the management and integration of refugees, problems that the Romanian government needs to solve in order to succeed in becoming a positive example in the region. In some instances, institutions continue to shift responsibility from one entity to another (Porumbescu & Cosciug, 2023), which has a major effect on refugees, who may become distressed or even suffer inconvenience due to delays in handling administrative procedures. To mitigate these challenges, promptly clarifying the existing legislation is crucial. Romania can take proactive steps to address these issues and ensure a smoother integration process for refugees.

Policy recommendations

In line with the national immigration strategy for the period 2021 – 2024 (The Romanian Government, 2021, August 19), the recent refugee crisis experience has emphasized several fields in need of policy intervention. First, the *ability of the existing institutional structures to effectively manage the immigration phenomenon* at both national and EU level needs to be improved. At the EU level, the lack of consensus on a common migration/asylum law undermines the capacity of Member States to carry out integrated actions against illegal immigration and human/migrant trafficking. Furthermore, the EU Member States' 2015 refugee response, lacking solidarity on sharing asylum seekers, has brought the European integration project into question (Topal & Radeljic, 2023). This might be a timely context for such initiatives, as there seems to be strong EU citizens support for both a common European Policy on migration and a common European Asylum system. Nevertheless, policy initiatives should also account for the actual research showing that the EU citizens are bracing the refugee protection policies, though they wish to maintain some control by stipulating some limits or conditions (e.g. family reunification for recognized refugees to be conditioned by the capacity of the refugee to cover the cost of living of their family members; setting national annual limits for asylum applications - see Jeannet et al., 2021).

Also, in Romania, the institutional structure and the number of employees were forced to quickly adapt to a new context characterized by higher migration/refugee flows. Therefore, the experience of other EU countries may further help to organize the Romanian institutions managing migration/refugees and to design proper action plans for such unforeseen events. The prospect of future immigration and refugee inflows remains high because the EU remains an attractive destination for potential immigrants worldwide, but also because of any possible armed, economic, or diplomatic conflicts, in line with previous experiences, such as the Arab Spring or the war in Syria. Furthermore, studies revealed that irregular immigration can be used both as a hybrid warfare tool and as a stressor meant to cause perturbations (Mészáros & Toca, 2023).

Second, *the absorption capacity and attractiveness of the Romanian labour market for foreign citizens, including Ukrainian refugees, remains poor* despite the significant labour deficit the Romanian economy is facing. Viewing integration solely as the initial reception of migrants highlights the absence of a comprehensive migration governance framework in Romania (Bejan, 2021). Whereas migration transition seems a highly probable pathway, strengthening the immigration/asylum systems is required in order to gain the most from immigration/refugee flows. Solutions to ease the integration of immigrants may include running information campaigns, developing projects in the field, providing facilities for the admission and stay of qualified foreigners on Romanian territory, recognition of qualifications, etc. Also, the literature has shown that lifting employment bans until the application is processed may also facilitate labour integration of refugees, particularly for those with lower education levels (Fasani et al., 2021).

Finally, *addressing the gap between the migration realities/actuality and the degree of awareness and information of the citizens* may reduce high social tension, which can be speculated or artificially accentuated by hostile actors. Thus, increasing transparency and continuous and timely information from the authorities, such as the Romanian labour market needs, the number of work permits released annually, the main source countries etc., may raise awareness of the population on the migration phenomenon. In addition, the literature has already evidenced that migrants have a positive net fiscal contribution in destination countries and are less prone to receiving social benefits than the native population (Dustman et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020).

Acknowledgement: This work is result of the Visegrad+ project *Ukrainian refugees in Central Europe and the Balkans – lessons learned and policy recommendations* (project number 22310070). The project is co-financed by the governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from The International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe. Cristian Incaltarau also acknowledges the support of the Romanian Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, within Program 1 – Development of the national RD system, Subprogram 1.2 – Institutional Performance – RDI excellence funding projects, Contract no.11PFE/30.12.2021.

