



REPORT 1

on digital skills and competencies with recommendations

Czech Republic

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M I N T E

This report summarizes the results of a meta-analysis (mapping) of migrants' digital skills and competencies, focusing on Ukrainian migrants who arrived in the Czech Republic after 24 February 2022. To conduct this meta-analysis, I examined the sources of information and services available to Ukrainian migrants in the Czech Republic, with a special focus on the internet (websites). This report primarily maps governmental webpages, NGO webpages and information provided by municipalities, as well as several web platforms. It also mentions other important digital communication channels, including apps, online maps, and digital broadcasting. Information and services provided via Facebook, Telegram, and other similar social networks were included if run by an official organization (e.g. an NGO) and only when their primary aim was to inform Ukrainian migrants in the long term.

The primary aim of this report is to capture how governmental, regional, and civil society organizations provided information to Ukrainian migrants who arrived in the Czech Republic in 2022. The report is mainly concerned with information provided directly to migrants themselves. However, it also covers some sources of information that were aimed at actors dealing with Ukrainian migrants as well as at Ukrainian migrants themselves. This information was usually in Czech only. Information provided directly to Ukrainians was usually in both languages (Ukrainian and Czech).

KEY FINDINGS

01.

Institutions in Czechia primarily inform migrants through websites. There is no available data about where and how migrants most frequently seek information.

02.

Several Ukrainian-migrant-focused informational websites were created in the Czech Republic immediately after the outbreak of Russian aggression. These websites are regularly updated and contain comprehensive information about life in the Czech Republic. Key websites of this kind are pomahejukrajine.cz run by the Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations and nasiukrajinci.cz run by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic.

03.

Information resources for migrants that were already in use in the Czech Republic before 24 February 2022, such as the website of the Association for Integration and Migration NGO, migrace.com, also play an important role.

04.

Ukrainian refugees receive a significant amount of information and assistance from NGOs. The role of some ministries is also considerable.

05.

The information provided to Ukrainian refugees by the regions is limited, except for the Capital City of Prague and the South Moravian Region. Municipalities do not aim to provide information to (Ukrainian) migrants.

06.

Activities focused on the digital competencies of migrants exist, but on a small scale and exclusively on a project basis.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration to the Czech Republic - Paths of entrance and basic socio-demographic information on Ukrainian refugees

In March 2022, the Czech government passed three new laws to address the influx of Ukrainian refugees. The first of these was Act No. 65/2022 Coll., on **Certain Measures in Connection with the Armed Conflict in Ukraine**, which incorporates the EU Council's decision to activate the Temporary Protection Directive (1) . This Act laid down the conditions for granting 'temporary protection' to Ukrainian nationals and their family members who came to the Czech Republic in connection with the conflict in Ukraine. Furthermore, this law grants temporary protection holders public health insurance status (initially for the duration of the temporary protection; later reduced to 150 days). This Act was amended four times in 2022. The second law was Act No. 66/2022 Coll., on **Measures in the Area of Employment and Social Security in Connection with the Conflict in Ukraine**. This Act gave temporary protection holders free access to the labour market and exempted them from the obligation to obtain a work permit. At the same time, it entitled them to CZK 5,000 in temporary protection humanitarian benefit. In the event of an emergency concerning (lack of) income, that benefit could be awarded repeatedly for up to five months. The third law, Act No. 67/2022 Coll., on **Measures in the Area of Education in Connection with the Armed Conflict in Ukraine**, provided refugee children with access to schools and childcare services.

Immigration to the Czech Republic - Paths of entrance and basic socio-demographic information on Ukrainian refugees

The number of migrants in the Czech Republic has grown significantly during the last twenty years. At the end of 2021, migrants made up 6.6% of the total population, which means 660,849 people (Czech Statistical Office 2022). Slightly less than half (42%) of these migrants were citizens of other European Union countries. The long-term increase in migrant numbers was primarily driven by an increase in economic migrants, followed by those arriving for family reunification.

The number of asylum seekers was very low. In terms of the representation of men and women, male migration still dominated but the number of migrant women was slowly increasing; women accounted for 43% of migration in 2021. The most common nationalities among migrants in the Czech Republic were Ukrainians (196,875 people), Slovaks (114,630 people), and Vietnamese (64,851 people) in 2021 (data as of 31.12.2021, Czech Statistical Office 2022).

