

## Migration Policy of the Authorities of the Republic of Poland in Connection with the Crisis Caused by the War in Ukraine in the Light of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens

Michał Krawczyk

**Abstract:** *Russia's aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, triggered a migration crisis unprecedented in the Central and Eastern Europe. The mass of refugees from Ukraine moved towards Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. Most of the refugees, however, ended up in Poland. Both the Polish state and society welcomed the refugees with great openness. Nevertheless, the influx of such a large number of the Ukrainian citizens on the territory of Poland made the authorities responsible for the systemic regulation of their stay, treatment, employment, education in schools, etc. Systemic solutions, in this regard, were adopted in the Act of March 12, 2022, on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict in the Territory of that State. The paper discusses the most important regulations of the act in question.*

**Key Words:** *Migration Law; Migration Policy; Refugees; War; Ukraine; Poland.*

### Introduction

On February 24, 2022, troops of the Russian Federation attacked the territory of Ukraine. As a result of these events, thousands of the Ukrainian citizens began to head towards the territory of Poland, seeking shelter. Refugees from Ukraine crossed the Polish border with their own vehicles and on foot (brought by organized carriers or their relatives) as well as by organized transport – trains and buses on regular lines and lines specially organized.<sup>1</sup> The daily number of border crossings increased by the

<sup>1</sup> See ŻOŁĘDOWSKI, C. Nowi uchodźcy w Europie. Przemieszczenia zewnętrzne z Ukrainy między 24. 02. i 24. 03. 2022 r. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 8 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available

second week of the war, peaking on March 6 and March 7, when over 140 thousand refugees were registered. Then they started to decline, stabilizing from the beginning of the second decade of March at the level of over 30 thousand.<sup>2</sup> By July 11, 2022, over 4.69 million refugees from Ukraine had crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border.<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that this is the most dynamic migration process since year 1945, similar to the events of year 2015, when over 1.2 million refugees from the Middle East migrated to the whole of Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Almost immediately after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the Polish government institutions, local government units, non-governmental organizations and, above all, citizens became involved in helping the refugees. The level of civic involvement was and still is huge. The attitude of the Poles towards refugees, which had so far been rather reluctant, also changed radically.<sup>5</sup> According to the Public Opinion Research Center CBOS research, 68 % of the Polish women and men declare that they have helped the Ukrainians in some way (in kind or in financial terms). On the other hand, 94 % of the respondents expressed their support for

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at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzcy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See ŻOŁĘDOWSKI, C. Nowi uchodźcy w Europie. Przemieszczenia zewnętrzne z Ukrainy między 24. 02. i 24. 03. 2022 r. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 7 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzcy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See Ilu uchodźców z Ukrainy jest w Polsce [AKTUALNE DANE]. In: *300Gospodarka.pl* [online]. 2022 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://300gospodarka.pl/news/uchodzcy-z-ukrainy-w-polsce-liczba>.

<sup>4</sup> See BENDYK, E. and P. BURAS. *Polska wobec wojny, Polska w świecie po wojnie: Zadania na nowy czas* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, 2022, p. 5 [cit. 2022-07-11]. ISBN 978-83-66544-47-5. Available at: [https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/E.Bendyk.P.Buras\\_Polska.wobec\\_wojny\\_Polska.w.swiecie.po\\_wojnie.pdf](https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/E.Bendyk.P.Buras_Polska.wobec_wojny_Polska.w.swiecie.po_wojnie.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See GŁOWIAK, K. Stosunek Polaków do przyjmowania uchodźców przed i w warunkach europejskiego kryzysu migracyjnego. *Historia i Polityka* [online]. 2021, nr 35, pp. 147-162 [cit. 2022-07-11]. ISSN 2391-7652. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.12775/hip.2021.009>; and PASAMONIK, B. „Malowanie straszego diabła” – metamorfoza obrazu uchodźcy w Polsce. In: B. PASAMONIK and U. MARKOWSKA-MANISTA, red. *Kryzys migracyjny: Perspektywa społeczno-kulturowa: Tom I*. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej, 2017, pp. 15-45. ISBN 978-83-64953-82-8.

