

Vansač Peter

Professor, Head of Department of Social Work
St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work Bratislava
Institute of bl. M. D. Trčku, Michalovce; Slovakia
vansac.p@gmail.com
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1007-9130>

Guľašová Monika

Associate Professor, Department of Social Work
St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work Bratislava
Institute of bl. M. D. Trčku, Michalovce; Slovakia
mgulasova9@gmail.com
<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7772-4072>

ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC FOR THE REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

Abstract. The war in Ukraine that broke out on 24th February 2022 has set in motion a number of people in Ukraine who have sought help in neighbouring countries. Since Slovakia is an immediate neighbour of Ukraine, it is logical that people from Ukraine, especially mothers with children and elderly people, sought help in our country. State, church and voluntary institutions in Slovakia responded to this situation very promptly and helpfully. The border crossings Ubl'a, Vyšné Nemecké and Veľké Slemence became places where the departees from Ukraine could find safety, welcome and humanitarian aid. The aim of our research study is to analyze the social assistance for departees from Ukraine, based on the available statistical data in the Slovak Republic. In the research we analyze the number of: departees from Ukraine have crossed the borders of the Slovak Republic, refugees applied for temporary shelter and accommodation, children of refugees placed in schools, refugees employed. We also analyze social benefits paid to refugees from Ukraine. As a research method, we chose to analyse statistical data regarding the departees from Ukraine. The research study was carried out on the basis of available data processed by the Government of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. In addition, we relied on data processed by the non-profit organization Centre for Ethnicity Research and other non-profit organizations. The data provide us with information for the first 3 months.

Key words: temporary shelter, refugee status, social assistance, Slovakia.

Introduction. The war in Ukraine that broke out on 24th February 2022 has set in motion a number of people in Ukraine who have sought help in neighbouring countries. Since Slovakia is an immediate neighbour of Ukraine, it is logical that people from Ukraine, especially mothers with children and elderly people, sought help in our country. State, church and voluntary institutions in Slovakia responded to this situation very promptly and helpfully. The border crossings Ubl'a, Vyšné Nemecké and Veľké Slemence became places where the departees from Ukraine could find safety, welcome and humanitarian aid.

People who fled the war from Ukraine on the basis of Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and on Amendments to Certain Acts in Article 13(2)(j) could obtain the *status of refugee*, and on the basis of this status they also obtained "temporary shelter, which is granted for the purpose of protecting foreigners from war, endemic violence, the consequences of a humanitarian disaster, or persistent or mass violations of human rights in their country of origin." [7]. The Government of the Slovak Republic adopted Resolution No. 185 on the proposal to declare the provision of temporary refuge in accordance with the Council (EU) Implementing Decision of 4th March 2022, where it approves this decision, simultaneously declaring who is considered to be a national of Ukraine and also determining the beginning of the provision of temporary refuge. Pursuant to Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum, Section 31(1)(c), the following shall be deemed to be a national of Ukraine – persons, who:

- can prove their identity and nationality of Ukraine in a credible manner,
- are not citizens of Ukraine who prove their identity

and nationality in a credible manner, the granting of international protection,

- are not citizens of Ukraine, who prove their identity and nationality in a credible manner, granting permanent residence in the territory of Ukraine before 24th February 2022 [5].

The Public Administration of the Slovak Republic has set up a website in the Ukrainian language on the basis of which citizens from Ukraine who decided to stay in Slovakia could find out how to arrange: residence in Slovakia, accommodation, work, social security, health care, placement of a child in a school, legal assistance [2].

The **aim** of the research – to analyze: the number of departees from Ukraine (migrants and applicants for residence in the Slovak Republic); the number of accommodations provided by the Slovak Republic to the refugees from Ukraine; the number of children of refugees from Ukraine enrolled in schools; the number of employed persons from Ukraine; financial support for refugees from Ukraine. **Research methods:** analysis of statistical data regarding the departees from Ukraine.

Research results

Overview of refugees who crossed the border of the Slovak Republic from Ukraine and applied for temporary shelter

Chart 1 demonstrates that since the outbreak of war on 24th February 2022, 253,263 refugees fleeing the war have crossed our border with Ukraine. Of this number, temporary refuge has been granted to 79,781 refugees (Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts in § 29–§ 33 deals with temporary shelter) [4].