References

- Bejan, R. (2021). *The Integration of Refugees in Romania: A Non-Preferred Choice*, Working Paper no. 155, The Centre on Migration, Policy & Society University of Oxford. <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP-2021-155-The-Integration-of-Refugees-in-Romania-A-Non-Preferred-Choice.pdf>

- Bureiko N., Moga T. L., Gheorghiu A., & Ibanescu B. C. (2021). Between the Home and Kin-State: Self-Identification and Attachment of Ukrainians and Romanians in the Ukrainian-Romanian Borderland of Bukovina. *Problems of Post-Communism* 68(1), 53-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2023.2275524>
- Burla, V. (2023). Decontările ilegale de milioane de euro din banii pentru cazarea refugiaților ucraineni [The illegal settlements of millions of euros from the money for the accommodation of Ukrainian refugees]. *Europa Liberă*, 4 May. <https://romania.europalibera.org/a/decontari-fictive-refugiati/32391599.html>
- Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania (2022). Răspunsul României la criza umanitară a refugiaților [*Romania's response to the humanitarian refugee crisis*]. https://gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/21.04.2022_-_R%C4%82SPUNSUL_ROM%C3%82NIEI_LA_CRIZA_UMANITAR%C4%82_A_REFUGIA%C8%9AILOR.pdf
- Chiruta D. (2023). DATA | How much money Romania spent on Ukrainian refugees' health. Romanians' reactions, PRESShub, 29 June. <https://www.presshub.ro/data-how-much-money-romania-spent-on-ukrainian-refugees-health-romanians-reactions-276504/>
- Community of Russian Lipovenes in Romania (2022). Declarație de presă a Președintelui CRLR, Deputatul Silviu Feodor [Press Statement by the President of the CRLR, MP Silviu Feodor]. <https://www.crlr.ro/ro/nout%C4%83%C8%9Bi/activitati-crlr/declara%C8%9Bie-de-pres%C4%83-a-pre%C8%99edintelui-crlr-deputatul-silviu-feodor/>, last accessed on 02.08.2023.
- Cusco, A. (2017). *A Contested Borderland: Competing Russian and Romanian Visions of Bessarabia in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Century*. Central European University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7829/j.ctt1v2xv4t>
- de Haas, H. (2010). *Migration transitions - a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration*, International Migration Institute, James Martin 21st Century School, University of Oxford, Working Paper no. 24. <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/imi-working-papers/wp24-migrationtransitions->
- Defense Romania (2023). Caracțița Rusiei: Anchetă media de amploare în Ucraina privind legăturile demnitarilor români George Simion și Diana Șoșoacă cu FSB [Russia's little minnow: Large-scale media investigation in Ukraine on the links of Romanian dignitaries George Simion and Diana Shoshaka with the FSB], 6 April. https://www.defenseromania.ro/caracitita-rusiei-ancheta-media-de-amploare-in-ucraina-privind-legaturile-demnitarilor-romani-george-simion-si-diana-sosoaca-cu-fsb_622048.html, last accessed on 02.08.2023.
- Deliu, A., & Trifan, E. (2023). *Report on the needs and difficulties encountered by Ukrainian refugees in Bucharest. Subjective perceptions and evaluations*. <https://asociatiasocialincubator.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Raport-Impreuna-pentru-Ucraina-EN.pdf>
- Despa, O. (2023). Țară în service. Cum s-a transformat România din țara cea mai primitoare cu refugiații, în cea care le face bagajele: „Suntem în pragul foametei” [Country in service. How Romania turned from the most welcoming country with refugees, to the

- one that packs their bags: “We are on the verge of starvation”]. *Europa liberă*, 9 April. <https://romania.europalibera.org/a/ucraineni-care-vor-sa-plece-acasa/32350415.html>
- DeWind, J., Kim E. M., Skeldon, R., & Yoon, I. J. (2012). Korean Development and Migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38(3), 371-388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2012.658543>
- Dincă, D. V., Nicolescu, C. E., Dumitrică, C. D., & Dogaru Cruceanu, T. C. (2023). The impact of the Ukrainian war on the resilience and sustainability of the local public administration in Romania: An exploratory study, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 23(2), 64-863.
- Dustmann, C., Frattini, T., & Halls, C. (2010), Assessing the Fiscal Costs and Benefits of A8 Migration to the UK. *Fiscal Studies*, 31(1), 1-41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5890.2010.00106.x>
- Entitlements and Access to the Labour Market:Romania. *Mass influx of people from Ukraine: social entitlements and access to the labour market*.
- European Commission. (2015, December). Standard Eurobarometer 84 – Autumn. Public opinion in the European Union. Eurobarometer 84 <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2098>
- European Commission. (2021, September). Standard Eurobarometer 95 – Spring. Public opinion in the European Union. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2532>
- European Commission. (2023, July). Standard Eurobarometer 99 – Spring. Public opinion in the European Union. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2532>.
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (2023) Country Report: Romania, the Asylum Information Database (AIDA. https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AIDA-RO_2022-Update.pdf
- Eurostat (2023a). Population structure indicators at national level [demo_pjanind__custom_7842663]. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi_emp_a\\$defaultview/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi_emp_a$defaultview/default/table)
- Eurostat (2023b). Employment and activity by sex and age - annual data [lfsi_emp_a\$defaultview]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi_emp_a/default/table?lang=en
- Eurostat (2024a). Asylum applicants by type of applicant, citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data [MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA__custom_7202279]. ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA__custom_7202279/default/table
- Eurostat (2024b). First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data [MIGR_ASYDCFSTA__custom_7202353]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYDCFSTA__custom_7202353/default/table
- Fasani, F., Frattini, T., & Minale, L. (2021). Lift the Ban? Initial Employment Restrictions and Refugee Labour Market Outcomes, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 19(5), 2803–2854, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeaa/jvab021>