accepting refugees from Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> According to more than half (53 %) of the respondents, war refugees from Ukraine should stay in Poland for as long as necessary.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that from the first day of the influx of war refugees from Ukraine to Poland, both in the statements of public authorities and in the actions of all entities involved in organizing support and assistance for refugees, the Polish model of accepting war refugees was distinct from the one dominating in the experience of other countries – the model of building “camps” for them near border crossings. In Poland, it was focused on including refugees into the life in the Polish society, resignation from relocation and cooperation between the state and the Polish society.<sup>8</sup>

The German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, said during the European Union summit in Versailles that the cordiality with which Poland welcomed the Ukrainian refugees is a great achievement. He also suggested that Poland was a model for Germany to act. Also, the German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said that “Poland accepts refugees and does it perfectly” and that she is “very grateful to the Polish government for providing such ex-

<sup>6</sup> See OŁDAK, M. Społeczeństwo obywatelskie w Polsce wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny. Wybrane przykłady. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 23 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>. See also FELIKSIĄK, M. and B. ROGUSKA. *Polacy wobec rosyjskiej inwazji na Ukrainę* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Fundacja Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, 2022, p. 2 and 8 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Komunikat z badań, nr 38. ISSN 2353-5822. Available at: [https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2022/K\\_038\\_22.PDF](https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2022/K_038_22.PDF).

<sup>7</sup> See ŻUKOWSKI, T. Polacy o uchodźcach z Ukrainy. Przegląd badań opinii publicznej z marca 2022 r. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 76 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> See FIRLIT-FESNAK, G. Działania administracji publicznej wobec uchodźców wojennych z Ukrainy w Polsce – pierwszy miesiąc budowania systemu pomocy. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, pp. 11-12 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

emplary care to people from Ukraine.” Similarly, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Boris Johnson, stated that “Poland is at the forefront when it comes to the aid offered to Ukraine” and, furthermore, “the Polish government and the Poles are doing an absolutely wonderful job that is both inspiration and humanitarian aid.”<sup>9</sup> The above-mentioned statements are all the more valuable as Poland has not had a coherent migration policy so far, and this area of the state activity has remained in the shadow for the last 30 years.<sup>10</sup>

The admission of such a large number of refugees from Ukraine made it necessary for the Polish authorities to introduce systemic legal solutions that would regulate the situation of the Ukrainian refugees in Poland. On March 12, 2022, the Polish Parliament passed the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict in the Territory of that State, hereinafter referred to as the “Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens”.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the act was passed as part of a cross-party consensus confirmed by an almost unanimous vote of the ruling majority and the opposition.<sup>12</sup>

The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens aims to create a special legal regulation providing an *ad hoc* legal basis for legal stay to citizens of Ukraine who, as a result of hostilities, were forced to leave their

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<sup>9</sup> See ŁOTOCKI, Ł. Kryzys uchodźczy w Polsce w dyskursie publicznym w państwach zachodnich – refleksje po pierwszym miesiącu wojny. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, pp. 82-83 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> See KUBICKI, P., M. PAWLAK, A. MICA and A. HOROLETS. Wyjście z cienia: Polityka uchodźcza w sytuacji kryzysu. *Polityka Społeczna*. 2017, vol. 44, nr 9, p. 27. ISSN 0137-4729.

<sup>11</sup> See *Act of March 12, 2022, on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with an Armed Conflict in the Territory of that State* [2022]. *Journal of Laws of Poland*, 2022, item 583.

