FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

With ‘Migration in Ukraine: Facts and Figures’, the Ukraine Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) intends to provide you with a compilation of migration trends and statistics.

While this short overview can only provide an introduction to the complex and often inter-related topic of migration issues in Ukraine, we have tried to the extent possible, to put the facts and figures in context and to highlight how the relevant trends have evolved over time. This appears even more important given the often limited information available.

In line with IOM’s overall mandate, this fact sheet aims at advancing the understanding of the opportunities and challenges of migration in the Ukrainian context. Maximizing those opportunities and minimizing the challenges accompanied with migratory movements are the guiding principles of all activities and programmes the Mission is engaged in.

In doing so, the IOM Mission in Ukraine continues fighting trafficking in human beings, assisting the Government in dealing with irregular migration and migration management, and creating migrant-inclusive health practices and policies. At the same time, IOM Ukraine engages in exploring and promoting regular channels for Ukrainian labour migrants, integrating ethnic minorities, promoting the benefits of cultural diversity, and counteracting xenophobia.

This overview is a dynamic document, which will be updated on a regular basis, and thus, we welcome any comments, advice and new data, which you might have and that may help to improve this document in the future.

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The degree of economic divergence between Ukraine’s regions is significant. For instance, per capita income in the Donetsk Region is USD 683 (in the first quarter of 2011), which is 20% higher than the average income in Ukraine (USD 550), while the income in the Chernivtsi Region (USD 352) is 37% less than the average. These economic disparities and asymmetric development paths between the regions have to be perceived as one of the factors explaining the current geographical distribution pattern (see Map 4). Other key factors include EU border proximity, established migration networks, and cultural ties.

Ukrainian labour migration, at least to a certain extent, can be characterized by ‘brain waste’, in light of the existing mismatch between migrants’ skills and occupied positions. Only few of the migrants manage to find jobs abroad corresponding to their qualification levels, regardless of their education, almost all of them are working in low skilled jobs. This disparity is further evidenced when data on migrants’ areas of employment abroad (see Figure 3) are juxtaposed with their education level (see Figure 5).
Demographics

The population development of Ukraine is characterized by demographic decline. Between 1991 and 2010 the total population declined from 51.7 million to 45.9 million, reflecting a sharp decline in birth rate and a negative migration balance. This trend is expected to continue, implying that the overall population will decline by another 10 million until 2050. By 2050, nearly half of the population will be more than 45 years old.

Unemployment and Migration

Migrant-non-migrant wage differential: the average migrant wage abroad was USD 820 in 2008, which was almost 3 times higher than the average salary in Ukraine (USD 281). The main migration push factors for Ukrainian labour migrants are the improvement of their living standards and the prospect of higher salaries (over 56%); whilst unemployment is a marginal variable (less than 7%). However income differentials are not the sole motivation factor for migration; the decision process includes non-fiscal variables such as social preferences and cultural values.

Remittances to Ukraine are nearly equivalent to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and almost eight times higher than Official Development Assistance (ODA). Hypothetical models estimate that the Ukrainian economy would have lost about 7% of its potential without the stimulating effects of migrant transfers and that a 10% increase in per capita remittances leads to a 3.5% decline in the share of people living in poverty. The biggest share of remittances is used for living expenses and consumer goods, whilst only 3.3% are used for setting up a business. One per cent reduction in transaction costs raises recorded remittances by 14-23%.

Aging is an inevitable demographic trend and Ukraine is projected to experience an increase in the percentage of Ukrainians of retirement age (aged 65 or over) from 14% to 20.5%. This development will have significant consequences for the labour force, who will have to support the growing number of pensioners and people in need of health care.
Ukraine receives the largest shares of remittances from Russia, United States, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom, which indicates that it is not only Ukrainian labour migrants making transfers but also the diaspora (see diaspora chart below).

The presented statistics refer only to registered foreign nationals in Ukraine, whilst the real figure is believed to be higher. The overall trend demonstrates a consistent decrease since 2006.

Students comprise an important segment among the foreign population in Ukraine. According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports the number of foreign students has been constantly rising – almost 47,000 foreign students were studying in Ukraine in 2010, which represents an 56% rise relative to the figures for 2002 (22,022).

Ukraine remains one of the main countries of origin for victims of trafficking (VoTs). Out of the estimated 110,000 Ukrainian citizens who have become VoTs since 1991 (average 5,500/annum), IOM identified/assisted 7% (over 7,500). Numerous new trends are emerging, including an increase in labour exploitation; the risk group for trafficking expanding from young women (15-24) to women and men of all ages; a rise in the number of identified child victims; and an increasing number of foreign VoTs.
Irregular Migration

In recent years, Ukraine has witnessed a shifting trend in main countries of origin of irregular migrants detected at the border, with dominant nationalities changing from Asia to the newly independent states (CIS region).

Irregular migrants apprehended inside the country make up almost 50% of those detected at the border, which indicates a need for an integrated migration management approach shifting beyond a border control focus.

Since 2009 the general trend signifies a decrease in the number of irregular migrants in detention, which is linked to the declining number of non-CIS (mainly Asian) third country nationals entering Ukraine irregularly.
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We are interested in your opinion — please provide your comments to this Facts & Figures brochure (iomkiev@iom.int).