

# 8

## *Ukrainian Refugees to Europe*

### *in 2022*

#### *Multiple Sources of Deservingness*

Foreign policy also influences how EU leaders treat the right to asylum, as the geopolitics of Europe's efforts to create a united front against Russian aggression is an undercurrent to the prompt European response to Ukrainians.

(Vallianatou and Venturi 2022, np)

What we're seeing now is that [the TPD] is an eminently humane and practical measure. ... It's necessary to prevent people from being in limbo, spending months in unfit reception centres, and waiting for their applications to be assessed for years. It gives them access to integration, to services from day one, and it gives them clarity about how long they can stay.

(Reidy 2022, np. quoting Olivia Sundberg Diez, Policy and Advocacy Advisor – Refugee Resettlement, Protection and Integration – International Rescue Committee, Brussels).

### **8.1 Introduction**

Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and the ongoing war have caused by far the largest migration into Europe since World War II. By March 1, 2022, more than 650,000 displaced persons had entered the European Union (EU), crossing Ukraine's western border into Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. By July 2022, nearly 6 million Ukrainian refugees were estimated to be in continental Europe. In April 2023, more than five million were registered for temporary protection, and slightly over eight million refugees were recorded across Europe (see Map, Figure 8.1). The largest numbers were concentrated in Poland and Germany, which had more than one million each in mid-July 2022, though there was gradual movement westward as well as circular and return migration to Ukraine. Substantial numbers stayed in other EU states including Italy and Sweden, and in Britain under different rules of entry and stay. It is difficult to be precise about numbers



**Figure 8.1** Map of refugees from Ukraine across Europe, April 2023  
 Source: Ukrainian Situation Flash Update #45, UNHCR 21 April 2023.  
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because there has been a great deal of movement within Europe as well as to Ukraine and back. The map in Figure 8.1 shows the distribution of refugees in Europe in April 2023 according to the UNHCR.

In early March 2022, shortly after the war's beginning, Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion were granted immediate entry to EU states and collective protection for three years by the EU's passage of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD). The Directive also provided social rights in all EU member states. This was the first-ever activation of the TPD. It was originally written into EU provisions in 2001, in response to the influx of refugees from Bosnia during the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Proposals were made to activate the Directive during the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) migration, but they did not receive enough support (Ciger 2016, 2022). In fact, in 2020 the EC considered eliminating the TPD because it had not been used in almost twenty years. To this point, people seeking asylum in Europe were required to make individual applications through the Geneva Convention process. Part

of the rationale for the TPD's activation in 2022 was to alleviate pressure on national asylum systems, which, it was argued, would be quickly overwhelmed by the rapid flow of refugees from Ukraine.

Olivia Sundberg Diez, policy and advocacy advisor on refugee issues to the International Rescue Committee (quoted in Reidy 2022, np) characterizes the TPD as “an eminently humane and practical measure for responding to those fleeing wars and seeking asylum in Europe.” As previous discussion of the MENA migration showed, processing of individual applications can take long periods, criteria for protection are applied inconsistently, and asylum seekers wait in limbo sometimes for years. The processing of hundreds of thousands of individual applications also places a heavy administrative burden on governments. The TPD establishes a much simpler and more rapid process for responding to a large influx of refugees. It allows the EU to extend collective protection to those from a country at war, providing them with legal entry, secure residence, and social rights in Europe temporarily during the crisis. The Directive that was activated in March 2022 applies only to those affected by the war in Ukraine. The individual application process remains in place for non-Ukrainian asylum seekers in Europe.

In terms of the book's explanatory framework, Ukrainian refugees have multiple sources of deservingness. They are ethnically close, especially to Polish and other Slavic populations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Many have high levels of education, and so the potential to contribute economically in European receiving states. As most Ukrainian men remain in Ukraine to contribute to the war effort, a large majority – 90 percent – of refugees are women and children, an obviously vulnerable and unthreatening population. The security dimension of their deservingness is especially critical.

As Vallianatou and Venturi (2022, np) observe, “Foreign policy influences how EU leaders treat the right to asylum, as the geopolitics of Europe's efforts to create a united front against Russian aggression is an undercurrent to the prompt European response to Ukrainians.” To state the matter bluntly, many in CEE states fear that if Russia succeeds in incorporating Ukrainian territory, they may be slated for invasion next. In Europe's major powers, Germany and France, there is concern that Russian expansion could trigger a war with NATO. Hosting Ukraine's civilian refugees supports the war effort and so contributes to Europe's security. Providing them with protection and inclusion has formed part of a broader political commitment by EU

governments and popular majorities to support Ukraine financially and militarily, and to impose costly sanctions on Russia. EU member governments unanimously supported the passage of the TPD.

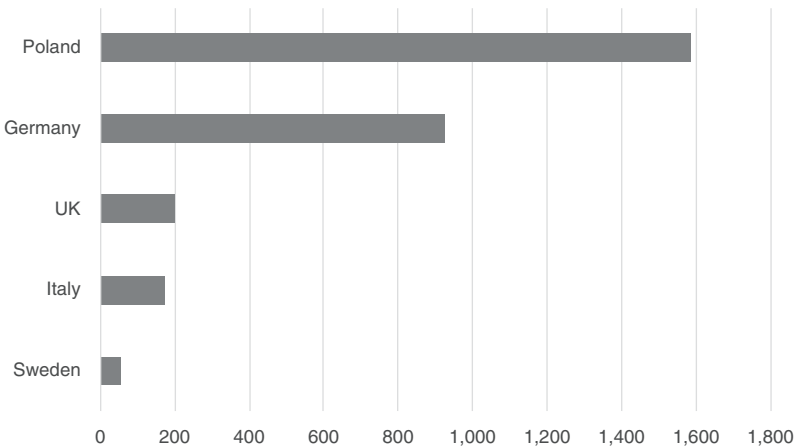
Ukrainian refugees at the same time present challenges for sustaining the inclusionary migration cycle. In comparison with co-ethnic resettlers to Poland and Russia, the refugee migration is much larger in scale, bringing several million Ukrainians to Europe within a period of several weeks. While many refugees are employed in receiving states, given the large percentage of children, elderly and women with care responsibilities, often heading single-parent families, many need various types of social support. And while Ukrainians are ethnically close to Europeans – white and Christian, they are more distant from majorities in Italy or Sweden than from the Slavic populations of CEE states. Finally, most European countries feature political and electoral competition in which parties mobilize popular opinion to seek advantage. Free political agents, including populist parties that have thrived by promoting anti-immigrant and ethno-nationalist politics, could challenge the protection and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees on ethno- or welfare-nationalist platforms.

But after a year and a half and several elections into the migration, no significant parties have challenged it. Some welfare nationalist grievances have emerged in European societies, but politicians have not used them for political advantage, and media have not amplified them, as both invariably do in exclusionary migrations. Rather, governments have managed grievances by reducing some benefits and facilitating and incentivizing refugees' employment. Benefit reductions and other restrictive changes have been treated as matters of normal politics, promoted by finance ministries on the basis of fiscal constraints. Municipalities that have become overburdened by the needs of refugees blame central governments for not providing enough support, and demand more subsidies. For the most part, Ukrainian refugees have not been maligned and scapegoated as welfare abusers, as were CEE labor migrants and MENA refugees. One German mainstream politician who labelled the refugees 'welfare tourists' early in the migration was roundly condemned and quickly retracted his words. Hostility has been expressed by some on the fringes of far-right parties. But neither Italy's populist government, nor the Sweden Democrats (SwD) nor Alternative for Germany (AfD) have taken issue with the presence or social rights of Ukrainian refugees. Europe's broad societal and elite consensus on supporting the migration has been remarkable.