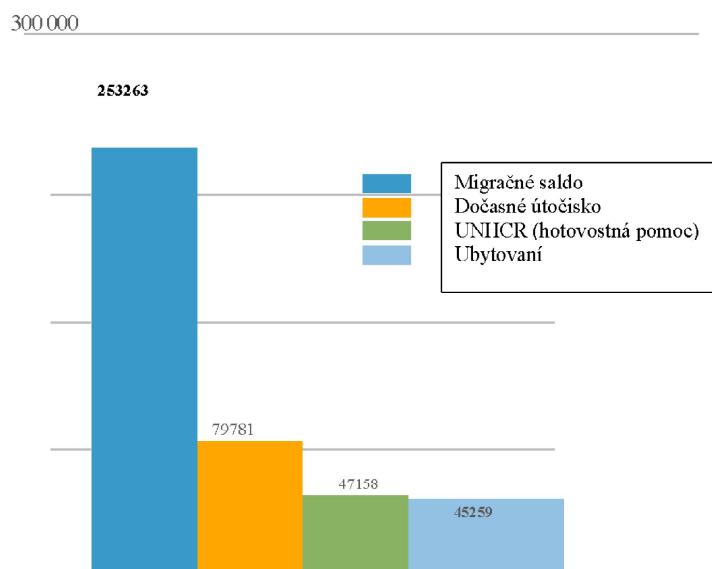


Chart 1. Approximate number of departees from the UA to the Slovak Republic as of 24th June 2022
Source: report on the current situation regarding the war in Ukraine

From Table 1 it is evident that as of 31st December 2022 the Slovak Republic has granted a total of 156 881 residences. Of these, 53 700 persons from Ukraine have been granted temporary residence, 8360 persons from Ukraine have been granted permanent residence and 94 821 persons from Ukraine have been granted tolerated residence [8].

Table 1

Number of valid residencies for nationals of Ukraine as of 31st December 2022

Nationality	to 31st December 2022			
	Total number of stays	Of which		
		Transitional	Permanent	Tolerated
Ukraine	156 881	53 700	8 360	94 821

Source: Statistical overview of legal and illegal migration of foreigners in Slovakia

Accommodation

Accommodation was provided to 45,259 leavers: of these, private accommodation was provided for 40,552 persons, state accommodation for 3,702 persons and emergency accommodation for 895 persons (Table 2) (Act No. 404/2011 Coll. on the residence of foreigners defines three types of residence, namely temporary residence, permanent residence and tolerated residence) [4].

Table 2

Accommodation for refugees from Ukraine

Total	Accommodation (24th June 2022)		
	Of which:		
	Private accommodation	State accommodation	Emergency accommodation
45 259	40 552	3 702	895

Source: Report on the current situation in the context of the war in Ukraine

Number of employed exiles from Ukraine

Of the 9 342 employed (Chart 3) Ukrainian expatriates, the following are the most common occupations: assembly workers 22.48%; support workers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport 18.61%; cleaners and helpers 8.66%; stationary machinery and equipment operators 8.45%; food preparation assistants 6.75%.

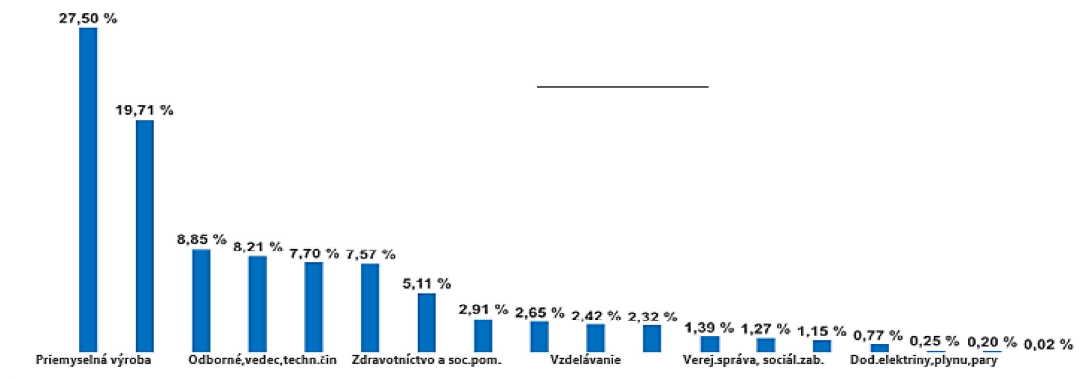


Chart 3. Number of employed exiles from Ukraine
Source: report on the current situation regarding the war in Ukraine

Number of children of refugees from Ukraine enrolled in schools

In Chart 4, we present data on the children of school leavers on three dates - 15th May 2022, 24th May 2022 and 31st May 2022.

