

Refugees from Ukraine in Germany: Fleeing the War and Starting Life in a New Country

Summary: Background and Results

The Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered the largest movement of refugees in Europe in the post-World War II era. More than one million people have fled from Ukraine to Germany since the start of the war.

The study “Refugees from Ukraine in Germany (IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP Survey)” provides representative insights into these refugees’ living situations and their plans for the future. It is being conducted jointly by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ), and the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin). To collect data for the study, 11,225 Ukrainian refugees were surveyed between August and October 2022.

Key findings:

- The uncertain course of the war in Ukraine and the German legal framework have shaped Ukrainian refugees’ living conditions and affected their intentions to stay: 37% of Ukrainian refugees would like to stay in Germany permanently or for at least a few years, 34% plan to stay until the end of the war, 27% are still undecided, and 2% intend to leave within a year.
- The vast majority of adult Ukrainian refugees are women (80%). Many of these women (77%) fled to Germany without a partner, 48% with minor children, and 12% with a partner and minor children. Of the men, 71% came to Germany with a partner.
- Ukrainian refugees have a higher level of education than the Ukrainian population as a whole: 72% of Ukrainian refugees in Germany hold a university degree.
- Very few Ukrainian refugees knew German well at the time of the survey (5%), but half of all respondents were already attending German courses.
- 74% of respondents were living in private accommodations and only 9% in shared accommodations.
- Most Ukrainian refugees rate their health as good. However, they have significantly lower life satisfaction than the German population, and Ukrainian refugee children also have lower psychological well-being than other children in Germany.
- 17% of working-age Ukrainian refugees were employed at the time of the survey, and 71% had a job requiring a vocational or university degree.
- Ukrainian refugees expressed a need for more support, especially in learning German, seeking employment, obtaining medical care, and finding housing.