

SURVEY REPORT

# DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE IN AUSTRIA

Risk Factors in the Area of Housing



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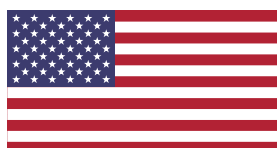
SURVEY REPORT

# DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE IN AUSTRIA

## RISK FACTORS IN THE AREA OF HOUSING

Saskia Heilemann

April 2023



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The data used in this report were collected through a partnership between IOM Austria, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Integration Fund. We would like to thank the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), U.S. Department of State, for its financial support. Thanks also go to Ivona Zakoska-Todorovska (Regional Migration Data and Research Officer, IOM Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia) and her team for research guidance.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 forced millions of Ukrainians and third-country nationals living in Ukraine to flee their homes, many crossing international borders. With the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (2001/55/EC), the European Union introduced a regime that grants those who fled Ukraine and who fall under the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 a residence permit, as well as access to social welfare, education, employment and health care. By December 2022, there were 87,570 Temporary Protection holders in Austria, where the system of basic care (*Grundversorgung*) provides immediate support and housing for asylum-seekers and other non-Austrian citizens who are in need of protection and assistance. Unlike asylum-seekers, for whom the system was originally established, the majority of displaced persons from Ukraine (i.e. 72% of all Ukrainians receiving basic care) live in private accommodation instead of organized accommodation provided by the authorities. According to the survey, of those in private accommodation, 66 per cent (+/- 4.9) rent and 27 per cent (+/- 4.6) are hosted by friends, relatives or people not known to them before arrival. The fact that a significant proportion of displaced persons from Ukraine is living in private accommodation presents particular challenges and potential vulnerabilities.

Seventy-seven (77) per cent of adult Temporary Protection holders residing in Austria are female and 35 per cent of Temporary Protection holders are children, representing a group that is at an increased risk of vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking. Although most offers of private assistance are well intentioned, living outside of the organized housing system poses challenges to monitoring and protection measures. Information about living conditions in private accommodation is limited, including on potential risks of violence, exploitation and abuse encountered by displaced persons from Ukraine.

To fill this data gap, IOM Austria took part in a panel data collection that was jointly implemented by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Integration Fund. In the third wave of the survey, which took place from 17 January to 8 February 2023, a set of questions on the topic area was added. The self-administered online survey was sent to 7,274 displaced persons in Austria. Of these surveys, 552 were completed and submitted.

One of the objectives of this non-representative survey was to identify risk factors of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse when accommodated in private versus organized, public housing. The data collected support the anecdotal evidence that vulnerability to exploitation and housing are linked. This Survey Report summarizes the data collection findings with the objective of making the information collected accessible in order to strengthen existing protection, assistance and awareness-raising interventions and policies.

### TEXT BOX 1: KEY FINDINGS

**Many female single-headed households:** Most are females (83%) and live with children (59%). Twenty-six (26) per cent live with their spouse.

**Well educated but rarely employed:** Seventy-eight (78) per cent have an academic degree and 81 per cent were employed in Ukraine. In Austria, only 26 per cent are employed, of which 65 per cent say that their work is below their level of qualification.

**Precarious financial situation:** Seventy (70) per cent rely on basic care. Seventy-five (75) per cent rate their financial situation as “not so good” or “not good at all”.

**Children are mostly well cared for:** Fifty-nine (59) per cent live with children in one household. Of those living with children, 89 per cent are either the parents themselves or the parents live in the same household. Ninety (90) per cent of children go to school or kindergarten in Austria – the attendance of those of compulsory school age (6 to 14 years) is 99 per cent.

**Majority has no intention to return to Ukraine:** Sixty-nine (69) per cent do not have concrete plans to return to Ukraine.

**Private accommodation is the most prevalent form of housing:** Two thirds (65%) live in private accommodation, of which 66 per cent of these are renting, whilst the other 27 per cent are accommodated by friends, relatives or people not known to them before arrival.

**Relatively unstable housing situation:** Sixty-six (66) per cent have been living in their accommodation for over six months. Fifty-one (51) per cent changed accommodation – an average of 1.7 times. Fifty-six (56) per cent cannot stay in their accommodation for more than the next six months. Uncertainty among persons housed in public accommodation is higher (48%) than among those who live in private accommodation (29%).