## 8.2 A Large and Inclusionary Migration: “Europe at its Best”

### *Who Are the Refugees?*

According to the UNHCR, a large majority of refugees from Ukraine in Europe are women and children under the age of eighteen. Males between the ages of 18 and 59 years make up only about 10 percent of the total. Most of the men in that age range have remained in Ukraine to participate in or support the war effort, largely by choice, though they have also been prohibited from leaving Ukraine since martial law was declared in the wake of the invasion. The adult refugees are well-educated, with more than two-thirds holding bachelor’s or master’s degrees. The largest group of children is between 5 and 11 years, with smaller numbers of preschoolers and adolescents. Refugees are concentrated in Germany and especially Poland; Figure 8.2 shows the number of refugees per 100,000 population for my study’s five European cases, which also include Italy, Sweden, and Britain (UK). Receiving states have experienced stresses on housing markets and social services for children. The proportion of refugee children attending school varies by age and state of residence. Some, mainly in older grades, follow an online Ukrainian curriculum rather than attending



**Figure 8.2** Number of Ukrainian refugees per 100,000 population registered for temporary protection in Poland, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom (Britain), and Italy, April 2023

Source: UNHCR Ukrainian Refugee Situation, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

schools in hosting states, though Germany is now requiring that all attend schools. Many refugees have returned to Ukraine, remained for varying periods, or moved between Ukraine and Europe. The risks of being in Ukraine are unpredictable. Even areas not directly involved in the ground war are bombed sporadically by Russia (OECD 2023).

Besides those in the European Union, Figure 8.1 shows 300–500,000 Ukrainian refugees in Britain and more than 1,000,000 in Russia. Britain was no longer an EU member in 2022 and so not bound by the TPD. Britain's government adopted more restrictive Sponsorship Schemes that require Ukrainians to be sponsored by relatives, voluntary host families or NGOs, civic groups, church communities and so on, who bear almost all costs of hosting. (I will not discuss Britain further; the rules of its programs can be found in note one at the chapter's end.)<sup>1</sup> Those in Russia include a mix of Ukrainians who went voluntarily and many who were forced, including children. The UNHCR's 1,000 000+ estimate in Figure 8.1 apparently formed part of a larger group of nearly three million from Ukraine who ended up in Russia by force or by choice. According to Schenk (2023, np), the main Western expert on migration in the region:

Nearly 2.9 million Ukrainians went to Russia in the year following the invasion, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some out of desperation, some in solidarity with Moscow, and some – including thousands of children – reportedly by force. Some newly arriving Ukrainians immediately sought escape westward, back into Ukraine or the European Union. These flows are difficult to quantify and are entangled with stories of trauma, forced deportation, and kidnapping.

As the quote indicates, relatively little is known about those in Russia. Some may have entered the Compatriot Resettlement program; many are incarcerated or held in camps. As there is so little reliable information available, I will not discuss Russia further.<sup>2</sup>

### *Ukrainian Refugees in the EU and the TPD: Collective Protection and Social Rights*

On March 2, 2022, within days of Russia's attack on Ukraine, the European Commission (EC 2022a) proposed activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD); on March 4, the Directive was unanimously approved by the European Council (2022).<sup>3</sup> The TPD is an emergency mechanism for managing a *mass influx of displaced*

people into Europe. The Council's Implementing Decision provides *immediate and collective protection* to persons from Ukraine displaced by the Russian invasion. The Directive does not confer a legal status and is not equivalent to asylum or subsidiary protection. It is a blanket decision that allows Ukrainian citizens and permanent legal residents, as well as those with refugee status or equivalent protection, who were living in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, to obtain temporary residence permits in any EU state. All EU governments, in approving it, committed to receiving, protecting, and providing for refugees. The approval process was, according to Trauner and Valodskaitė (2022, 18), swift and uncontested: "Between the Commission's proposal and the Council's decision were only a few days. There were no lengthy discussions or a high level of politicization, which has characterized many negotiations on EU asylum law in recent years. An agreement was reached in a period of one week after the outbreak of the war."

In principle, the TPD can be activated as soon as EU member states judge that there is a mass influx. The Council can determine the "exact category of persons who will receive temporary protection" (Ciger 2016). The TPD that was approved in early March 2022 provides a citizenship -based protection; those without Ukrainian citizenship, permanent legal residence or accepted asylum (legal refugee) status, irrespective of whether they were living in Ukraine at the start of the war, are not included. Third-country nationals (TCNs) do not qualify. According to IOM statistics, approximately 500,000 of those who fled the war in Ukraine were TCNs (Enríquez 2022). While the EU called on member governments to admit on humanitarian grounds and extend temporary protection to TCNs displaced by the invasion, and several have done so, this was not required. The assumption was that most TCNs could safely return to their countries of origin, so did not require protection. Publicized refusals of entry to some of those seeking entry at Europe's border crossings were in compliance with the Directive as long as they were not in fact Ukrainian citizens, permanent residents or refugees. In short, eligibility for coverage by the TPD relies on civic (citizenship, permanent residence), not ethnic criteria, in practice including many Russophone Ukrainian citizens and some who may identify as ethnically Russian.

The TPD is exceptional in international refugee law and practice in specifying a particular group that is affected by a particular conflict at a particular point in time. Up to 2022 (as far as I am aware) international

and EU refugee policies, including the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) discussed earlier, have used universal categories of risk to define eligibility for asylum seekers, who apply and await decisions about their protected status. The TPD, by contrast, provides for *immediate and collective protection* (European Council 2022). The Council Implementing Decision expressly states that all EU countries bordering Ukraine should allow entry of all Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war and includes guidelines for expediting border crossings (Ciger 2022). Refugees can choose their EU state of residence; there are no country-level quotas or allocations, though in some cases individual regions or cities within EU states have set limits. The Directive calls for preserving the unity of families and provides for reunification of separated families as long as one member has protection, with family members to be granted residence in the same host country. It promises financial support from EU funds for “all the efforts of Member States to comply with the obligations deriving from this Decision.” Initially, those who returned to Ukraine temporarily could retain TPD registration, though some restrictions have since been introduced.

The TPD also provides a set of *harmonized rights across the EU*, including temporary residence permits for the full period of protection, access to employment, accommodation or housing, some medical care, and education for those under the age of 18, all renewable for a period up to three years. Evidence shows that EU states have broadly complied with the Directive. Numbers of TPD designations equal or exceed numbers of Ukrainian refugees registered in most EU states. All EU Member States (except Denmark) have transposed the Directive into national legislation. The duration of initial temporary residence varies, with the stipulation that it be renewable for up to three years; several governments that initially granted protection for one year have extended it. As to social rights, the European Commission Directive (EC 2022b) specifies “Obligations of EU countries towards persons enjoying temporary protection,” including those listed earlier as well as access to banking services and the right to move to another country within the EU.

The programs and entitlements in various policy areas – housing, health care, and financial assistance – need not be identical across member states but must comply with the Directive. According to the OECD (2022, 9), “Although there is a certain margin of discretion, EU Member States are bound by this legal framework and cannot



offer a lower set of rights than those foreseen by the Directive to the beneficiaries of temporary protection.”<sup>4</sup> Administration and levels of provision have varied, but overall, governments have responded well. In fifteen of the twenty-six EU states beneficiaries have access to social protection “on an equal standing with nationals.” In the remaining eleven, where permanent residence is a precondition to access certain benefits, refugees do not automatically qualify, but they are provided the full range of benefits specified in the TPD in various forms. The specified social benefits are summarized below:

- **Housing:** states rely on different mixes of “hosted accommodations” – private households that host refugees, including refugees’ relatives and others, sometimes with government financial support. The lengths of both hosting commitments and government subsidies may be limited. Governments also provide reception centers and temporary collective sites such as hotels and hostels according to need.
- **Employment rights:** refugees have legal access to labor markets in receiving states. Particular jobs or professions may require re-qualification according to the rules of the state of residence. In some cases, requirements have been softened or waived, and the evaluation of Ukrainian refugees’ qualifications has been expedited.
- **Education:** all EU states are committed to providing education to children ages 6–18; some provide or subsidize tertiary education.
- **Health care:** ranges from full access to preventive, chronic/routine and urgent care, to emergency access only for adults; these benefits are the least generous.
- **Financial support:** levels and mechanisms vary widely.
- **Language courses and vocational training:** optional, provided in some cases.
- **The European Banking Authority** has made provisions for migrants’ use of financial services. According to Bird and Amaglobeli (2022, 5), “To facilitate access to basic financial products and services, the European Banking Authority /has waived requirements for/ financial institutions to obtain a passport to verify a refugee’s identity. They can, instead, rely on alternative, independent documentation as evidence that a prospective customer is a refugee fleeing Ukraine.” This provision implicitly responds to immigration legislation that makes it illegal to provide banking services to unregistered migrants.