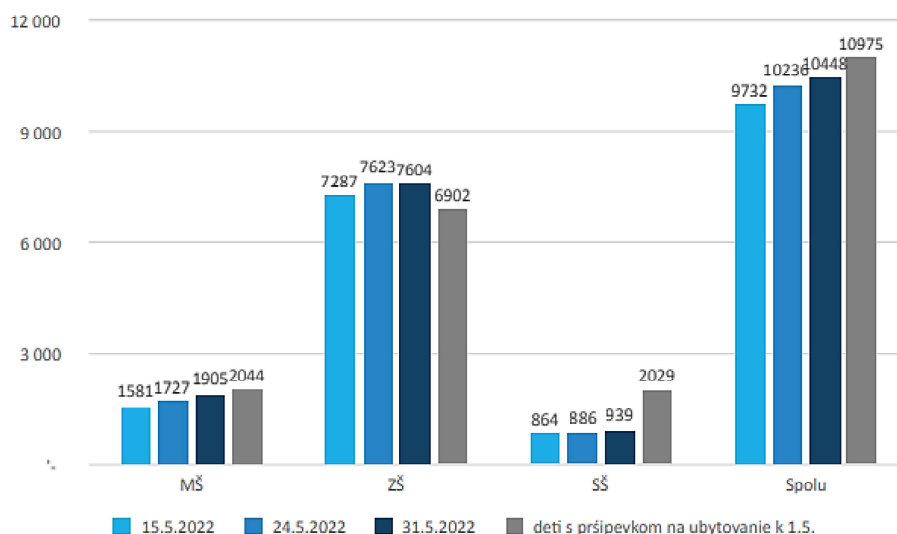


Chart 4 Number of children by type of school and date
Source: report on the current situation regarding the war in Ukraine

Most children are enrolled in primary schools (more than 7.5 thousand, 73%). The children with accommodation allowance are aggregated in the groups of Kindergarten (3-5yrs), Primary (6-14yrs) and Secondary (15-18yrs). The data are as of 1st May 2022. The lower number of primary school pupils with an allowance may be due to an age shift in aggregation

or a time shift. There were 10,448 children enrolled in schools as of 31st May 2023 [4].

Financial support for refugees from Ukraine

Assistance in material need includes: material need allowance, dependent child allowance, protection allowance (Table 3)

Table 3

Material hardship assistance for refugees from Ukraine

	SK support system	International support (UNHCR) UNICEF)
Individual	68 EUR	80 EUR
Woman with one children (0-3 years)	305 EUR	240 EUR
Woman with one children (6+ years)	221 EUR	200 EUR
Woman with four children (two 0-3 years, two 3+ years)	383 EUR	380 EUR* (*maximum amount of aid)

Source: report on the current situation regarding the war in Ukraine

Discussion

Number of departees from Ukraine arriving on the territory of the Slovak Republic. Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on 24th February 2022, there has been an enormous influx at the border crossings with Ukraine. According to the *Report on the current situation in connection with the war in Ukraine*, prepared by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, a total of 253 263 departees crossed the border crossings (for 3 months from 24th February 2022 to 24th June 2022) - Ubl'a, Vyšné Nemecké and Veľké Slemence. Most of the departees only migrated through Slovakia. According to the above document, in 3 months there were 173 582 persons. After crossing the border, each person who crossed the border from Ukraine received food and, if they needed it, temporary accommodation. Basic humanitarian assistance was provided by both governmental and non-governmental organizations [2, 10].