**Accommodation allows for privacy to a certain extent:** Eighty-eight (88) per cent of households report having their own bathroom, 75 per cent a living space that is separate from the housing provider's space and 57 per cent a private area that can be locked.

**Statistically significant differences between private and public accommodation only in some areas:** Differences exist regarding housing costs, knowledge about the possibility to stay and the freedom to leave, with private accommodation scoring better in all areas except costs.

**Satisfaction with living conditions is high:** Twenty-three (23) per cent state that they are very satisfied with the conditions of their accommodation. Another 65 per cent are satisfied. Still, 33 per cent would like to or need to move, the main reasons being lack of space, housing costs, lack of privacy and that the accommodation is no longer available.

**Displaced persons connect to each other:** Ninety-three (93) per cent have contact with people who fled Ukraine and whom they met in Austria or with relatives and friends whom they knew previously.

**Information needs regarding support structures:** Forty-five (45) per cent feel underinformed about general support and assistance services. Forty-seven (47) per cent do not know to whom they can turn in the event of violence, exploitation or abuse encountered. Regarding the latter, women have particularly low knowledge of support structures. Employment (90%), medical care (85%), housing (77%) and education/training (77%) are the main topics about which more information is desired.

**Some report to have experienced or witnessed conflicts, unequal treatment, exploitation, violence and abuse:** Sixteen (16) per cent report to have experienced or witnessed interpersonal conflicts, mainly caused by the challenging living conditions in their accommodation. Fifteen (15) per cent report to have experienced perceived unfair or unequal treatment based on their nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religion, often in the context of housing. Ten (10) per cent report to have experienced or witnessed exploitation, 2 per cent violence and 1 per cent abuse.

**The precarious financial situation and lack of information are two likely key risk factors:** Both factors are present in the survey and might put the vulnerable group of female single-headed households with children at a higher risk of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse. Addressing these two key issues would strengthen resilience and reduce potential risks of vulnerability.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 REPORT STRUCTURE

The Survey Report summarizes the data collection exercise and findings with the objective of making the information collected accessible in order to strengthen existing protection, assistance and awareness-raising interventions and policies. This report is structured as follows:

### Chapter 1 – Introduction

Provides background information on displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria, the application of the Temporary Protection Directive and the provision of housing support. It also gives an overview of available data.

### Chapter 2 – Research aim and methodology

Describes the purpose of the research and the research design, and also looks at some limitations and constraints. The analytical framework applied in chapter 4 is outlined.

### Chapter 3 – Survey results

Presents the data collected using various figures.

### Chapter 4 – Analysis and conclusion

Analyses and interprets the data to answer the research question. Concludes with some considerations for policy and practice.

## 1.2 DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE IN AUSTRIA

The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine that started on 24 February 2022 forced Ukrainians and third-country nationals<sup>1</sup> living in Ukraine to leave their homes. While 5.4 million people have been internally displaced,<sup>2</sup> an additional 8 million<sup>3</sup> Ukrainians and also third-country nationals have fled the country, 5.6 million people have returned to their habitual place of residence (80% from within Ukraine, 20% from abroad).<sup>4</sup>

In response, the European Council adopted Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382<sup>5</sup> on 4 March 2022, introducing temporary protection for those fleeing Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 as a consequence of the war (Council of the European Union, 2022), thereby activating Council Directive 2001/55/EC (Temporary Protection Directive)<sup>6</sup> for the first time. Article 2 paragraph 1 of Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 outlines three categories of persons to whom temporary protection applies: (1) Ukrainian nationals residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; (2) stateless persons and nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, who benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; and (3) family members of the above-mentioned groups. Article 2 paragraph 2 outlines categories of persons which shall also benefit from temporary protection or adequate protection under the respective national law and finally, in accordance with Article 7 of Directive 2001/55/EC, Member States may also apply the Council Decision to other persons (EMN, 2022b:1). The Temporary Protection Directive foresees harmonized rights for Temporary Protection holders, including a residence permit as well as access to social welfare, education, employment and health care (EMN, 2022a).