States may set additional conditions for access to labor markets and social services. Poland, for example, requires a national identification number for both. A later section of the chapter will draw on UNHCR and OECD surveys and interviews with refugees to assess the realities of inclusion across these areas of welfare and social provision.

In sum, Europeans' response to Ukrainian refugees has been exceptional, especially in comparison to the treatment of non-European refugees and asylum seekers whose countries were at war (De Vries and Hoffman 2022). They are exceptional even when compared to responses to intra-EU labor migrants from CEE states, most of whom were as close ethnically to majorities of receiving states as Ukrainians, though of course their countries were not under attack. It is worth recalling that the EU's previous efforts to control the allocation of MENA refugees, or to standardize social rights of EU labor migrants, produced deep resentments and refusals to comply by member states. The EU's interventions in national migration, refugee, and welfare politics have been treated as serious violations of national sovereignty especially by parties on the populist right. The TPD has, so far, provoked virtually none of these reactions. In fact, the EU's leadership in responding to the Ukrainian refugees appears to be welcome.

### 8.3 Political Mobilizers of Inclusion

#### *The EU's Rationales for Activating the TPD*

The European Council's discussion and decision around activation of the TPD included specific political, security, and geopolitical contexts and rationales. According to the text of the decision, Russia invaded Ukraine due to "Ukraine's move towards the European Union and the West's defensive military alliance, NATO. ... Thus, the EU has a direct interest in this conflict and sympathy for the Ukrainians and their fight against the aggressor." In the Commission's proposal, one of the reasons given to support temporary protection as an appropriate instrument in response to the Ukrainians' displacement was the "extraordinary and exceptional nature of the military invasion of Ukraine by Russia." Similar statements can be found in the Council Implementing Decision (EC 2022, Preamble para 3 and 4), which states:

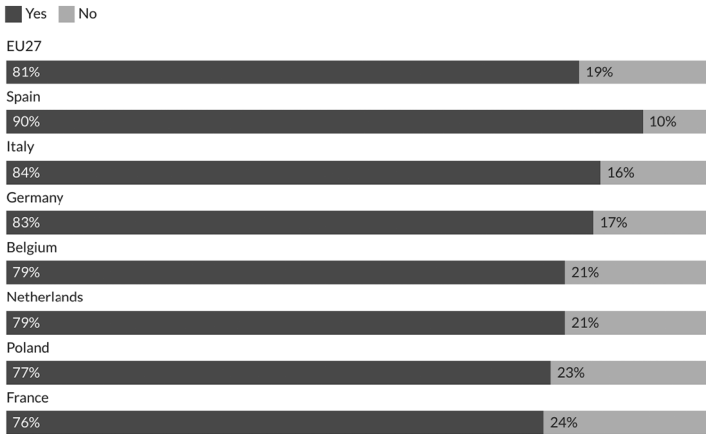
Following the invasion, which seeks to undermine European and global security and stability, the European Council condemned Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms, underlining the gross violation of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.... The Union has shown, and will continue to show, its resolute support for Ukraine and its citizens, faced with an unprecedented act of aggression by the Russian Federation. This Decision forms part of the Union's response to the migratory pressure resulting from the Russian military invasion of Ukraine.

In line with the requirements of the TPD, the duration of these measures is also limited in time. It is to remain in place "as necessary to enable the Member States concerned to address a situation at the European Union's Eastern external borders that endangers the European Union's security and stability." The Directive allows EU member states to apply more favorable provisions. The Council can also end the activation of the TPD.

### *Public Opinion and Civil Society: Strongly Pro-Refugee*

A range of public opinion polls, both at the EU level and in individual countries, show strong and sustained support for the admission and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees. A March 2022 poll conducted shortly after the war's beginning in the EU27 and disaggregated for selected states, including Germany, Italy, and Poland, asked whether the EU should accept more Ukrainian refugees. Nearly half responded, "We should take as many as possible without bureaucracy." An additional 44 percent chose the response, "We should only accept a certain number of refugees." More than 90 percent thus agreed to accepting refugees from Ukraine – an extraordinary level of consensus. In a later survey of the EU27 in June 2022, 81 percent of the total responded that their country should accept refugees from Ukraine, including more than eighty percent of respondents in Germany and Italy and seventy-seven percent in Poland (see Figure 8.3). By March 2023, support for accepting more refugees had declined modestly but remained above 75 percent on average in the EU27. Drops were relatively larger in the states that hosted the largest numbers – 13 percent in Germany and 10 percent in Poland, reflecting their publics' experiences of costs. Still, support remained above 70 percent of respondents in both cases (Hoffman and Schmidt, 2023).<sup>5</sup>

### EU27: Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine?



June 2022

eupinions | what do you think?

**Figure 8.3** Attitudes in the EU27 and selected EU members on accepting refugees from Ukraine, June 2022

Source: DeVries and Hoffman 2022. Reproduced with permission.

Political and security considerations played major roles in this support. Most significantly, from the security deservingness perspective, sixty-eight percent of those polled in the EU27 in December 2022 agreed that “Russia’s attack on Ukraine is an attack on all of Europe.” Sixty-two percent of the total, and 72 percent in Poland, agreed that “Ukrainians also defend our freedom and prosperity, not just their own.” Two-thirds on average in the EU27 saw Ukraine’s future in Europe, agreeing that “the EU should accept Ukraine as a member in the coming years.” (Hoffman 2023; Hoffman and Schmidt 2023) The poll showed somewhat less support for providing weapons to Ukraine, with about 60 percent of respondents from March 2022 to March 2023 agreeing that the EU should provide them and the highest level of support, 75+ in Poland. More than half opposed economic sanctions against Russia, judging them to be ineffective in influencing Russia’s behavior.

Support for Ukrainian refugees has involved every level of society – besides mass public opinion, organized civil society, volunteers, and elites across the political spectrum. As soon as refugees entered Europe, many were aided by non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) and by the spontaneous mobilization of volunteers. By comparison, there was civil society activism in the early stages of the MENA migration, especially in Germany, and international organizations (IOs) and NGOs continued to provide aid. Organizations and individuals in Russia also mobilized to help those fleeing the war in Donbas from 2014 (see Chapter 7). But the mobilization of aid and resources for Ukrainian refugees has been exceptional. In the spring of 2022, web sites offered free transport across the EU to refugees' destinations. Many people invited families to live in their homes or helped to convert public buildings, school gymnasiums, and other facilities for housing. Governments relaxed documentation and health requirements so that dogs, cats, birds, and in some countries ferrets and other pets could remain with their families (Sandvik 2023). "Blue Dot Safe Spaces," both physical and virtual, were created to provide immediate assistance to refugees and to serve as clearing houses for information. In sum, despite the numbers, the EU and member states created and implemented a model for reception of refugees fleeing wars. EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson stated that "this is Europe at its best" (European Commission 2022b).

Poland hosted the largest number of refugees, both absolutely and in proportion to its population. Since 2014, Ukrainian refugees had been coming to Poland, albeit in much smaller numbers, to escape conflicts and their fallout in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea (see Chapter 7). Close to 60 percent of the surveyed population in Poland had since 2015 agreed strongly or moderately that "Poland should accept Ukrainian refugees from areas affected by the conflict." In early 2022, in response to Russia's invasion, those agreeing increased to 95 percent. By July 2022, the percent had eroded only slightly. Societal mobilization, much of it spontaneous, emerged in all host countries. More than 50 percent of those polled in Poland reported that they or a family member had volunteered to support Ukrainian refugees in the war's early months, with a slight decline by summer 2022. To provide immediate accommodations for the large inflow, Polish teachers and volunteers in some cases reconverted gyms and other spaces into dormitories on a daily basis. Such solidarity was underpinned by security considerations; surveys by the Polish Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS 2022) showed that a large majority of respondents who volunteered to help Ukrainian refugees in spring 2022 felt threatened by the war.

