

Warsaw, 9 May 2023

80% of refugees from Ukraine see a positive attitude towards them among Poles

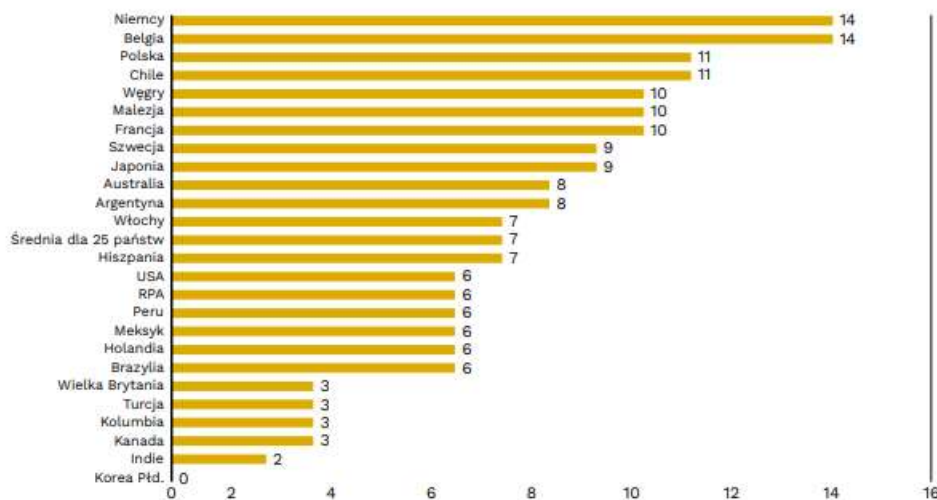
Over 1 million Ukrainians who sought refuge after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 are currently in Poland. 80% of them believe that Polish society has a positive attitude towards them. However, Poles' views on refugees' situation is clearly changing. The percentage who believe that Ukrainian refugees are in need of assistance has fallen from 84% to 50% since the Russian. In its report *Poles and Ukrainians — the challenges of integrating refugees*, the Polish Economic Institute analyses Poles' attitudes towards refugees from Ukraine.

Growing fatigue

In Poland and other countries in the region, social acceptance for taking in and supporting refugees from Ukraine remains high, but it is decreasing over time. As the days go by, states' and societies' determination to take in Ukrainian refugees is declining. Support for taking in refugees is still high (66% globally), but it fell by 7 pp between April 2022 and December 2022, which points to the risk linked to weakening determination to provide assistance and bear its cost.

"In Europe, the biggest drop in support has taken place in Germany (-14 pp), Belgium (-14 pp), Poland (-11 pp), Hungary (-11 pp) and France (-10 pp), but average support for taking in refugees is still high; 66% in the 28 countries surveyed. While these values may vary between studies, the trend is clear and does not raise any doubts. In the near future, governments and NGOs may face the challenge of stepping up efforts to foster social inclusion," says Łukasz Baszczak, an analyst in the behavioural economics team.

Wykres 1. Spadek poparcia dla przyjmowania uchodźców wojennych w okresie 03.04.2022-11.12.2022 (w pkt proc.)



Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie: IPSOS (2023).

Chart 1. Fall in support for taking in refugees between 03.04.2022 and 11.12.2022 (pp)

Germany / Belgium / Poland ...

Source: prepared by PEI based on IPSOS (2023).

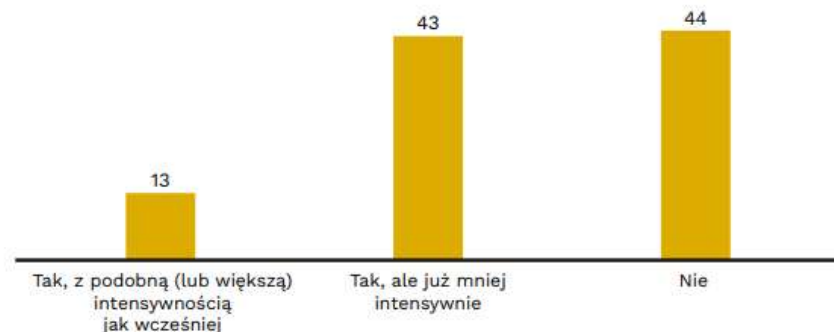
Ukrainians have become part of Polish society

Before the war, 40% of respondents did not encounter Ukrainians in their everyday life. In 2022, this percentage fell significantly; it is now 6%. Respondents are most likely to encounter Ukrainians at shops or shopping malls, as well as near their home, in their neighbourhood. One in four Poles meets Ukrainians at work.

Although the war began more than a year ago, Poles are still helping refugees, but on a smaller scale. When the study was conducted, slightly over 13% of respondents said that they are helping refugees with the same intensity as before (closer to the start of the war). 43% said that they are still helping, but with less intensity. This means that more than half of the Poles who helped refugees at all are still doing so, around 8 months after the Russian invasion. 44% of Poles have stopped helping Ukrainians.

“Fatigue with helping, and with the subject of the war and refugees, is a well-known phenomenon in the literature. Some increase in anti-Ukrainian behaviour — which is still relatively rare in Polish society — is therefore unsurprising. To conduct an effective refugee policy, it will be crucial to monitor changes in these attitudes and prevent them using various tools,” says Radosław Zyzik, a senior advisor in the behavioural economics team.

Wykres 10. Zaangażowanie w pomoc uchodźcom w listopadzie 2022 r. – wśród osób, które wcześniej udzielały pomocy (w proc.)



Źródło: opracowanie własne PIE na podstawie badania ankietowego.

Chart 10. Involvement in helping refugees in November 2022 among people who helped earlier (%)

Yes, with the same (or greater) intensity as before

Yes, but less intensively

No

Source: prepared by PIE based on the survey.

Compassion fatigue

Fewer and fewer Poles believe that Ukrainian refugees are people in need of assistance. In the survey conducted in spring 2022, 84% of respondents did ("yes" or "rather yes"); a few months later, this had fallen to just 50% (a decrease of 34 pp). With this moderate change in attitudes, people's priorities are changing, too. In spring 2022, 69% of respondents agreed ("yes" or "rather yes") that providing refugees with a safe haven should be an absolute priority, even if it reduces our quality of life. By the autumn survey, this had fallen to 47% (a decrease of 22 pp). The percentage of respondents who said that they had encountered unfavourable opinions about refugees increased slightly, too (from 61% to around 67%).

"The decline in people's willingness to help refugees is a case of 'compassion fatigue'. During long-term crises such as war, accompanied by information about the conflict and the difficult situation of refugees — in the absence of information about the potential end of the conflict — a sense of assistance fatigue may appear, reducing people's willingness to support those in need. If we include external circumstances — such as inflation — that make everyday life more difficult, there is a mix of causes and effects that should be monitored carefully and counteracted at the earliest possible stage," says Łukasz Baszczak, an analyst in the behavioural economics team.

The Polish Economic Institute is a public economic think-tank dating back to 1928. Its research primarily spans macroeconomics, energy and climate, the world economy, economic foresight, the digital economy and behavioural economics. The Institute provides reports, analyses and recommendations for key areas of the economy and social life in Poland, taking into account the international situation.

Media contact:

Ewa Balicka-Sawiak

Press Spokesperson

T: +48 727 427 918

E: ewa.balicka@pie.net.pl