- Fassmann, H., & Reeger, U. (2012). "Old" immigration countries. The concept and empirical examples. In M. Okolski (Ed.), *European immigrations: Trends, structures, policy implications* (pp. 65-90). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Fihel, A., Janicka, A., & Okólski, M. (2023). Predicting a Migration Transition in Poland and its Implications for Population Ageing. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 12(1), 265-292. <https://doi.org/10.54667/ceemr.2023.15>
- General Secretariat of the Government of Romania (2022). Informații comunicate de către autoritățile publice centrale și locale privind cooperarea cu organizații neguvernamentale, în contextul crizei refugiaților din UCRAINA [Information from central and local public authorities on cooperation with non-governmental organisations in the context of the refugee crisis in UKRAINE]. https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Raport_Informatii-comunicate-de-catre-autoritatile-publice-centrale-si-locale-privind-cooperarea-cu-organizatii-neguvernamentale.pdf, last accessed on 11.10.2023.
- HotNews (2023, 4 April). Câți ucraineni și-au cumpărat locuințe în România de la începutul războiului / Județele preferate [How many Ukrainians have bought homes in Romania since the beginning of the war / Favorite counties]. https://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-finante_banci-26184195-cati-ucraineni-cumparat-locuinte-romania-inceputul-razboiului-judetele-preferate.htm
- Huang, X., Kaushal, N., & Wang, J.S.H. (2020) What Explains the Gap in Welfare Use Among Immigrants and Natives? *Population Research and Policy Review*, 40, 819–860. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-020-09621-8>
- Incaltarau, C., & Simionov, L. (2018). Is Eastern Europe Following the Same Transition Model as the South? A Regional Analysis of the Main Migration Transition Drivers. In Pascariu G. C. and Duarte, A. (Eds.) *Core-Periphery Patterns Across the European Union* (199-232), Emerald Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78714-495-820171007>
- Incaltarau, C., Maha, L.G., Kourtit, K., & Nijkamp, P. (2021). Outmigration and Remittances as Facilitating Conditions for Economic Transition in Romania, in: Cochrane, W., Cameron, M. P., Alimi, O. (Eds.) *Labor Markets, Migration, and Mobility. Essays in Honor of Jacques Poot - New Frontiers in Regional Science: Asian Perspectives*, Springer, ISBN 978-981-15-9274-4, pp. 143-180. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-9275-1_7
- Jeannot A-M, Heidland T, & Ruhs M. (2021). What asylum and refugee policies do Europeans want? Evidence from a cross-national conjoint experiment, *European Union Politics*, 22(3), 353-376. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14651165211006838>
- King, R. (2015). Migration and southern Europe. A center-periphery dynamic?. In M. Baumeister & R. Sala (Eds.), *Southern Europe?: Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece from the 1950s until the present day* (pp. 139-172). Frankfurt am Main; New York: Campus.
- King, R., Fielding, A., & Black, R. (1997). The international migration turnaround in Southern Europe. In R. King & R. Black (Eds.), *Southern Europe and the new immigrations* (pp. 1-25). Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press.