*Political Elites: Pro-Refugee Populists*

Parties across the political spectrum, including populists, have supported Ukrainian refugees. The motivations of mainstream parties are obvious: broad popular support for vulnerable refugees and shared opposition to Russia's invasion. Because populist parties played such large roles in the exclusion of both CEE and MENA migrants and refugees, it is more puzzling why no populist parties have tried to mobilize attitudes against the Ukrainian refugees. Recall that mobilization is a mutual process between society and elites. Given the very broad pro-refugee attitudes among EU electorates, anti-immigrant appeals would mostly fall flat. An equally important factor relates to these parties' past political support for Russia and Putin. Europe's populists, with the major exception of Poland's PiS, were more or less pro-Russian until 2022. Populist parties in Italy, Sweden, and Germany (along with those in France, Greece, and others) had taken positions sympathetic to Russia, some defending the 2014 annexation of Crimea and opposing economic sanctions. The invasion of Ukraine, which constituted a major escalation of the Russian threat, put these parties on the defensive politically. In short order, they reversed their stances, showcasing their turn against Russia by welcoming Ukrainian refugees as well as supporting the supply of arms and other aid to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia. Some dropped past opposition to their country's NATO membership.

The shift in position of the Sweden Democrats (SwD) serves as an especially good example. One of Europe's most strongly ethno-nationalist and welfare-chauvinist parties, SwD, had in the past advocated virtual ethnic homogeneity in Sweden. Facing an election in 2022, the party supported sanctions against Russia and assistance to Ukraine, and reversed past opposition to Sweden's membership in NATO (as did Sweden's Social Democrats). According to Bolin (2023, 309), who analysed SwD's shifting positions, "The party has even advocated a relatively generous reception of Ukrainian refugees. Given [its] very restrictive immigration policy, this can be seen as a departure from its traditional line." The party's leader, Jimmie Åkesson, acknowledged the change, saying, "Ukraine is both religiously and culturally more similar to Sweden compared to clan societies in the Horn of Africa." Ukrainian refugees, he continued, differ from previous migrations "of low-educated, or even completely uneducated,

people”; “the burden on society, economically socially and culturally, will not be as devastating” (Bolin 2023, 309, quoting Åkesson). In the 2022 election, the party won slightly over 20 percent of the national vote and became a *de facto* member of Sweden’s governing coalition, in part by maintaining its xenophobic stance toward MENA migrants (Ivaldi and Zankina 2023, 24).

Italian and German populists carried out similar shifts. Italy, whose populist parties and politicians had been openly supportive of Putin in the past, now condemned the invasion, endorsed sanctions and providing arms to Ukraine, and welcomed Ukrainian refugees. Matteo Salvini, leader of the right-populist League, who had been personally friendly with Putin, publicly announced that he would travel to Ukraine’s border to welcome refugees who were coming to Italy. (Several months earlier, Salvini had defended himself against charges of blocking MENA refugees who tried to disembark from a rescue ship in Italy) (Pettrachin and Hadj Abdou 2022; Biancalana 2023). The populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) has remained more internally divided about the war than others, probably because of its significant ethnically Russian electorate in the eastern regions where the party is strongest. But its leadership has supported Europe’s position and Ukrainian refugees (Arzheimer 2023). Poland’s PiS, perhaps the European party of any orientation that has from its inception been most intensely hostile to Russia, has become even more so.

Europeans who voted for populist parties during this period also favored supporting Ukrainian refugees. Pettrachin and Hadj Abdou (2022, np) suggest an insight into the response of these voters, who, as earlier chapters have shown, are often motivated by opposition to change:

the portrayal of Ukrainians as heroes, defending their country against one of the most powerful military powers, has also been crucial. Support for armed forces is a component that touches upon questions of national identity, security, and stability. These are deeply conservative values that often influence the attitudes of those individuals and political leaders that tend to be more skeptical towards immigration.

A year and a half into the migration, there have been no significant protests against including Ukrainian refugees or open political divisions within or between EU states. Countries that received large inflows have not requested that refugees be distributed among other

EU states; they have received significant monetary subsidies from the EU to mitigate their costs. In sum, the politics of this inclusionary migration contrast sharply with the politics of the MENA and other exclusionary cases. Populist parties have done extremely well in elections since the invasion by continuing to demonize the much smaller numbers of MENA and other TCN migrants who come to Europe. So far, no significant populist party has attempted to politicize grievances related to Ukrainian refugees (Enríquez 2022).

#### 8.4 Media Framing

The third part of the inclusionary migration cycle is positive representation in mass media. It was argued in earlier chapters that media both influence public opinion and help set political agendas, identifying issues that elites must address. Press coverage of Ukrainian refugees has been overwhelmingly sympathetic and has justified policies of protection and inclusion, contributing to the perception of deservingness (Rosstalnyj 2022, i). According to Vallianatou and Venturi's (2022, np) study of the media's "double standards for refugees,"

The proliferation of positive narratives by European media newsrooms in the first days of the crisis helped create a discursive and narrative context favourable to the need to protect and host Ukrainian displaced people. This initial playing field, along with other geopolitical, historical and cultural variables that have also been present in the policy-making equation, was conducive to the EU taking different political decisions from seven years ago, (in 2015) i.e., the activation of the most beneficial reception and protection mechanism for refugees in the history of the EU.

Media, including television, emphasize the humanitarian effects of the war; refugees and those remaining in Ukraine are presented as individuals. They are often interviewed and quoted, speaking in their own voices about their experiences and the horrors they face. Such reporting about Syrian and other MENA migrants has been rare.

Differing treatment by media of those who are ethnically close and fighting common enemies and those who are ethnically distant and fleeing more remote conflicts may be to some extent understandable. Still media helps to construct and reinforce distance and difference. In contrast with Ukrainian refugees, their Syrian counterparts have been regularly dehumanized, presented as an anonymous, often



threatening mass rather than individuals with identities, lives, and stories of hardship. While media presented migrants in all three exclusionary cases as bringing serious health threats, including contagious diseases, into receiving countries, articles about Ukrainian refugees often raise concerns about their trauma-induced physical and psychological health needs. The crisis of the war in Ukraine is represented, rightly, as created by Russia, while Syrians fleeing a war that at various points engaged their government as well as the US, Russia, and Islamic militias were themselves presented as the cause of Europe's "migrant crisis" (Rosstalnyj 2022, 6). In the case of the MENA migration, "Commonalities from history and reasons to sympathize with refugees were expressed but not on a wide front with a broad audience" (Rosstalnyj 2022, 33).

### *A Note on the Economic Context*

The economic context for the Ukrainian refugees' migration, though not as bleak as that of the 2008 global recession, has placed significant downward pressure on living standards in Europe. The cutting off of Russian energy supplies, on which both German and Italian economies were substantially dependent, led to a general increase in energy prices throughout Europe. Economic sanctions against Russia after its annexation of Crimea had costs for European economies, as did supplying arms and other support to Ukraine. Overall, growth has been low – less than 5 percent in all cases for 2022 and 0.5 percent or lower for the first quarter of 2023. Annual inflation in 2022 ranged from almost 8 percent in Germany to more than 14 percent in Poland (Statista 2023). Through 2022 and 2023, opinion polls have shown that in their personal lives, Europeans are most worried about increases in their cost of living. Some households have ended refugee hosting arrangements because of rising costs, but there has so far been no broader backlash against Ukrainian refugees driven by economic factors.