<sup>12</sup> See ŻUKOWSKI, T. Suplement – Kryzys uchodźczy w Polsce w polskim dyskursie publicznym. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 87 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

country of origin and entered the territory of the Republic of Poland.<sup>13</sup> The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens is a special law that exists alongside the hitherto binding legal acts concerning foreigners.<sup>14</sup> The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens sets out, first of all, specific rules for legalizing the stay of the Ukrainian citizens who entered the territory of the Republic of Poland directly from the territory of Ukraine in connection with hostilities conducted on the territory of that state. It is worth noting that when referring to a citizen of Ukraine, it also means the spouse of a Ukrainian citizen who does not have the Ukrainian citizenship, provided that he or she came to the territory of the Republic of Poland directly from the territory of Ukraine in connection with hostilities conducted on the territory of that country.<sup>15</sup>

The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens also specifies: 1) the rules for employing the Ukrainian citizens; 2) assistance provided by voivodes, local government units and other entities to citizens of Ukraine; 3) establishing the Assistance Fund to finance or co-finance the implementation of tasks to help the Ukrainian citizens; 4) the rights of the Ukrainian citizens who stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland; 5) the rules for extending the periods of legal stay of the Ukrainian citizens and the documents issued to them by the Polish authorities regarding the rights to enter and to stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland; 6) the rights of the Ukrainian citizens who are students, university teachers or research workers, entering the Republic of Poland from the territory of Ukraine; 7) regulations concerning the education, upbringing and care of children and students who are citizens of Ukraine; 8) principles of the organization and operation of universities in relation to the provision of study places for the Ukrainian citizens; 9) principles of undertaking and pursuing economic activity by the Ukrainian citizens.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Druk nr 2069: Rządowy projekt ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa – Uzasadnienie [2022-03-07]. In: *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [online]. 2022, p. 1 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/8BB50CB16E2DEC48C12587FE005C19B8/%24File/2069-uzas.docx>.

<sup>14</sup> See *Act of December 12, 2013, on Foreigners* [2013]. *Journal of Laws of Poland*, 2021, item 2354, see also *Act of June 13, 2003, on Granting Protection to Foreigners within the Territory of the Republic of Poland* [2003]. *Journal of Laws of Poland*, 2021, item 1108, 1918.

<sup>15</sup> See Article 1 Section 2 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>16</sup> See Article 1 Section 3 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

## Legal basis for the stay

The Article 2 Section 1 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens constitutes the legal basis for recognizing the stay of the Ukrainian citizens as legal for a period of 18 months from February 24, 2022, to the date specified in the regulation of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers has been authorized to determine the final date by which the entry into the territory of the Republic of Poland of a citizen of Ukraine will automatically result in the legality of his or her stay. When determining the above-mentioned date, the Council of Ministers will be guided by the number of foreigners arriving on the territory of the Republic of Poland, the situation of the civilian population and the prospect of ending hostilities on the territory of Ukraine as well as with regard to the defence, the state security and the public order.<sup>17</sup> The legal situation of the Ukrainian citizens who were on the territory of the Republic of Poland on the day on which the troops of the Russian Federation attacked the territory of Ukraine, i.e. on February 24, 2022, was also regulated. The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens provides for the extension of the validity of national visa and temporary residence permits until December 31, 2022, in a situation when the last day of legal stay of a Ukrainian citizen fell after February 24, 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## The PESEL number

The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens makes it possible to issue a PESEL number to refugees from Ukraine arriving in Poland, which allows for the implementation of a number of public services for these people.<sup>19</sup> The PESEL number is assigned in a special, simplified mode at the request of the interested person. Due to the security of the Polish state and due to the fact that registration is often made on the basis of documents whose authenticity is difficult to confirm, it was considered advisable to register biometric features (image and fingerprints) allow-

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<sup>17</sup> See Article 2 Section 4 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>18</sup> See Article 42 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>19</sup> Only in the first two weeks of the launch of the PESEL number assignment procedure more than 500 thousand of the PESEL numbers were issued to the Ukrainian citizens: a) 96.5 % of all PESEL numbers were issued to women and children, b) men aged 18 - 65 accounted for less than 3 % of the total, c) seniors (65+) accounted for 3 % of the total. See Już pół miliona numerów PESEL nadanych obywatelom Ukrainy!. In: *Portal Gov.pl* [online]. 2022-03-30 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/cyfryzacja/juz-pol-miliona-numerow-pesel-nadanych-obywatelom-ukrainy>.

