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At least 3 million people have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries since the beginning of Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, creating Europe's fastest growing migration crisis since World War II. Of those, more than 1,6 million have fled to Poland.

Almost 90% migrants are women with children, because their husbands and fathers remain in Ukraine in order to defend their home country. Some new arrivals have family or friends in Poland or further afield in Europe (especially Germany) where they can stay. But many have nowhere to go.

Despite the warm welcome, many migrant women are shocked, they want to talk out loud what they went through and then slowly they calm down and get used to the new reality – they have to go on living.

Many Ukrainian migrant women hope to return home, but as they scroll through the phones and see the images of death and destruction in the land they left behind, that hope could be draining away. Only in one of the biggest and densely populated city Kharkiv, which is located in the eastern part of Ukraine on the border with Russia, more than 600 residential multi-storey buildings were completely destroyed by incessant bombing and cruise missile attacks. Most factories, industrial enterprises, universities, hospitals, various social infrastructure facilities are completely destroyed and cannot be restored in the coming years. It means that in the coming years Ukrainians will be deprived of the ability to earn money, receive education and qualified medical care.

Host countries have to anticipate scenarios of increasing and perhaps sudden inflows of Ukrainian refugees in 2023. The different scenarios range from 500,000 to 4 million persons are expected and contingency plans must prepare for such high numbers.

The biggest challenges Ukrainian migrant women face are: lack of a clear procedure for the legal status of stay in the country; language barrier; need for psychological and physical recovery; need for more support, especially in learning German, seeking employment, obtaining medical care, and finding housing.

Ukrainian refugees have a higher level of education than the Ukrainian population as a whole: around 75% of Ukrainian refugees in Germany hold a university degree. But Ukrainian immigrants in Poland and Germany cannot rely on a large return on their human capital. Higher education turned out to be insignificant, which indicates that formal education does not contribute to increasing the level of income.