For example, social work and nursing students from the Institute of Bl. M. D. Trčku in Michalovce, University of Health and Social Work of St. Elizabeth in Bratislava on the border Vyšné Nemecké in cooperation with the Order of Malta in Slovakia in continuous operation

carried out assistance services for the departees from Ukraine – providing refreshments, help with registration, arranging transport, sim cards and others. In the “Hot spot” in Michalovce, students in cooperation with doctors provided nursing care and helped to manage the refugees' health problems - headache, abdominal pain, blood pressure, breathing problems, diabetes, minor injuries and others [6].

Overview of refugees who crossed the border of the Slovak Republic from Ukraine and requested temporary refuge. Chart 1 demonstrates that from the outbreak of war on 24th February 2022 to 24th June 2022, 79 781 refugees from Ukraine have applied for temporary refuge in Slovakia. Temporary refuge is granted in Slovakia according to Act No 480/2002 Coll. on asylum and on amendment and supplementation of certain acts.

People crossing the border from Ukraine received leaflets from the Ministry of the Interior on how to apply for temporary shelter. Temporary refuge (or temporary protection) is an effective means for the European Union to respond to a sudden influx of people from a neighbouring war-torn country. It also makes it possible to effectively spread the burden of hosting large numbers of people across all EU Member States, as currently

people fleeing Ukraine have the option of choosing the EU Member State in which to apply for temporary protection. According to the *Centre for Research on Ethnicity*, the current situation suggests that persons with temporary protection will remain in the territory of the Slovak Republic/EU in the medium and long term, and therefore solutions to their residency status need to be brought to bear on the need for successful integration [1].

According to the Statistical overview of legal and illegal migration of foreigners in Slovakia, in addition to temporary refuge, the Slovak Republic has granted temporary, permanent and tolerated residence to 156 881 citizens from Ukraine on the basis of Act No 404/2011 Coll. on the residence of foreigners and on amending and supplementing certain acts (see Table No.1) [8]. The Centre for Ethnicity Research states that tolerated stay is a type of stay that is unsuitable for persons who are expected to be integrated into Slovak society to a certain extent, with a view to the assumption of a medium - to long-term stay in Slovakia. Since people fleeing Ukraine can reasonably be expected to stay in Slovakia for more than 90 days, and it is advisable to assume a period of more than one year, it is necessary to allow people with the status of refugees to move to another, more stable type of residence, ideally temporary residence [1].

Accommodation. Based on the statistical data on accommodation of refugees from Ukraine, the Slovak Republic provided accommodation to 45 259 refugees in 4 months.

Housing for people arriving from Ukraine at the beginning of the outbreak of the war was dealt with in several ways:

1. Emergency accommodation for the first 10 days, which was solved in large-capacity premises at the level of district towns (in gymnasiums, dormitories, etc.).

2. Medium-term housing in various government facilities (hostels, recreational facilities, etc.) and private facilities (hotels, guest houses, etc.).

3. Long-term housing (mostly private rentals in houses and flats).

Due to the limited capacity of state facilities, it became obvious shortly after the outbreak of the war that housing would also have to be solved by private rentals and housing in private facilities (hotels, guesthouses), for which an allowance was introduced to compensate for the costs of accommodation for people from Ukraine with the status of refugees from Ukraine [1].

The provision of an allowance for accommodation of persons granted temporary refuge status is regulated by the amendment to the Asylum Act effective from 7th June 2022. The allowance is paid to accommodation providers by municipalities from funds transferred from the Ministry of the Interior. The details and procedure for the payment of the accommodation allowance are regulated by the amended Regulation No 218/2022 of the Government of the Slovak Republic. As of 1st October 2022, the amount of the allowance has been increased and will be paid until 31st May 2023 [3].

Number of children of refugees from Ukraine enrolled in schools. Chart 4 demonstrates the number of children of refugees from Ukraine enrolled in Slovak schools. The data are as of 15th May 2022, 24th May 2022 and 31st May 2022. Optimistically, the placement of children in schools is on an upward trend.

The Centre for Ethnicity Research reports that estimates are that only about 37% of children in a given

age group who have temporary refuge in Slovakia attend primary school. A certain proportion of children are also educated through distance education directly in the education system of Ukraine, but more detailed data are not available [1].