As of 31 January 2023, the Czech Republic has granted Temporary Protection to 483,310 refugees fleeing from Ukraine. The country continues to register new arrivals, but the flow has considerably reduced since the initial rush when conflict broke out in Ukraine in March 2022. 47% of Ukrainian refugees entering the Czech Republic are women, 33% children, 16 % men, and 4 % seniors. In terms of age, $\frac{3}{4}$ of adult refugees are below the age of 45 years, with 28% of adult refugees are aged below 30 years. Most of the adult refugees hold university degrees. According to research carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (2022), the highest educational attainment among adult Ukrainian refugees is as follows: Higher education 35 %, Higher vocational training 14 %, Secondary education with a secondary school leaving certificate 18 %, Secondary education without leaving certificate 21 %, Primary 7 %, No education 5 %). 78% of Ukrainian households include children (most often a mother with one child, often with two children). 61% of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic are of working age, and more than half of them are employed (or self-employed) (ibid.). In total, over 40% of economically active Ukrainian refugees work in the Czech Republic; around 8% work only remotely in Ukraine (PAQ 2022). 44% of working Ukrainians are employed well below their qualifications, 21% partly below their qualifications and about a third have retained work in line with their qualifications, but this is mainly a minority who were already working in unskilled manual occupations before coming to the Czech Republic (ibid.).

FINDINGS: COMMUNICATION WITH MIGRANTS

Availability of information for migrants before the arrival of Ukrainian refugees

In the Czech Republic, the lack of well-accessible information for migrants has long been considered a problematic issue (MV ČR 2016). Basic information in both Czech and English was provided by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (mvr.cz), which is responsible for the residence permit agenda and for the integration of migrants.

¹ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof.

The information for migrants on the ministry's website was brief but up-to-date in both Czech and English. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, which is responsible for migrants' labour market access and employment, operates the website cizinci.cz in six different languages (Czech, Russian, English, Ukrainian, Mongolian, and Moldovan). This page contains basic information on living and working in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, the website was not updated frequently before 2021.

Civil society has responded to this lack of easily accessible and understandable information; for a long time, the most stable and comprehensive source of information for migrants has been the website of the Association for Integration and Migration (migrace.com), which provides well-explained information regarding migrants' rights and obligations in the Czech Republic related to all important aspects of their lives (residence, access to schools and health care, employment, and more). This website contains all relevant information in Czech and English, and since 2022 it has also regularly published information in Ukrainian regarding Ukrainians' residence in the Czech Republic. Other NGOs also offer information via helplines or Facebook groups. Some NGOs provide useful information on specific individual topics: for example, Meta, o.p.s (meta-ops.eu) provides information, practical advice, and materials on access to education for migrants, in Czech, English, Russian, and Ukrainian. At the regional level, a Centre for Integration of Foreigners exists in each of the 14 regions of the Czech Republic. In the capital city of Prague and the South Moravian Region, these centres ([Integration Centre Prague](#), [Centre for Foreigners JMK](#)) are more closely linked to the regional governments and their websites provide extensive information for migrants in Czech, Russian, and English (and often in other languages). With the exception of the City of Prague, most Czech cities do not publish specific information for migrants on their local authority websites, but a bookmark or link to relevant information can sometimes be found. The City of Prague runs the metropolevsech.cz website (in Czech, English, Russian, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese), which provides useful practical information about life in Prague.

Availability of information for Ukrainian migrants

All of the above-mentioned organizations have responded to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees since March 2022 and have created special sections on their websites in Ukrainian dedicated to the Ukrainian refugees' situation. This essential and frequently changing information was regularly updated. A new virtual marketplace, pomahejukrajine.cz (meaning: help Ukraine), was promptly developed and became a key, heavily used information tool for Ukrainians, where people can find and offer help (in Czech and Ukrainian). The site is run by the Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations.

This site also contains a specific information platform providing hundreds of regularly checked links to useful resources related to Ukrainians' life in the Czech Republic. These links are categorized into 21 topics. For example, the topic "access to health care" includes 18 different links, one of which is a link to the website lekari.proukrajinu.cz (meaning: doctors for Ukraine), a private initiative providing Ukrainian migrants with information on health care in the Czech Republic and an extensive list of doctors of various specialties who are sympathetic to Ukrainian patients.