- KPMG (2016). Romania – Ordinance Clarifies and Eases Rules on Foreign Workers. <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2016/10/fa16-105a.pdf>
- Mészáros, E. L. & Țoca, C. V. (2023). The EU's resilience and the management of hybrid threats coming from the Eastern neighbourhood: Belarus and the deliberate facilitation of irregular immigration. *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 14(1), 5-30. <https://doi.org/10.47743/ejes-2023-0101>
- Meyers, E. (2000). Theories of International Immigration Policy — A Comparative Analysis. *International Migration Review*, 34(4), 1245–1282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019791830003400407>
- Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (2023) Aproximativ 7.000 de cetățeni ucraineni s-au angajat în România de la începutul conflictului armat [Approximately 7,000 Ukrainian citizens have been employed in Romania since the beginning of the armed conflict]. September 4. <https://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/7017-cp-7000-cetateni-ucrainieni-angajati-04092023>
- National Agency for Employment (ANOFM). (2023) Situația încadrării pe piața muncii a cetățenilor ucraineni, prin intermediul ANOFM [Employment situation of Ukrainian citizens, through ANOFM], September 25. <https://www.anofm.ro/index.html?agentie=&categ=5&subcateg=1&idpostare=27363>
- Nistoroiu, A. (2023). Deși cetățenii români i-au ajutat, gazdele nu le-au dat banii de mâncare veniți de la stat, acuză sute de refugiați. „A trebuit să ne întoarcem în Ucraina”. Cum se apără proprietarii [Although the Romanian citizens helped them, the hosts did not give them the money for food coming from the state, accuse hundreds of refugees. “We had to go back to Ukraine.” How the owners defend themselves], *Libertatea*, 17 August. <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/refugiatii-ucraineni-acuza-ca-nu-au-primit-banii-de-mancare-de-la-gazdele-din-romania-care-primeau-fonduri-de-la-statul-roman-cum-se-apara-proprietarii-4636295>
- Nord Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (2022). *NATO and Afghanistan*, 31 august. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm
- Oncu, S. (2022). Guvernul a decontat peste 100 de milioane de lei pentru cazarea și masa refugiaților ucraineni, doar că nu știe pentru câți. Zeci de milioane lei neimpozabili au ajuns la persoane private care au cazat ucraineni [The government settled over 100 million lei for accommodation and meals for Ukrainian refugees, but it does not know for how many. Tens of millions of non-taxable lei went to private individuals who accommodated Ukrainians], *Profit.ro*, 17 August 2022. <https://www.profit.ro/stiri/social/guvernul-decontat-peste-100-milioane-lei-cazarea-masa-refugiatilor-ucraineni-stie-cati-zeci-milioane-lei-neimpozabili-au-ajuns-persoane-private-au-cazat-ucraineni-20785059>
- Petrescu, C., Neaguț, A., Niță, I. S., & Manea, M. (2023). *Cum a influențat criza din Ucraina ONG-urile din România?* [How did the Ukrainian crisis affect the NGOs from Romania?]. București. <https://helptohelpukraine.ro/2023/11/08/raport-cum-a-influentat-criza-din-ucraina-ong-urile-din-romania/>
- Population and Housing Census (2022). Population by ethnicity in the 1930-2021 censuses. <https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-rpl-2021/rezultate-definitive/>

- Porumbescu, A., & Cosciug, A. (2023), Mass Influx of People from Ukraine: Social Entitlements and Access to the Labour Market: Romania. In I. Florczak & J. K. Adamski (Eds.) *Mass influx of people from Ukraine: social entitlements and access to the labour market* (329-342). Italian Labour Law e-Studies.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2023). Analiza pietei muncii din Romania [Analysis of the labor market in Romania] August 2023, <https://www.amcham.ro/download?file=mediaPool/u2M5Atj.pdf>
- Romanian Border Police. (2021). Raport de evaluare 2020 [Evaluation report 2020]. <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/files/docu/1613553601330-coperta.pdf>
- Romanian Border Police. (2022). Raport de evaluare 2021 [Evaluation report 2021]. <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/files/docu/1646123974382-sintezabilantpfr2021final.pdf>
- Romanian Border Police. (2023a). Raport de evaluare 2022 [Evaluation report 2022]. <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/files/docu/1677496737128-sintezabilantigpf2022.pdf>
- Romanian Border Police. (2023b). Traficul la frontieră în data de 01 octombrie 2023 [Border traffic on October 1, 2023], 2 October, <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/main/i-traficul-la-frontiera-in-data-de-01-octombrie-2023-34917.html>
- Romanian Government (2004, January 29). Ordinance no. 44 regarding the social integration of foreigners who have acquired a form of protection in Romania. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/49507>
- Romanian Government. (2004, September 9). Ordinance no. 1483 for the approval of the Methodological Norms for the application of Government Ordinance no. 44/2004 regarding the social integration of foreigners who have acquired a form of protection or a right of residence in Romania, as well as citizens of the member states of the European Union and the European Economic Area)
- Romanian Government. (2005, July 14). Emergency Ordinance no. 102 regarding the free movement on the territory of Romania of the citizens of the member states of the European Union and the European Economic Area. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/63411>
- Romanian Government. (2006, September 13). Ordinance no. 1,251 for the approval of the methodological norms for the application of Law no. 122/2006 regarding asylum in Romania. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/75383>
- Romanian Government. (2007, June 20). Emergency Ordinance no. 55 on 2007 for the establishment of the Romanian Immigration Office through the reorganization of the Authority for Aliens and the National Office for Refugees, but also for amending and supplementing certain normative acts. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/83150>
- Romanian Government. (2008, February 20). Ordinance no. 187 of 20 February 2008 concerning the approval of the Action plan for encouraging the return of Romanian citizens working abroad. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/90015>
- Romanian Government. (2014, August 26). Ordinance no. 25 regarding the employment and posting of foreigners on the territory of Romania and for the modification and