ing, if necessary, to verify natural persons.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, a photograph of the applicant is attached to the application. Fingerprints are also taken from him or her. The photograph and fingerprints are collected in the information and communications technology system. Fingerprints are not collected from children up to 12 years of age.<sup>21</sup> In order to facilitate access to public services, citizens of Ukraine, together with a PESEL number, may obtain a trusted profile in a simplified procedure, which allows them to have a digital contact with the Polish public administration bodies.<sup>22</sup>

### Social assistance

The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens also defines the rules for granting social support to the Ukrainian citizens. The voivodes may provide assistance to these people including: 1) accommodation; 2) providing all-day collective meals; 3) providing transport to places of accommodation or to centres run by the Head of the Office for Foreigners; 4) financing journeys by public transport to places or between places. Assistance may also be provided by other bodies, other public administration bodies, units subordinate to or supervised by public administration bodies, public finance sector units and other public authorities.<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that the provisions of the Act on Public Procurement Law<sup>24</sup> are not applicable to public procurement necessary for the voivodes and other bodies and units to provide the assistance referred to above. Exclusion of the application of the above-mentioned act results from a special situation that requires an immediate provision of accommodation to the Ukrainian citizens, providing them with transport, food or medical care.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Druk nr 2069: Rządowy projekt ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa – Uzasadnienie [2022-03-07]. In: *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [online]. 2022, p. 4 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/8BB50CB16E2DEC48C12587FE005C19B8/%24File/2069-uzas.docx>.

<sup>21</sup> See Article 4 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>22</sup> See Article 9 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>23</sup> See Article 12 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>24</sup> See *Act of September 11, 2019 – Public Procurement Law* [2019]. *Journal of Laws of Poland*, 2021, item 1129, 1598, 2054, 2269; 2022, item 25.

<sup>25</sup> See Druk nr 2069: Rządowy projekt ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa – Uzasadnienie [2022-03-07]. In: *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [online]. 2022, p. 7 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/8BB50CB16E2DEC48C12587FE005C19B8/%24File/2069-uzas.docx>.

The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens also stipulates that any entity, in particular a natural person running a household who provides accommodation and meals to the Ukrainian citizens, may be granted a cash benefit on this account for a period of up to 60 days.<sup>26</sup> The amount of the benefit is PLN 40 per day per person.<sup>27</sup> The period of payment of such a benefit may be extended to 120 days if the citizen of Ukraine is, for example, pregnant, holds a certificate of disability or is over 60 (woman) or 65 (man) years old.<sup>28</sup> The Assistance Fund was established in order to provide funds that are necessary to finance and to support the implementation of tasks to help the Ukrainian citizens. Contributions to the Assistance Fund were made possible from the state budget, including the European funds budget as well as from some units of the public finance sector, including other state funds.<sup>29</sup>

### Employment and business

As rightly stated in the opinion of the Confederation of Employers LEWIATAN, regulating, *inter alia*, access of the Ukrainian citizens to the Polish labour market is of key importance for the integration of refugees from Ukraine.<sup>30</sup> It is estimated that currently there are over 600 thousand vacancies available on the Polish labour market that could be filled by immigrants from Ukraine. These are mainly vacancies in services (drivers, salespeople, cashiers, warehouse workers), finance (accountants) and information technologies (programmers), but also in marketing and

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[sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/8BB50CB16E2DEC48C12587FE005C19B8/%24File/2069-uzas.docx](http://sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/8BB50CB16E2DEC48C12587FE005C19B8/%24File/2069-uzas.docx).

<sup>26</sup> See Article 13 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>27</sup> See *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of May 4, 2022, on the Maximum Amount of the Cash Benefit due to the Provision of Accommodation and Meals for the Ukrainian Citizens and the Conditions for Granting this Benefit and Extending Its Payment* [2022]. Journal of Laws of Poland, 2022, item 1020.