## **8.5 How Much Inclusion? Reports on Ukrainian Refugees' Experiences**

Have EU states actually provided Ukrainian refugees with the economic and social rights promised by the TPD? How much inclusion do refugees themselves report in surveys and interviews? The

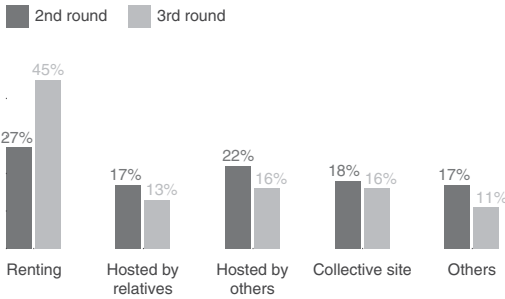
following discussion relies mainly on several reports published by the UNHCR on refugees' perspectives, intentions, risks, and needs in July and September 2022 and February, April, and July 2023, four titled *Lives on Hold* (UNHCR 2022a, 2022b, 2023a, 2023b) and one titled *Displacement Patterns* UNHCR (2023c). These reports do not cover the whole of the EU, nor always the same states and populations, but they provide the best available evidence for comparison of progress in inclusion and integration over time. They are supplemented with OECD reports and other sources.

### *Employment, Housing and Sources of Income*

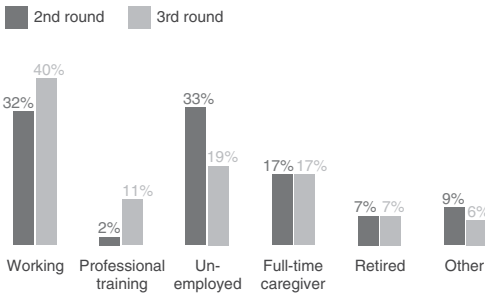
Figure 8.4 shows changes in refugees' accommodation, economic activity and sources of income between September 2022 and January 2023. Between the two surveys, the percent of refugees working, the single most important measure of integration, increased from 32 percent to 40 percent. The proportion in professional training increased from 2 percent to 11 percent. The unemployed percentage decreased from 33 percent to 19 percent. Seventeen percent remained full-time caregivers. These numbers show significant levels and increases in refugees' ability to find jobs and modest improvements in hosting states' provision of help to those preparing for the labor market. While still well below the 63 percent who were employed in Ukraine before leaving, the rate in early 2023 was at nearly two-thirds of that proportion. As noted earlier, some governments are taking measures to fast-track refugees' labor market entry. It matters greatly for judgments of deservingness that the TPD provides access to labor markets, because those who work are seen to be contributing economically.

Refugees' ability to pay for their own accommodations has also improved markedly. Renting serves as an indicator that they are settled and more self-sufficient. The percentage renting increased from 27 to 45 between the two surveys, while proportions of those hosted by relatives or others, or living in temporary collective sites (hotels or hostels) all decreased. These numbers also indicate that, while some kind of accommodation is being provided to virtually all refugees, stable housing remains a problem for many (see Figure 8.4). Temporary housing arrangements were made quickly as large numbers of refugees arrived in the early weeks after Russia's invasion. Some, including collective living facilities, were intended to be temporary, while

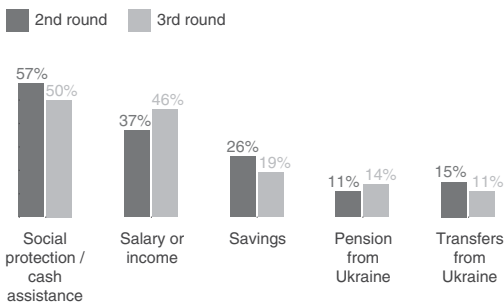
### CHANGES IN REFUGEES' ACCOMODATION ACROSS DATA COLLECTION ROUNDS



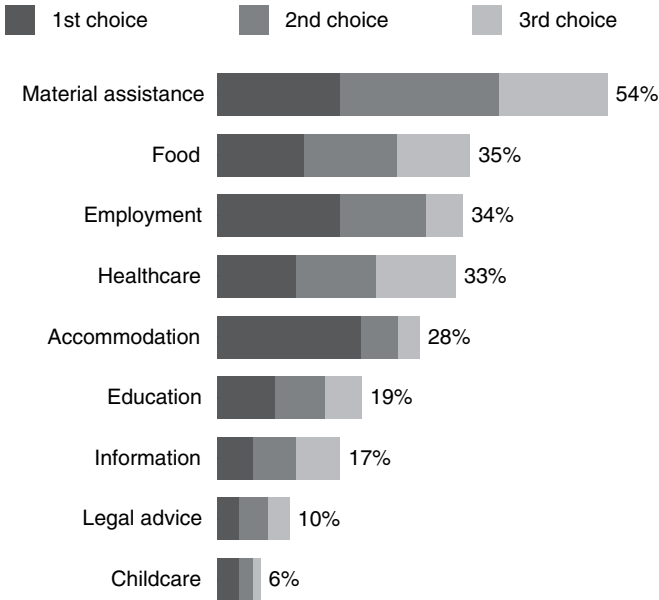
### CHANGES IN REFUGEES' ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ACROSS DATA COLLECTION ROUNDS



### CHANGES IN REFUGEES' INCOME SOURCES ACROSS DATA COLLECTION ROUNDS



**Figure 8.4** Changes in Ukrainian refugees' accommodations, economic activity, and income sources (September 2022 to January 2023)  
Source: UNHCR 2023a, 29. Reproduced with permission.



*Multiple responses were possible. So percentages can go over 100% when*

**Figure 8.5** Top 10 urgent needs of Ukrainian refugees in selected European states, April 2023 (Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia)  
Source: UNHCR 2023c, 22. Reproduced with permission.

others, especially hosted housing, were short-term. Many refugees were uncertain about the future of their housing, often assuming that they could remain in their current housing for at most several months (OECD 2022). Collective accommodations generally allow little privacy. Moves may mean children changing schools and are especially disruptive for people who are already displaced. In an April 2023 survey, more than a quarter listed housing as one of their ten top “urgent needs” (see Figure 8.5).

Refugees’ income sources became somewhat more stable as increasing numbers enter labor forces, with an almost 10 percent increase in those relying on salaries or income. The proportion relying on social protection or cash assistance declined by 7 percent, though it remained at 50 percent in early 2023 (see Figure 8.4). Almost 30 percent received pensions or transfers from Ukraine. At the same time, many refugees are employed below their skill levels.

In Poland, about half of employed women were in low-paid jobs in services, agriculture, and manufacturing, partly because of their limited Polish language skills. According to the vice-chair of the Polish trade union confederation (OPZZ), by some estimates, a majority of women refugees work on freelance or temporary contracts, as do many nationals, especially young people entering Poland's labor market (see Chapter 2). Many also work informally, often doing care work (Kucharska 2022).

### *Refugees' Urgent Needs*

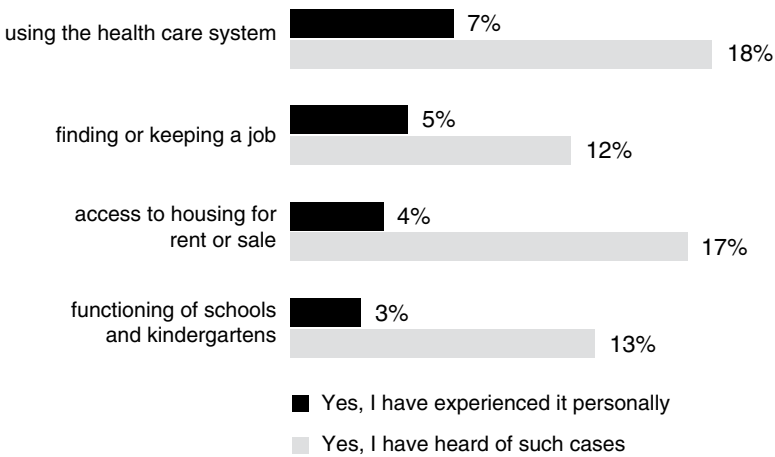
An April 2023 UNHCR survey asked refugees to rank their top ten urgent needs. Eighty-one percent reported at least one need. The largest percentage, more than half, named material assistance. About one-third listed food, employment, and health care (see Figure 8.5). Reportedly, about 45 percent of school-aged children were not enrolled in school in the host country, with three-quarters of these families preferring to study the online Ukrainian curriculum. These educational choices attest to families' intentions to return to Ukraine, to maintain a strong Ukrainian identity for their children, as well as weak efforts by host countries to accommodate refugee children with bilingual classes and adapted curricula. Insufficient language instruction in several cases is reported as a major gap in integration measures for both children and adults.