From the end of June 2022, there is a new concept of child care - children's groups. Parents can place their child in a playgroup, where their child will be cared for in a smaller group of children in a home environment. In this way, the Department of Labour is not only contributing to solving the shortage of available places in nurseries or kindergartens, but also to the integration of mothers into the labour market. It promotes the reconciliation of family and working life for parents and also gives mothers the opportunity to earn extra income, for example while on maternity leave. This concept also applies to the families of those who have left Ukraine - it applies to children from 3 to 5 years of age and for children with adverse health conditions from 3 to 6 years of age [9].

Number of employed expatriates from Ukraine. Chart 3 demonstrates the percentages of employed leavers from Ukraine in each sector out of a total of 9,342.

According to UNHCR, 49% of women and 37% of children come to Slovakia. According to analyses of Profesia.sk portal, the majority of job seekers are female. The Centre for Research on Ethnicity reports the following barriers to the labour market participation of emigrants:

1. recognition of qualifications,
2. language barriers,
3. the inability to do business - Ukrainian expatriates

are prevented from doing so by Law No. 404/2011 on the residence of foreigners, which, in Article 59(5), prohibits persons from doing business during the period of validity of the tolerated stay [1].

Financial support for refugees from Ukraine. In the first two months, the state provided material hardship benefits (their real payment took place only in April, two months after the outbreak of the war). At the same time, free school meals were provided for children in material need. Since May 2022, the system of paying social benefits and providing various other allowances has been taken over by international organizations (UNHCR) UNICEF (see Table No.3) [1].

Conclusion. The research study was carried out on the basis of available data processed by the Government of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. In addition, we relied on data processed by the non-profit organization Centre for Ethnicity Research and other non-profit organizations. The data provide us with information for the first 3 months. The individual data show that 253 263 departees crossed the Slovak border with Ukraine. Of this number, 79 971 applied for temporary shelter. 45 259 refugees were accommodated in Slovakia. 9 342 refugees found employment. As of 31st May 2022, 10 448 children have entered all types of schools (kindergarten, primary and secondary). The financial assistance of the material hardship allowance could be received by the deportees from the State (March, April 2022) and since May 2022 these benefits were paid by the international organizations (UNHCR) UNICEF. Behind all the numbers are families from Ukraine, mainly mothers with children and grandparents, their fates are not indifferent to us Slovaks.

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Вансач Петер

професор

Університет охорони здоров'я та соціальної роботи Св.Єлизавети в Братиславі
м.Михайлівці, Словаччина

Гуляшова Моніка

доцент

Університет охорони здоров'я та соціальної роботи Св.Єлизавети в Братиславі
м.Михайлівці, Словаччина

АНАЛІЗ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ДОПОМОГИ БІЖЕНЦЯМ З УКРАЇНИ В СЛОВАЦЬКУ РЕСПУБЛІКУ

Анотація. Війна в Україні, яка почалася 24 лютого 2022 року, сколихнула українців, які шукали допомоги в сусідніх країнах. Оскільки Словаччина є безпосереднім сусідом України, логічно, що громадяни України, особливо матері з дітьми та люди похилого віку, шукали допомоги саме в Словаччині. Державні, церковні та волонтерські інституції Словаччини відреагували на цю ситуацію дуже оперативно та якісно. Прикордонні переходи Убля, Вишне Немецьке та Велике Слемецьке стали місцями, де біженці з України могли знайти безпеку, гостинність та гуманітарну допомогу. Метою нашого дослідження є аналіз соціальної допомоги особам, які виїхали з України з початку вторгнення, на основі наявних статистичних даних у Словацькій Республіці. У дослідженні ми аналізуємо кількість: вибулих з України, які перетнули кордон Словацької Республіки; біженців, які звернулися за тимчасовим притулком та розміщенням; дітей біженців, яких влаштували до шкіл; біженців, яких було працевлаштовано. Також аналізуємо соціальні виплати біженцям з України. Як метод дослідження ми обрали аналіз статистичних даних щодо вибулих з України. Дослідження проводилося на основі наявних даних, оброблених Урядом Словацької Республіки, Міністерством внутрішніх справ Словацької Республіки. Крім того, ми спиралися на дані, оброблені некомерційною організацією «Центр досліджень етнічності» та іншими некомерційними організаціями. Дані дають нам інформацію за перші 3 місяці.

Ключові слова: тимчасовий притулок, статус біженця, соціальна допомога, Словаччина.