Austria grants displaced persons from Ukraine a temporary right of residence. This right of residence is documented by an “ID card for displaced persons”. The temporary right of residence is granted to the following groups of persons:

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1 In the European Union, those who are not citizens of the Union within the meaning of Article 20.1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union are referred to as third-country nationals (IOM, 2019a:214).

2 As of 23 January 2023, see IOM, 2023a.

3 As of 17 January 2023, see UNHCR, 2023.

4 As of 23 January 2023, see IOM, 2023b:2, 4.

5 Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, OJ L 71, pp. 1–6.

6 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, OJ L 212, pp. 12–23.



(1) Ukrainian citizens who fled Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022<sup>7</sup> and their family members; (2) persons entitled to protection in Ukraine who fled Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 and their family members; (3) Ukrainian citizens who had a valid Austrian residence title on 24 February 2022 that was later on withdrawn or not renewed and who cannot return to Ukraine from the time the validity of their residence title expired; and (4) Ukrainian citizens who were legally residing (visa-required or visa-free) in Austria on 24 February 2022 and who cannot return to Ukraine from the time their legal (visa-required or visa-free) residence expired. For the time being, the temporary right of residence is granted until 4 March 2024 (oesterreich.gv.at, 2023).<sup>8</sup>

By December 2022, 87,570 Temporary Protection holders from outside the European Union were residing in Austria. Ninety-nine (99) per cent have Ukrainian citizenship (86,485 persons). Seventy-seven (77) per cent of adults are female (44,170 persons). Fifty-eight (58) per cent are between 18 and 64 years old (50,765 persons) and seven per cent 65 years or older (6,490 persons). Thirty-five (35) per cent are children (30,315 persons; Eurostat, 2023a).

According to Public Employment Service (PES) data, 36 per cent of displaced persons from Ukraine registered at the PES in Austria at the end of May 2022 had tertiary education (OECD, 2023:6); at the end of December 2022 it was 33 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Survey data from Austria collected by the Austrian Institute for Family Research on behalf of the Austrian Integration Fund and by Judith Kohlenberger and associated researchers show a diverging picture: the self-administered online survey amongst 833 female displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria aged 18 to 55 years conducted in May 2022 showed that 72 per cent have a university degree (Mazal et al., 2022:10).<sup>10</sup> Another face-to-face and computer-assisted personal interview survey conducted in Vienna between April and June 2022 with a sample size of 1,100 displaced persons from Ukraine aged 18 and above showed that as many as 83 per cent of persons aged 25 and above had tertiary education (Kohlenberger et al., 2022).<sup>11</sup> According to our survey, 78 per cent have an academic degree (see chapter 3.1). In addition to being well educated, most displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria report that they speak English (67% or 58%, depending on the survey; Kohlenberger et al., 2022; Mazal et al., 2022:2) and more than half consider themselves upper class or upper middle class (Kohlenberger et al., 2022).

By December 2022, 8,126 Temporary Protection holders from Ukraine were employed in Austria (i.e. 16% of adults of working age). Most were employed as cooks/kitchen assistants (18%), in hotel and restaurant professions (16%), in assistant jobs (14%) or as building cleaners (14%).<sup>12</sup> At that time, Temporary Protection holders still needed a work permit which they received in all sectors without a labour market test. With entering into force of the amendment of the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals<sup>13</sup> on 21 April 2023, Temporary Protection holders are now exempted and can take up any employment without a work permit.

### 1.3 HOUSING SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM UKRAINE

Displaced persons from Ukraine residing in Austria who are in need of assistance can receive basic care (*Grundversorgung*) – a system that was originally set up to provide temporary basic care for asylum-seekers and other non-Austrian citizens who are in need of protection and assistance.<sup>14</sup> Since the Regulation for Displaced Persons entered into force on

7 In decision E 3249/2022-12 of 15 March 2023, the Constitutional Court found that Ukrainian nationals who left Ukraine not long before 24 February 2022, e.g. to spend a holiday abroad, are also included. See Constitutional Court, 15 March 2023. E 3249/2022-12. Available at [www.vfgh.gv.at](http://www.vfgh.gv.at).

8 Regulation of the Federal Government on a Temporary Right of Residence for Displaced Persons from Ukraine – Regulation on Displaced Persons, FLG II No. 92/2022, in the version of federal law FLG II No. 27/2023.