## **8.6 The Limits of Deservingness: Contention over Refugees' Social Rights**

### *Public Opinion*

There has been concern, and some contention in hosting societies, over refugees' social rights. In a summer 2022 survey on attitudes toward refugees creating problems with social resources, respondents in Poland were asked, "Have you personally experienced or heard about difficulties related to the influx of refugees from Ukraine in the following four areas of the social sphere: using the health care system; finding or keeping a job; access to housing for rent or sale; functioning of school and kindergartens." Only 3 to 7 percent reported difficulties in each of these areas, while between 12 and 18 percent responded

**Have you personally experienced or heard about difficulties related to the influx of refugees from Ukraine in:**

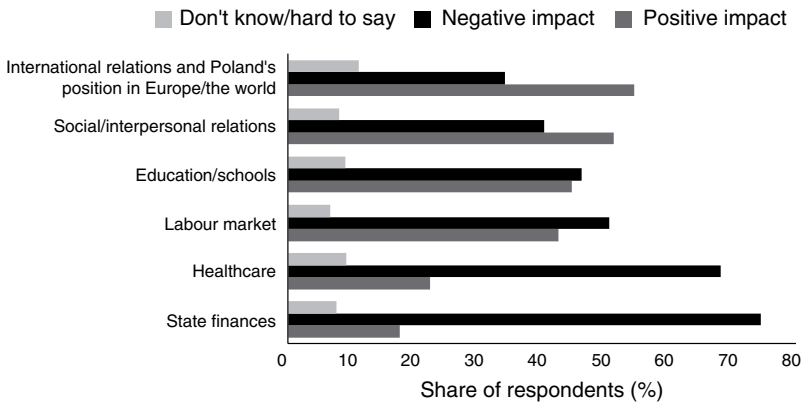


**Figure 8.6** Poland: Public opinion poll on difficulties in the social sphere related to the influx of refugees from Ukraine (July/August 2022)

Source: CBOS 2022, 3. Reproduced with permission.

that they had “heard about difficulties” (see Figure 8.6). In a separate 2022 opinion poll in Poland’s twelve largest cities asking about long-term impacts of hosting Ukrainian refugees, respondents anticipated significant negative impacts on social services as well as state finances. As Figure 8.7 shows, the survey, which included 12,000 respondents, found that many expected impacts mainly on health care and state finances, and to a lesser extent on the labor market. At the same time, respondents saw effects on education as neutral and a small majority were positive about social/interpersonal relations. The largest positive impact was seen to be on “international relations and Poland’s position in Europe/ the world” (Hargrave et al. 2023, 25).

As Figure 8.7 suggests, deservingness has limits. Chapter 3 showed that majorities in European countries, in most cases large majorities, believe that access to social benefits requires that people who are able to work and pay taxes do so. Even given Ukrainian refugees’ ethnic closeness, need, and contribution to European security, about six months into the migration grievances emerged around their social rights. Some arose from the societal level, over costs to public budgets, stress on social services, or competition for jobs and housing.



**Figure 8.7** Opinion in Poland’s major cities on long-term impacts of hosting Ukrainian refugees (2022)

Source: Hargrave et al. 2023, 25. Reproduced with permission.

European governments responded by reducing or ending some of the benefits provided initially. They also imposed requirements and conditions for continued receipt, particularly of housing and financial assistance. Restrictions driven by fiscal pressures have grown over time, as have conflicts between national and regional or city governments over which should bear costs of hosting refugees. Many temporary programs had been set up as the refugees arrived in early 2022, and have ended as the funding committed for them has been exhausted.

### *Limiting Benefits*

From summer 2022, governments began to limit aid and access to benefits, usually by restricting eligibility to refugees who met conditions of need or vulnerability, or reducing subsidies. At the same time authorities increased pressures and incentives for work, as well as sometimes facilitating access to jobs. While EU states’ social obligations had not been entirely homogenized under the TPD, the new restrictions were distinctive initiatives of individual governments. Past norms and practices of welfare retrenchment and immigration policy appeared, though not in harsh forms. Below is a summary of reductions or new conditions for receipt of benefits, organized by issue areas, then by country, for Poland and Germany, the two EU states that hosted the largest numbers of refugees.

## **Housing**

Poland continued to have the largest refugee population. Those arriving were initially housed in a mix of rented, privately hosted, and collective accommodations. Almost twenty percent of Ukrainian refugees lived in private-hosted housing for which the government paid subsidies. In July 2022, Poland's Commissioner for Refugees, Paweł Szefernaker, announced that payments for hosting households would end, except for those hosting people with disabilities, pregnant women, or large families – in short, the most vulnerable refugees (Poland Cancels 2022). In fall 2022, the government announced that those in collective accommodation would be required to contribute 50 percent of the cost after 120 days, a change that affected approximately 80,000 people (Krzysztozek 2022). In Germany, a federal state which had the second largest refugee population, conflicts emerged between states and municipalities on one hand and the federal government on the other, over costs of housing. Saxony's Prime Minister Michael Kretschmer, for example, addressing problems of housing for Ukrainian refugees, insisted, "The federal government must finally support the financing of the accommodation. The municipalities are at their limit; without the promised support, they will soon no longer be able to act." Franziska Giffey, mayor of Berlin, likewise declared that the city was "at capacity" and that the federal government needed to build more social housing (InfoMigrants 2022, np). In Italy as well, some cities claimed that they were at saturation points and demanded help from the central government.

## **Social Assistance**

Social assistance payments also became contentious, partly because some refugees were returning to Ukraine for various periods while still registered for these payments. Refugees were explicitly permitted to travel back and forth between Ukraine and their EU country of residence without losing protected status. However, receiving assistance payments, especially during extended absences, became an issue. In September 2022, Friedrich Merz, the leader of Germany's center-right Christian Democrats, who were in opposition, accused Ukrainian refugees of taking advantage of Germany's social welfare system. Merz told Bild TV in an interview "What we're seeing is welfare tourism on the part of these refugees: to Germany, back to Ukraine, to Germany, back to Ukraine." Merz's charge produced an uproar, with



sharp criticism from representatives of all the major parties, including Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the Greens, the Social Democrats, and the Free Democrats. The SPD's chief parliamentary whip charged, "He [Merz] deliberately wants to unleash a political culture war and shift the discourse to the right." The Free Democrats accused him of endangering public support for Ukraine. The Green Party co-chair castigated Merz for "speaking of 'welfare tourism' while referring to people fleeing a terrible war." Merz apologized for using the term "welfare tourism" (German Opposition 2022, np). Both German and Polish governments *did* in fact restrict access to social benefits for those who returned to Ukraine for extended periods, but rejected the rhetoric of blame and scapegoating that was used constantly in the exclusionary migration.

### **Work Incentives**

Poland and Germany also took measures to increase refugees' participation in their labor forces. Germany had long used a dispersal system to allocate labor migrants and asylum seekers to different parts of the country, partly to prevent what it viewed as overburdening of cities by concentrations of people from other cultures, and partly to meet labor needs. Under the TPD, Ukrainian refugees had no restrictions on their place of residence, but governments had some control over conditions for their social rights. The German government adapted the dispersal system to help allocate refugees across the country's federal states according to employment opportunities (labor market needs). Moving to the designated location was not mandatory, but access to social assistance was made conditional on the refugees' presence there. Poland's decision to charge refugees for part of the cost of collective accommodations also had the effect of motivating participation in the labor force.