- completion of some normative acts regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/160962>
- Romanian Government. (2016, August 24). Ordinance no. 25 for the amendment and completion of some normative acts in the field of foreigners.
- Romanian Government. (2019, July 3). Emergency Ordinance no. 57 on the Administrative Code. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/215925>
- Romanian Government. (2021, August 19). Ordinance no. 884 for the approval of the National Strategy on Immigration for the period 2021-2024, the Action Plan for the period 2021-2022 for the implementation of the National Strategy on Immigration for the period 2021-2024, as well as for the amendment of Ordinance no. 572/2008 regarding the establishment of the Coordination Group for the implementation of the National Immigration Strategy. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/245959>
- Romanian Government. (2022, December 12). Emergency Ordinance no. 194 regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/215925>
- Romanian Government. (2022, February 27). Emergency Ordinance no. 15 regarding the granting of support and humanitarian assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, originating from the area of the armed conflict in Ukraine. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/251954>
- Romanian Government. (2022, June 29). Emergency Ordinance no. 100 regarding the approval and implementation of the National Plan of measures regarding the protection and inclusion of displaced persons from Ukraine, beneficiaries of temporary protection in Romania, as well as for the modification and completion of some normative acts. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/256915>
- Romanian Government. (2022, March 12). Ordinance no. 337 on granting of gratuities and facilities for the transportation of foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, coming from the zone of armed conflict in Ukraine. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/252572>
- Romanian Government. (2022, March 7). Emergency Ordinance no. 20 regarding the modification and completion of some normative acts, as well as for the establishment of humanitarian support and assistance measures. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/252480>
- Romanian Government. (2023, April 26). Ordinance no. 368 for establishing the amount, conditions and mechanism for granting lump sums according to the Emergency Ordinance no. 15/2022 regarding the granting of humanitarian support and assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, coming from the area of the armed conflict in Ukraine. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/267398>
- Romanian Institute for Statistics. (2024). TEMPO-Online. <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/>
- Romanian Parliament (2006). Law No. 122 on Asylum in Romania. <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/71808>

- Romanian Parliament. (2011, July 11). Law no. 157 for the modification and completion of some normative acts regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania,. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/130383>
- Romanian Parliament. (2018, November 5). Law No. 247 for the amendment and completion of some normative acts regarding the regime of foreigners in Romania. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/206601>
- Romanian Presidential Administration. (2022). *Declarația de presă susținută de Președintele României, Klaus Iohannis, la finalul ședinței Consiliului Suprem de Apărare a Țării* [Press statement by Romanian President Klaus Iohannis at the end of the meeting of the Supreme Council of National Defense], 24 February. <https://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/declaratia-de-presa-sustinuta-de-presedintele-romaniei-klaus-iohannis-la-finalul-sedintei-consiliului-suprem-de-aparare-a-tarii1645698579>, last accessed on 02.08.2023.
- Solano, G., & Huddleston, T. (2020). *Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020*. <https://www.mipex.eu/>
- Topal, S., & Radeljić, B. (2023). Does “Fortress Europe” have an alternative? EU member states between solidarity and national interests. *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 14(1), 79-103. <https://doi.org/10.47743/ejes-2023-0104>
- UNHCR Operational Data Portal (2024). *Ukraine Refugee situation: Romania*. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10782>
- UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe (2022). *Lives on hold: Profiles and intentions of refugees from Ukraine*, July 2022, 16. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/94176>
- Union of Ukrainian in Romania. (2023). *Raportul activității Uniunii Ucrainenilor din România privind ajutorarea ucrainenilor refugiați pe teritoriul României de la începutul invaziei armate a Federației Ruse în Ucraina* [The report of the activity of the Union of Ukrainians in Romania regarding helping Ukrainian refugees on Romanian territory since the beginning of the armed invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine]. <https://uur.ro/razboiul-din-ucraina/>, last accessed on 10.08.2023.
- United Nations. (2020). *International Migrant Stock*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>
- Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The Modern World System, Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.
- Zelinsky, W. (1971). The hypothesis of the mobility transition. *Geographical Review*, 61(2), 219-249. <https://doi.org/10.2307/213996>