9 Data provided by Public Employment Service Austria on 7 February 2023.

10 Sample size: 833; data collection: May 2022 in Austria; conducted by the Austrian Institute for Family Research on behalf of the Austrian Integration Fund.

11 Sample size: 1,100; data collection: April to June 2022 in Vienna; conducted by Judith Kohlenberger, Konrad Pędziwiatr, Bernhard Rengs, Bernhard Riederer, Ingrid Setz, Isabella Buber-Ennsner, Jan Brzozowski and Olena Nahorniuk.

12 Data provided by Public Employment Service Austria on 7 February 2023.

13 Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals, FLG No. 218/1975, in the version of federal law FLG I No. 43/2023.

14 Included are asylum-seekers, rejected asylum-seekers without a legal status who cannot be deported due to legal or factual reasons, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, displaced persons with a temporary right of residence, non-Austrians with certain residence permits for particularly exceptional circumstances, non-Austrians without a legal status who cannot be deported due to legal or factual reasons, non-Austrians in detention pending deportation and persons who have been granted asylum, but only for a period of up to four months after receiving asylum (Art. 2 para 1 Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act, FIG I No. 80/2004). Some provincial laws governing basic care include additional categories of non-Austrian citizens in need of assistance, for example holders of certain residence permits or victims of human trafficking. In Tyrol and Vorarlberg, persons with subsidiary protection status may receive social assistance (Art. 3 para 2 subpara f Tyrol Minimum Benefit Act, FIG No. 99/2010; Art. 6 para 1 Vorarlberger Social Benefit Act, FIG No. 81/2020).

12 March 2022, Temporary Protection holders have access to basic care.<sup>15</sup> Since 1 December 2022, third-country nationals who have been displaced from Ukraine but who are not eligible for Temporary Protection and were permitted to enter Austria for the purpose of transit and immediate departure, are also eligible for basic care.<sup>16</sup>

Within the framework of basic care, displaced persons from Ukraine can be housed in organized accommodation provided by federal or provincial authorities such as collective reception centres or reception facilities (i.e. public housing). If they live in private accommodation instead, they receive inter alia rent subsidies as well as financial support for daily necessities (EMN, 2022c:18).<sup>17</sup> Before displaced persons from Ukraine came to Austria, the majority of persons receiving basic care were accommodated in organized facilities, e.g. 65 per cent on 1 December 2021 (Migration Info & Grafik, 2023).

Some private accommodation for displaced persons from Ukraine that is free of charge is centrally organized by the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services via an online platform (Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service, 2022), where private individuals or organizations with vacant properties or rooms can register and where information for those offering accommodation is provided. The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services reviews the offers and forwards them to the provinces, who subcontract the allocation to aid organizations (EMN, 2022c:8; Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service, 2022). The quality of accommodation can differ depending on the province, but general criteria for the provision of private housing include sleeping facilities; sufficient sanitary facilities; short-term availability; security of supply (water, hot water, electricity, heating, if possible also Internet); and the possibility to prepare meals if no catering can be provided (Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service, 2022). Unlike some other European Union Member States, Austria does not provide cash support to private individuals for hosting displaced persons from Ukraine (EMN, 2022c:7). Rent subsidies as well as financial support for daily necessities provided in the framework of basic care are directly paid to the displaced persons, except for those living in Burgenland, where the funds are paid out to the housing provider who then transfers the financial support for daily necessities to the tenants (Land Burgenland, 2023; Langthaler, 2022:4).

According to basic care data 55,799 Ukrainians were receiving basic care in Austria by December 2022. Seventy-two (72) per cent of those lived in private accommodation (39,967 persons), the rest (28%) in public accommodation (15,832 persons; Mol, 2023:7). However, the administrative data do not indicate the type of private accommodation. Our data collection shows that of the 65 per cent of persons surveyed who live in private accommodation, 66 per cent (+/- 4.9) rent their own accommodation and 27 per cent (+/- 4.6) are hosted by friends, relatives or people not known to them before arrival (see chapter 3.2).

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15 Article 2 para 1 subpara 1 and subpara 3 Agreement between the Federal State and the Provinces on Basic Care - Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act, FIG I No. 80/2004 in conjunction with Regulation of the Federal Government on a Temporary Right of Residence for Displaced Persons from Ukraine – Regulation on Displaced Persons, FIG II No. 92/2022, in the version of federal law FLG II No. 27/2023.