<sup>28</sup> See *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of June 24, 2022, amending the Regulation on the Maximum Amount of the Cash Benefit due to the Provision of Accommodation and Meals for the Ukrainian Citizens and the Conditions for Granting this Benefit and Extending Its Payment* [2022]. Journal of Laws of Poland, 2022, item 1336.

<sup>29</sup> See Article 14 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>30</sup> See Druk nr 2069: Rządowy projekt ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa – Opinia Lewiatana [2022-03-08]. In: *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [online]. 2022, p. 1 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/7D6C92FE9E36076FC12587FF004870B2/%24File/2069-002.pdf>.



sales, in the area of health (doctors, nurses) and in the human resources industry.<sup>31</sup>

To meet these expectations, the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens grants these refugees access to the Polish labour market. In order to take advantage of this solution, the entity employing a citizen of Ukraine is only obliged to notify the competent employment office via information and communications technology system on web domain *praca.gov.pl* within 7 days.<sup>32</sup> The Ukrainian citizens can also register with the poviats labour offices. Thanks to this, they can use the services of the labour market in the form of job placement, career counselling and training.<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting that already at the beginning of May 2022, over 102 thousand Ukrainian citizens were employed in Poland. The vast majority, over 75 %, are women. Half of these 102 thousand employed are people performing simple work (49.4 thousand). The Ukrainian citizens are also often employed as industrial workers and craftsmen (14.2 thousand), service and sales workers (10.7 thousand) as well as machine operators and assemblers (10 thousand). Several thousand people are employed as office workers, specialists, technicians and other associate professionals.<sup>34</sup>

Refugees from Ukraine may also undertake and perform economic activity on the terms applicable to the Polish citizens, i.e. only after registration with the Central Register and Information on Economic Activity (CEIDG). However, the existence of this right depends on the prior registration of a citizen of Ukraine in the PESEL Register. Citizens of Ukraine, in addition to the right to register with the Central Register and Information on Economic Activity, also have the right to establish general partnerships and partnerships.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See ZAWADZKI, P. W. Pierwsze konsekwencje inwazji Rosji na Ukrainę dla polskiego rynku pracy. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, pp. 58-59 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzeczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> See Article 22 Sections 1 – 3 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>33</sup> See Article 22 Section 6 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>34</sup> See *Zatrudnienie w Polsce znalazło już 102 tys. obywateli Ukrainy*. In: *Portal Gov.pl* [online]. 2022-05-02 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/zatrudnienie-w-polsce-znalazlo-juz-102-tys-obywateli-ukrainy>.

<sup>35</sup> See Article 23 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

## Childcare

In connection with the mass influx of refugees from Ukraine to Poland, it was necessary to introduce solutions aimed at securing the welfare of minors who crossed the border without parents or legal guardians, and often without any adult care. The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens provides for legal regulations that will effectively protect the interests of such a child, e.g. by ensuring the quick possibility of obtaining a document entitling an adult to represent a minor and to exercise a care over this minor and his or her property.<sup>36</sup> The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens has introduced solutions for a temporary guardian, defining also his or her powers and the procedure for his or her appointment by the court. A temporary guardian represents and takes care of the person and property of a minor citizen of Ukraine. A temporary guardian is established by the guardianship court having jurisdiction over the minor's place of residence. The court proceedings may be initiated by authorized entities.<sup>37</sup> A temporary guardian is appointed within 3 days from the date of receipt of the application by the court or obtaining information about the need to establish a temporary guardian. In the first place, the function of a temporary guardian is entrusted to a relative who is related to the minor. Only in a situation where there are no such persons, the possibility of appointing as a temporary guardian of a person designated by the social welfare unit competent for the place of residence of the minor opens up.<sup>38</sup>

## Social and health benefits

The Ukrainian families are entitled to many benefits, the beneficiaries of which are the Polish citizens. These are: family benefit, childcare benefit, family care capital, "good start" benefits and subsidies for the child's stay in a nursery or children's club. Taking into account the fact that in many cases incomplete families of the Ukrainian citizens came to the territory

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<sup>36</sup> See Druk nr 2069: Rządowy projekt ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa – Uzasadnienie [2022-03-07]. In: *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [online]. 2022, pp. 9-10 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/0/8BB50CB16E2DEC48C12587FE005C19B8/%24File/2069-uzas.docx>.