In response to the high number of Ukrainians coming to the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic has also created a very informative website: nasiukrajinci.cz (meaning: our Ukrainians), in both Czech and Ukrainian. This vastly used site is regularly updated and contains information on 11 thematic areas of life in the Czech Republic. The general website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs contains a new link to information for Ukrainian citizens in the Czech Republic in both Ukrainian and Czech, summarising information on specific social benefits. This Ministry also operates a free telephone line for citizens of Ukraine where they can obtain information about social support; the line is also used for acute crisis intervention. On the other hand, it is not entirely easy to find a more comprehensive overview of the social system of the Czech Republic; the main information is available in English, but more detailed information that may be needed by Ukrainian citizens is not easy to find. The volunteer-built website for Ukrainians stojimezaukrajinou.cz (meaning: we stand for Ukraine) is a further information tool, which also enables users to submit information about war crimes in connection with the conflict in Ukraine.

Websites are not the only source of information for Ukrainian migrants, but they remain the main channel of communication between the state or most NGOs and migrants. NGOs almost always also maintain Facebook pages, where they publish information mostly in Czech, occasionally also in other languages (e.g. regarding important legislative changes or new informative materials). YouTube channels and Instagram profiles are also common. In contrast, Twitter is the most common social media channel used by state organizations. LinkedIn-type networks are used to promote events or job opportunities. Telegram and Viber are not commonly used by institutions in the Czech Republic.

Several mobile applications and digital solutions have also been developed to assist in providing information to migrants. In March 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs launched its Smart Migration app for migrants and refugees from Ukraine. This app provides the most important information about employment, healthcare, and education in the Czech Republic, in Ukrainian, English, and Russian. The related Smart Migration South Moravia app provides information for migrants more specifically about life in the South Moravia region. Furthermore, a group of IT and other volunteers developed the Movapp app, which is designed to facilitate communication between Czechs and Ukrainians. Meanwhile, the Ukraine Community Map (umapa.eu) displays key addresses a newcomer might need: from doctors, lawyers and kindergartens to food banks.

Although this map was primarily intended to provide information about locations in the Czech Republic, it also includes dozens of locations in Slovakia and Poland. Another interesting project is that of Czech Radio, which operates an online broadcast of "Ukrainian Radio", available on the [audio portal](#), digitally, or in the mobile app [mujRozhlas.cz](#).

Digital competences and migrants in the Czech Republic

No study of migrants' digital competencies has yet been carried out in the Czech Republic, and there has been only minimal research to date on the digital competencies of Czech citizens. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI 2023), Czechia ranked 19th of the 27 EU Member States in 2022 for digital competency. For many years, Czech public administration suffered from the effects of inefficient IT procurement. The current Czech government (which came into power in 2021) made improving digital public services one of its priorities, and a number of reforms are currently underway concerning various areas of digitalization. The country's strength is its excellent mobile and internet coverage; e-government is currently a weak point. Development is also hampered by a long-standing shortage of IT specialists. Due to the push for greater digitization (and also due to personnel constraints at the Labour Offices), Ukrainian migrants were encouraged to apply for social contributions online. This is not yet common for Czech citizens. Larger scale activities focusing on migrants' digital competencies are currently lacking in the Czech Republic. Only a few projects developing migrants' digital competence have been implemented in the Czech Republic so far (e.g. [Media Literacy for refugees, asylum-seeking and migrant women](#) or Citizen of the World). Digital competence among marginalized groups (including some migrants) is only addressed in the Czech Republic by a community of IT volunteers: [česko.digital](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

01.

Concerning the well-described 'digital gap' in the literature, focus on multiply disadvantaged groups (e.g. aging migrants) and the knowledge and opportunities they have in digital technologies and their use.

02.

Ensure that planned reforms in the area of digitalization of public administration etc. take the impact of these reforms on migrants in the Czech Republic into account.

03.

Provide continual support for current information resources, especially due to the frequent changes in legislation.

04.

Further develop information on missing or poorly covered topics (e.g. the social system) in Ukrainian.

05.

Conduct an investigation into how Ukrainian migrants obtain information and, in response to its results, adapt the way information is delivered to them.

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