16 With the possibility of retroactive offsetting of the costs in connection with the provision of basic care for this group from 1 March 2022 (Art. 4 Agreement between the Federal Government and the Provinces pursuant to Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act, establishing in particular an increase in selected maximum cost rates under Article 9 of the Basic Care Agreement as well as a lump sum for initial care, FLG I Nr. 197/2022).

17 The rent subsidy amounts to EUR 165 per month for individuals and to EUR 330 per month for families; assistance for daily necessities amounts to EUR 260 per adult and months and to EUR 145 per child and months (Asylkoordination, 2023:3).

## 2. RESEARCH AIM AND METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH AIM

IOM reports show that globally, most people fleeing Ukraine are women, children and older persons (IOM, 2022).<sup>18</sup> These groups can be especially vulnerable to violence,<sup>19</sup> exploitation<sup>20</sup> and abuse,<sup>21</sup> including human trafficking.<sup>22</sup> While most offers of private assistance to displaced persons are well intentioned, the lack of oversight and regulation, including assessments of private accommodation offers, can place them at a heightened risk of exploitation, abuse and trafficking (EMN, 2022c:9; Hoff and de Volder, 2022:16; UNHCR, 2022). This creates possible vulnerabilities where landlords may take advantage of their limited knowledge of local conditions (e.g. their rights or available services and support) and reduced bargaining power (IOM, 2019b:15). A lack of adequate housing in terms of living space and privacy (UNICEF, 2021:29), as well as assumed or actual dependence on the housing provider, e.g. due to lack of financial resources or accurate information (Hoff and de Volder, 2022:12ff.), can also be considered risks. Qualitative research from Austria indicates that besides dependencies, diverging daily routines leading to tensions as well as uncertainty regarding the duration and costs of accommodation also pose challenges (Rosenberger and Lazareva, 2022:18–20). Of particular concern are separated children who are accompanied by family members/friends with a need to clarify guardianship.

This research thus aims to collect data on the living and housing situation of displaced persons from Ukraine residing in Austria in order to identify potential risks of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse when they are accommodated in private versus public housing. In doing so, we provide data to support some anecdotal evidence on the links between vulnerability to exploitation and housing (see, for example, Chen, 2022:25–26). The Survey Report provides an analysis of the data collected and an overview of risk factors. We are thus contributing to ongoing national data gathering efforts on displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria, making this data publicly available in order to strengthen existing protection, assistance and awareness-raising interventions and policies.

### 2.2 METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The data collection targeted displaced persons from Ukraine residing in Austria. It was a collaboration between IOM Austria, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Integration Fund. A set of 17 closed and four open-ended questions on housing, violence and abuse was added to an existing questionnaire, which was in the third wave of a panel data collection.<sup>23</sup> Data collection was conducted by Market Institute, a private data collection and analysis firm, and took place from 17 January to 8 February 2023 using an online, self-administered survey in German and Ukrainian.

The link to the survey was sent to potential respondents by email and text message using the following contact databases: (1) contacts provided by the Austrian Integration Fund, i.e. persons who are registered with the Austrian Integration Fund or who attend a German course organized by the Austrian Integration Fund, and (2) contacts from the Market Institute, i.e. from the institute's regular panel (friends and acquaintances) and provided by various private aid organizations as well as by friends and employees of the institute. The survey was sent out to a total of 7,274 contacts on 17 January 2023, with reminders to fill out the questionnaire sent on 20 January, 25 January, 31 January and 6 February to those who had

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18 According to Ukraine's martial law introduced on 24 February 2022 men between the ages of 18 and 60 are normally not allowed to leave the country (OHCHR, 2022:41).

19 Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, that either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death or psychological harm (IOM, 2019b:5).

20 Exploitation is defined as the unfair treatment of a person for someone else's benefit (IOM, 2019b:5).

21 Abuse is defined as an improper act by a person in a position of relative power, causing harm to a person of lesser power (including physical abuse, sexual abuse, abuse of a position of vulnerability, psychological abuse, etc.; IOM, 2019b:5).

22 Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (Art. 3 para a General Assembly resolution 55/25, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 15 November 2000. Available at [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)). On the vulnerability of women, children and older persons see, for example, David et al., 2019:10; OHCHR, n.d..