<sup>37</sup> These are: 1) Border Guard; 2) commune head, mayor, city president, voivodship marshal; 3) public prosecutor; 4) Police; 5) heads of organizational units of social assistance; 6) representatives of international or non-governmental organizations providing assistance to foreigners; 7) person exercising actual custody of the minor.

<sup>38</sup> See Article 25 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

of the Republic of Poland, in particular women with children, while their husbands stayed in Ukraine, the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens introduces a regulation that family members who remain in the territory of Ukraine are not included in the family composition, and thus their income is not included in the income on the basis of which the entitlement to benefits is determined.<sup>39</sup> The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens also grants refugees support in the form of a one-time cash benefit for living, in particular to cover expenses for food, clothing, footwear, personal hygiene and housing fees, in the amount of PLN 300 per person. The application for the payment of that one-off cash benefit is submitted to the commune competent for the place of residence of the citizen of Ukraine. In addition, a citizen of Ukraine legally residing in the territory of the Republic of Poland may be granted cash and non-cash benefits, on the terms and pursuant to the Act of March 12, 2004, on Social Assistance.<sup>40</sup>

People fleeing from Ukraine, although not always directly exposed to hostilities, usually experienced factors that had a negative impact on their health, such as a long journey, stress, getting cold or dehydration, so they have often noticed health problems resulting from the current situation (e.g. injuries, stomach and headaches, stomach problems, symptoms of infection, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder). The risk of their occurrence is additionally increased by the fact that a large percentage of refugees from Ukraine are children and the elderly. The group of refugees also includes the disabled, pregnant women and people with chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, heart disease.<sup>41</sup> The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens grants refugees the right to healthcare on the same terms as the Polish citizens, pursuant to the Act on Healthcare Services Financed from Public Funds.<sup>42</sup> It should also

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<sup>39</sup> See Article 26 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>40</sup> See *Act of March 12, 2004, on Social Assistance* [2004]. Journal of Laws of Poland, 2021, item 2268, 2270; 2022, item 1, 66, 1079.

<sup>41</sup> See JAROSZEWSKA, E. Napływ uchodźców z Ukrainy jako wyzwanie dla polskiego systemu ochrony zdrowia – doświadczenia pierwszego miesiąca wojny. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 37 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> See *Act of August 27, 2004, on Healthcare Services Financed from Public Funds* [2004]. Journal of Laws of Poland, 2004, no. 210, item 2135.

be noted that due to the increased influx of refugees and the resulting issue of communication with a new group of patients, and an additional burden for medical facilities struggling with a shortage of medical personnel, the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens introduces easier rules for temporary employment of medical personnel from Ukraine. There is now a simplified possibility of granting permission to practice a profession as well as granting a conditional right to practice a profession, and thus employing doctors, dentists, nurses and midwives from Ukraine without the need to recognize their diploma.<sup>43</sup>

## Education

Although the number of the Ukrainian students in the Polish schools has been gradually increasing for years,<sup>44</sup> the situation that arose after February 24, 2022, created completely new challenges. In connection with them, the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens introduces systemic solutions that make it possible to provide mass education and upbringing to children and students from Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> It is worth remembering that schools, kindergartens and other educational institutions are not only places for acquiring knowledge, but also places for adaptation, integration and support for children and parents.<sup>46</sup> Citizens of Ukraine may also be granted benefits of a social nature, according to the principles set out in the Act on Education System.<sup>47</sup> According to the information from the

<sup>43</sup> See JAROSZEWSKA, E. Napływ uchodźców z Ukrainy jako wyzwanie dla polskiego systemu ochrony zdrowia – doświadczenia pierwszego miesiąca wojny. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZULSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 46 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>. See also Articles 61 – 64 of the Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens.