### *Limiting Benefits as Normal Politics*

The politics and rhetoric around social benefits in this inclusionary migration are radically different from those in the exclusionary cases, even when benefits are being retracted. Restrictions and reductions are discussed and justified in the language of normal domestic politics, advocated by finance ministries citing fiscal constraints. Hosting households more often blame authorities for failing to provide adequate subsidies. Regional and city authorities castigate national

governments for shifting costs downward. Charges that Ukrainian refugees overuse or exploit welfare resources – the constant drumbeat of welfare nationalist mobilization against CEE and MENA migrants in Europe and Central Asian labor migrants in Russia – are relatively rare and generally not amplified. Rather, they are rejected by elites as false and fail to resonate with much of the electorate. Even as fiscal and financial stresses increased, Ukrainian refugees have for the most part not been scapegoated or vilified by societies or elites. They are broadly viewed as deserving to be included in the ‘legitimate community of welfare receivers’ of mature European welfare states.

## 8.7 Ukrainian Refugees’ Multiple Sources of Deservingness

### *Cultural Closeness and Personal Ties*

My study concurs with the largest group of contemporary analysts’ finding that shared ethnic – racial and cultural – identity – is the main basis for deservingness. It matters greatly that Ukrainian refugees are white, Christian (mainly Orthodox and Catholic) and considered ‘European.’ The degree of cultural closeness does diminish as refugees move westward in Europe. However, they have concentrated in Slavic countries (in addition to Germany), with many fewer in Italy, Sweden, and others, (see Figure 8.1) which diminishes the issue of difference. Another factor connected with identity was the presence in Europe of a large Ukrainian diaspora before the war began. Significant numbers of nationals, especially in Poland and Italy, had personal links with Ukrainians in the diaspora who worked as carers and nannies in their homes. As a result, they were aware of and personally connected to the war’s effects on their employees’ families. There is evidence that these connections contributed to support for the refugees by humanizing them and bringing consciousness of their situations into European homes on a daily basis (Roberts 2022).

### *Need: Vulnerable and Unthreatening*

Ukrainian refugees easily meet the second criterion for deservingness: need and vulnerability. It is clear and immediate to EU populations that they are fleeing war and destruction of their homeland. There is no contention about whether they “qualify” for protection, no

mixing in of labor migrants from “safe” countries, as there was with the MENA migration. The large majority of Ukrainian refugees are women, children, and elderly people whose families are often divided, with some members in serious danger. As a feminized migration it brings no threats of crime, violence, or terrorism. The near absence of young and middle-aged men makes the Ukrainian migration distinctively vulnerable as well as unthreatening, in sharp contrast with Europeans’ perception of large numbers of young male labor migrants who joined the MENA migration.

### *Contribution: A Settled Diaspora to Absorb Costs*

Contribution and reciprocity constitute the third basis for deservingness. There are certainly costs to including Ukrainian refugees in the short term. However, the large numbers of generally young, educated women in the migration have the potential to contribute economically to the labor-short economies of Europe. In addition, the Ukrainian diaspora was expected to absorb a large part of the costs of resettlement. Ukrainians had held visa rights in the European Union since 2017. Almost 1.35 million held valid residence permits in a European state at the end of 2020, of whom nearly half a million were in Poland, almost 225,000 in Italy, over 80,000 in Germany, and almost 13,000 in Sweden (Fleck 2022). When it approved the TPD, the EC explicitly stated the expectation that about half of the refugees would be aided by diaspora communities without putting pressure on the reception capacity of receiving countries.

The diaspora’s anticipated role was a major factor in European leaders’ confidence that the Ukrainian migration, despite its size, would be much more manageable than migration in previous crises. According to an OECD Report, *Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries* (2022, 4), “this humanitarian crisis cannot be compared to previous ones, notably to the 2015/16 humanitarian crisis in Europe, for multiple reasons.” Among those reasons was the large pre-conflict Ukrainian diaspora. The report noted that many refugees had relatives or friends already living in EU who could provide housing and help refugees find jobs and other resources. While the other half (estimated to be between 1.2 million and 3.5 million persons) might seek receiving states’ assistance, the expected role of the diaspora in settling refugees was calculated to seriously mitigate costs for EU states (European Council 2022).

*Security: The Russia Factor*

The contribution of Ukraine to Europe's security is the most important factor in refugees' deservingness. The documents accompanying approval of the TPD recognized this explicitly. Russia is represented as the most serious threat confronting Europe, especially Poland and the other front-line states that border Russia, and Germany, the linchpin of NATO. According to Hanne Beirnes, Director of the Migration Policy Institute Europe (quoted in Reidy 2022, np):

One of the main reasons why the EU's response to Ukrainians has differed significantly from its treatment of other refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants is because EU policymakers are not viewing the situation primarily as a refugee crisis. ... This is very much perceived by EU and national policymakers as a geopolitical conflict in which the EU is positioning itself towards what is happening in Ukraine, but also towards Russia. ... So the solidarity that is shown with the refugees, and the willingness to host, is very much seen as one of the ways in which the EU is positioning itself.

Inclusion of Ukrainian refugees is inextricably tied to a broader set of issues about the war's course and the costs for Europe and Europeans of military and financial aid to Ukraine and of sanctions against Russia. After territorial gains by Ukrainian forces in 2022, at this writing, the conflict appears to be at something of a stalemate. There is division in Europe and the United States over the costs of the war, providing munitions, and questions about how long support will continue. (As of October 2023, a major crisis in the Middle East is also distracting international attention.)

Going forward, EU policy toward the refugees is likely to depend on events in Ukraine. As the TPD has never been activated before, there are no rules or conventions for its use beyond the initial crisis. There is no precedent to suggest what a ceasefire, negotiations, or other developments would mean for Ukrainian refugees protected under the Directive. The EC has discretion to extend the Directive beyond its initial three years in the event that the conflict continues or to declare Ukraine, or parts of it, safe for return. It is unclear whether any decisions would apply to the refugees collectively or differ among EU states. Decisions could depend on the region of Ukraine from which refugees came, how badly that region was affected by the war's destruction of infrastructure. While the TPD is explicitly temporary, it can be extended. The Directive was activated by a unanimous vote of

EU member states. It is unclear how strong a consensus among those states would be required, either to extend or to end temporary protection.<sup>6</sup> Most of the refugees express an intent to return home after the war, and some would likely get visas to remain working in Europe, but this is all unchartered territory.

## 8.8 Comparing Ukrainian and MENA Refugee Migrations

Some commentators (Foley 2020; Cigur 2022; Trauner and Valodskaitė 2022) have suggested that use of the TPD might bring a shift in Europe's exclusionary migration policies. Trauner and Valodskaitė (2022) argue that there are two likely outcomes of Europe's policy toward the Ukrainian refugees' migration: "either a 'decoupling' from EU asylum policy or movement toward solidaristic reforms in migration policies generally." All evidence points to a decoupling. Europe is entering its third year of protecting and socially including several million Ukrainian refugees. Throughout this time, hostility toward MENA and other non-European TCN migrants and asylum seekers has remained pervasive and arguably deepened, marked by the nearly total refusal to accept their entry into EU states or Britain (Düvell and Lapshyna 2022). In sum, my study confirms Wilde's (2022, np) argument that "the approach to Ukrainian refugees is operating *in tandem* with the alternative, far more restrictive approach that operates for other refugees. *Thus an extreme two-tier system of refugee protection prevails, mapping onto a stark divide between white Europeans and non-white non-Europeans.*" (my emphasis)

Immigration from MENA and other states continues to serve as a major animating issue for populist parties and their electorates. Populists continue to use welfare nationalist and xenophobic appeals to gain political support. Opposition to 'irregular' immigration was central in the fall 2022 Italian election that brought to power a populist coalition led by Prime Minister Meloni, who has advocated pushbacks of migrants' boats. The Sweden Democrats, now *de facto* members of the governing coalition, have pressed for legislation to limit terms of visas for MENA migrants already granted protection and to put an end to family reunification. Stopping the entry of irregular migrants is the major platform of the prospering AfD, which recently held secret meetings to discuss a proposal for mass deportations of migrants from Germany in the event that the party gains sufficient power. Large

popular demonstrations against the AfD and its proposal do show empathy for the migrants, but the party continues to gain support nationally. In sum, opposing migration remains populists' stock-in-trade, and continues to bring them unprecedented political success.