23 The Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior together with the Austrian Integration Fund conducted a self-administered online panel data collection on displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria. The first wave took place from 24 June to 16 July 2022, the second wave from 24 October to 27 November 2022 and the third wave from 17 January to 8 February 2023.

not yet completed the survey. As an incentive to complete the survey, 50 points – corresponding to a EUR 5 voucher from Sodexo – were offered upon completion. Those individuals in the sample who participated in other waves of the panel survey received a EUR 5 voucher for each wave. Those who participated in all three waves received an additional EUR 5 voucher.<sup>24</sup>

Out of the total sample size of 7,274, 1,777 opened the survey link, 629 started the questionnaire and 552 completed it (8% response rate, 31% completion rate). Only completed surveys were included in the analysis.

Methodological limitations of this study include sample bias, insufficient sample size and selection bias, as well as low response and completion rates. The primary limitation to the generalization of these results is that the sample is not representative of displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria due to the sampling methodology and limited sample size and the lack of a sampling frame. The survey population was not randomly selected from a representative sample of Ukrainian displaced persons in Austria. For example, those who are disconnected from support or information are underrepresented in our sample because it partially consists of contacts of the Austrian Integration Fund. For the interpretation of results (see chapter 3.3), this means that the number of persons who feel rather underinformed about general support and assistance services among all displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria is potentially higher. In addition, the survey was a self-administered online survey, which means that participants self-selected to complete the survey and certain groups such as elderly and sick persons or persons with impairments who may not have access to an online device or computer were not considered.

It is thus important to keep in mind that findings are not representative of displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria. Rather, the data collected and conclusions drawn give an initial insight into a phenomenon that might merit further discussion and more rigorous analysis.

## 2.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

IOM's Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability Model (IOM, 2019b:5ff.) was applied as the analytical framework. The model is used to identify determinants of vulnerabilities. It considers risk factors (which contribute to vulnerability, such as households headed by a single parent), protective factors (which improve the ability to avoid, cope with or recover from harm, i.e. resilience – such as sufficient earnings) and how they interact. The model hypothesizes that the levels of vulnerability and resilience are determined by the interaction of factors across four levels (individual, household/family, community, structural level), i.e. the factors that make one person more vulnerable than another to a specific risk. The risk in our case is that of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse in the context of housing. The risk is higher when vulnerability (i.e. a person's susceptibility to harm) is higher and resilience is lower. The survey questions are based on a range of individual factors (such as sex, age, educational level), household/family factors (such as number of children, income level) and a number of community factors (such as social networks, access to information) that are derived from the IOM Protection Handbook (IOM, 2019b) and Counter-trafficking in Emergencies: Information Management Guide (IOM, 2020).

The question guiding the analysis is as follows: **which individual, household/family and community factors increase resilience, and which increase vulnerability and thereby decrease/increase the risk of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse?** Since a large part of the target group is accommodated in private housing, the focus of the analysis will be on the conditions of private housing, which will be compared with public housing.

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24 There are several benefits and potential methodological drawbacks of using incentives. One benefit is that incentives can motivate people to participate in surveys and thus increase the response rate. Providing incentives can – on the other hand – raise ethical concerns. They may encourage people to participate even if they are not interested or do not qualify for the survey. This can undermine the integrity of the research and lead to inaccurate results. In our case, however, the incentive was rather small.