<sup>44</sup> See SYRNYK, M. Polityka oświatowa wobec migrantów – dzieci i uczniowie z Ukrainy w polskiej szkole. *Acta Politica Polonica* [online]. 2017, nr 2, pp. 53-72 [cit. 2022-07-11]. ISSN 2719-4388. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18276/ap.2017.40-05>.

<sup>45</sup> See also *Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of March 21, 2022, on the Organization of Education, Upbringing and Care for Children and Youth Who Are Citizens of Ukraine* [2022]. *Journal of Laws of Poland*, 2022, item 645.

<sup>46</sup> See *Biała Księga: Wyzwania systemowego wsparcia uchodźców na poziomie lokalnym i krajowym* [online]. 1. wyd. Wrocław: Samorządowy Okrągły Stół, 2022, p. 62 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: [https://www.wroclaw.pl/beta2/files/dokumenty/122550/Okragly\\_stol\\_Bia%C5%82a%20ksi%C4%99ga\\_220601\\_www.pdf](https://www.wroclaw.pl/beta2/files/dokumenty/122550/Okragly_stol_Bia%C5%82a%20ksi%C4%99ga_220601_www.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> See *Act of September 7, 1991, on Education System* [1991]. *Journal of Laws of Poland*, 1991, no. 95, item 425.

Polish Minister of Education, Przemysław Czarnek, from only 75 thousand students from Ukraine enrolled in the Polish schools until March 19, 2022, this number increased to 130 thousand by March 28, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusions

The war in Ukraine and the resulting mass influx of the Ukrainian citizens to Poland created unprecedented challenges for the Polish authorities and society. From the very first days, both the state authorities and ordinary citizens made effort to provide shelter and care for refugees from Ukraine. The initial actions were, for obvious reasons, uncoordinated and *ad hoc*.

The Act on Assistance to the Ukrainian Citizens, passed in mid-March 2022, introduces systemic solutions to regulate the legal stay of refugees from Ukraine; this act not only legalizes their stay in Poland, but also allows them to apply for a PESEL number, which opens the possibility of granting them a number of rights and benefits. The Ukrainian citizens may take up work and perform economic activity on the same terms as the Polish citizens. Systemic solutions were introduced for the care of minors who were found on the territory of Poland without their parents or other guardians. Children and adolescents were offered the opportunity to study in the Polish schools. Refugees from Ukraine were covered with medical care and were granted many social benefits, just like the Polish citizens.

It is worth noting that the model of assistance adopted by the Polish authorities differs from the previous practice of other countries in dealing with refugees. The Polish authorities did not decide to create refugee camps, but, instead, focused on their integration with the Polish society. This model has been appreciated not only by the leaders of other countries involved in helping Ukraine, but, most importantly, by the Ukrainians themselves.

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<sup>48</sup> See FIRLIT-FESNAK, G. Działania administracji publicznej wobec uchodźców wojennych z Ukrainy w Polsce – pierwszy miesiąc budowania systemu pomocy. In: G. FIRLIT-FESNAK, E. JAROSZEWSKA, Ł. ŁOTOCKI, J. ŁUKASZEWSKA-BEZUŁSKA, M. OŁDAK, P. ZAWADZKI, C. ŻOŁĘDOWSKI and T. ŻUKOWSKI. *Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę. Społeczeństwo i polityka wobec kryzysu uchodźczego w pierwszym miesiącu wojny* [online]. 1. wyd. Warszawa: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2022, p. 20 [cit. 2022-07-11]. Available at: <https://wnpism.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Kryzys-uchodzczy-2022-raport-KPS.pdf>.

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Michał Krawczyk, Ph.D.

Faculty of Social Sciences  
University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce  
Żytnia 39  
08-110 Siedlce  
Poland  
[michal.krawczyk@uph.edu.pl](mailto:michal.krawczyk@uph.edu.pl)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3923-3576>