The Ukrainian refugee migration shows that European political elites have the administrative capacity to organize the integration of several million refugees into their societies and economies in a condensed time frame without provoking a crisis. This possibility is arguably unique to the Ukrainian migration, given the degree of ethnic proximity, support by the Ukrainian diaspora, the exceptional predominance of educated women and children and the "Russia factor." The behavior of populists in the Ukrainian case is exceptional, but it has more to do with disassociating themselves from Russia's aggression than any new-found tolerance for outsiders. Mainstream parties are constrained by anti-migrant popular attitudes that are continually mobilized by populists. Migration, more than any other issue, has transformed Europe's party systems and brought ethno-nationalist parties into legislative coalitions and governments. Any prospect for solidaristic reforms is diminishing.

## 8.9 Conclusion

My study began by identifying the multiple political and humanitarian crises and costs produced by contemporary migration policies in Europe and Russia. Since 2000 conditions have worsened for asylum seekers, labor and irregular migrants. Only those who over-fulfill conditions for deservingness are generally accepted into societies' 'legitimate community of welfare receivers.'<sup>7</sup> The chapters have explained how things got to their present point, emphasizing structural factors that are not likely to change in the medium term, at least not in directions that could mitigate welfare nationalist politics. While political elites have some influence over inclusion/exclusion, they are constrained by popular attitudes and by electoral competition from anti-migrant populist parties that either push more moderate parties in exclusionary directions or replace them. Even in Russia, Putin was nudged away from more moderate migration policies by ambitious regional politicians who mobilized anti-immigrant grievances. Media that denigrate and sensationalize migrants and stoke popular fears dominate news cycles. Žagar (2018), who studied the decaying discourse on refugees in Slovenia from the 1990s Bosnian to the 2015

MENA migrations, concluded that the growth of social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook) that completely lack journalistic professional ethics contributed to deterioration of language.<sup>8</sup>

As many others have argued, the Geneva Convention system no longer works, either for asylum seekers or for receiving states' governments. The individual application process burdens governments administratively and is slow, arbitrary, and cruel for asylum seekers. There are too many seeking asylum, and it is difficult to distinguish those fleeing persecution and violence from the much larger numbers of labor or "irregular" migrants, who apply for asylum because there are no international protections against destitution. While claiming to respect the Convention, European governments increasingly assign weaker subsidiary forms of protection even to successful asylum applicants. They continue to accept small quotas of the "most deserving" to keep up the pretence of observing Geneva principles. Russia, while it is a party to the Convention and occasionally grants temporary protection, has almost never granted asylum.

Alexander Betts and Paul Collier (2015) have put forward an ambitious proposal to address at least part of the migration crisis. They emphasize that the vast majority of the world's refugees remain in states in their regions of origin, where some receive international humanitarian aid. Betts and Collier propose that wealthier states invest in economic projects to help refugees become self-supporting where they are. For example, Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan could be incorporated into special development zones in which wealthier states and private corporations would invest to provide them with employment. Refugees would then have fewer incentives to move to Europe and could build their skills for reconstruction when the wars in their home states eventually end. The authors' laments about the cruel waste of lives and talent of those living in refugee camps, or on the margins of large cities with no legal status, resonate strongly. Betts and Collier's proposal is related to the concept behind the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, discussed in Chapter 6, which was established by the EC during the 2015 MENA migration. The Fund was supposed to "address the root causes of destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development" (quoted in Terlizzi and Marchese 2020, 11). (The Trust Fund differed from Betts' and Colliers' proposal in not including private corporate investment.)

In 2015, when European governments were very highly motivated to slow the inflow of migrants, EUR 5 billion was committed to the Fund for projects in 26 countries across three regions of Africa. This amount was spread very thinly and has had limited impacts. It is not clear what would motivate these governments to engage in a much more ambitious and expensive effort than they made during the 2015 crisis. Such an approach could, as Betts and Collier argue, have multiple benefits in supporting refugees and dampening incentives for their moving to Europe, but there is little evidence of the normative commitments and solidarity demanded by the proposal. European governments and the EU have instead spent large sums on policies of securitization and externalization of borders, which have limited the flow of irregular migration but neither stopped it nor provided alternatives for those who come. Sea and land entries to Europe have continued, as have the UNHCR's recordings of the dead and missing. In 2023, migration, mostly from the MENA region, reached more than 223,000, its highest level since 2016 (UNHCR Europe 2023). European states continue to close and securitize internal land borders, a practice that before 2015 was allowed within the Schengen Zone only temporarily under national states of emergency (SchengenVisa. 2023a). In 2023, the EU allocated "hundreds of millions of Euros to Frontex (the European Border and Coast Guard Agency) for border surveillance, including drones and radiation detection devices and aircraft to carry out forced returns of migrants" (SchengenVisa 2023b).

Externalization, which was introduced as a temporary emergency measure to deal with the 2015 emergency, has become a key part of the EU's immigration control strategy. Member states continue to fund new agreements with governments across the Mediterranean to keep migrants away from Europe. A recent externalization agreement paid the government of Tunisia to "tighten border controls in exchange for aid." According to the *New York Times* (Yee 2023) in order to comply Tunisian authorities moved more than 1,000 migrants from a point of departure on the Mediterranean to a border region with little food or water, resulting in indeterminate numbers of deaths before the government was pressed to move some to shelters. According to the report, "The E.U.-Tunisia deal went ahead over the objections of some EU lawmakers and rights groups who accuse Europe of buttressing an autocrat in the making. Tunisia's president, Kais Saied, who has a



record of vilifying migrants, has spent the last two years dismantling Tunisia's democracy" (Yee, 2023).

In the face of popular and political pressures to control migration, European governments continue to pursue these partially effective, inhumane policies. There is no political will or possibility to move in the direction of reform based on the 'Ukrainian refugee' model, or for large-scale investment in development zones in MENA states that host the majority of refugees. Given the economic and political conditions, ongoing conflict in the MENA region and large disparities in living standards between Europe and MENA and other poor third countries, there seems no alternative to the ongoing arrival of migrants. Some will be turned back while others succeed in remaining, often in precarious situations on the margins of European cities. In sum, the stand-off between the desperation of migrants and asylum seekers, and Europe's capacities for securitization and surveillance seems likely to continue.

## Notes

1. "Great Britain: Rules of Entry and Residence. What Does a Ukrainian Need to Know?" <https://visitukraine.today/blog/880/great-britain-rules-of-entry-and-residence-what-does-a-ukrainian-need-to-know>.
2. My efforts to get clarification on the sources of these figures from UNHCR were unsuccessful.
3. For the full text of the decision, Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection ST/6846/2022/INIT see [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2022.071.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2022%3A071%3ATOC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2022.071.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2022%3A071%3ATOC).
4. For a Table showing in detail the rights and benefits of dedicated protection schemes by host country, including work rights, education, housing, health services, financial support and other integration measures for all EU and most OECD member states, see OECD (2022, 19–27).
5. The data in this paragraph come from repeated surveys with the same questions administered at quarterly intervals from March 2022 to March 2023, which found almost no time effects in the first year of the war. See Hoffman and Schmidt (2023).
6. Passage of the TPD required a 'qualified majority' in the European Council.

7. Exceptions are made for educated migrants, especially those who have skills that are valued or needed in receiving societies, irrespective of ethnicity. Those with skills in IT as well as health care and other deficit areas are welcomed and included by legislation or practice in all cases studied.
8. According to Zagar (2018, 120–121) “While traditional media have journalists and editors with certain professional ethics, everybody can be a journalist and editor on Facebook and Twitter if they want to, and professional ethics becomes a matter of personal preferences, biases, likes, and dislikes in every segment of public life.”