### 3. SURVEY RESULTS

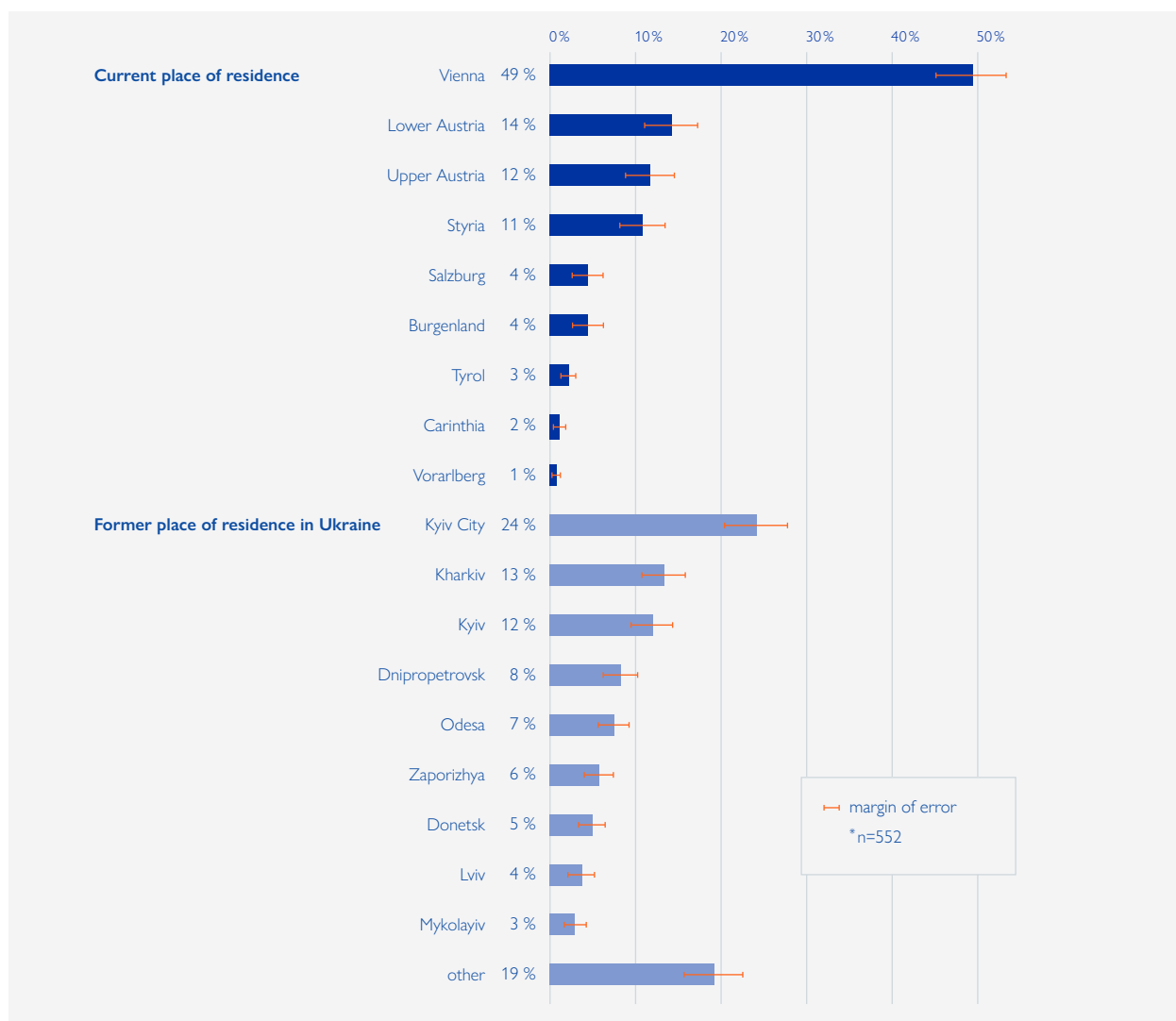
The key results of the survey with regard to the research question are presented below. The results are divided into four thematic blocks, starting with some basic information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample. This thematic block also includes information on children, to whom special attention is paid as a vulnerable group. Next, the central theme of this survey, the housing situation, is described, followed by social networks and access to information as essential resilience factors. Finally, the last section is devoted to concrete experiences of violence, exploitation or abuse.

It should be noted that a margin of error has been calculated with a confidence interval of 95 per cent.

#### 3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 552 displaced persons from Ukraine surveyed, all have Ukrainian citizenship. Ninety-eight (98) per cent (+/- 1.2) have an identity card for displaced persons. Forty-nine (49) per cent (+/- 4.2) are accommodated in Vienna. The rest are distributed throughout other Austrian provinces. Forty-nine (49) per cent (+/- 4.2) come from Ukraine's two largest cities, Kyiv and Kharkiv and their respective provinces (see figure 1). Sixty (60) per cent (+/- 4.1) belong to the Ukrainian Orthodox church, seven per cent (+/- 2.1) to another Christian denomination. Twenty-three (23) per cent (+/- 3.5) are without a creed.

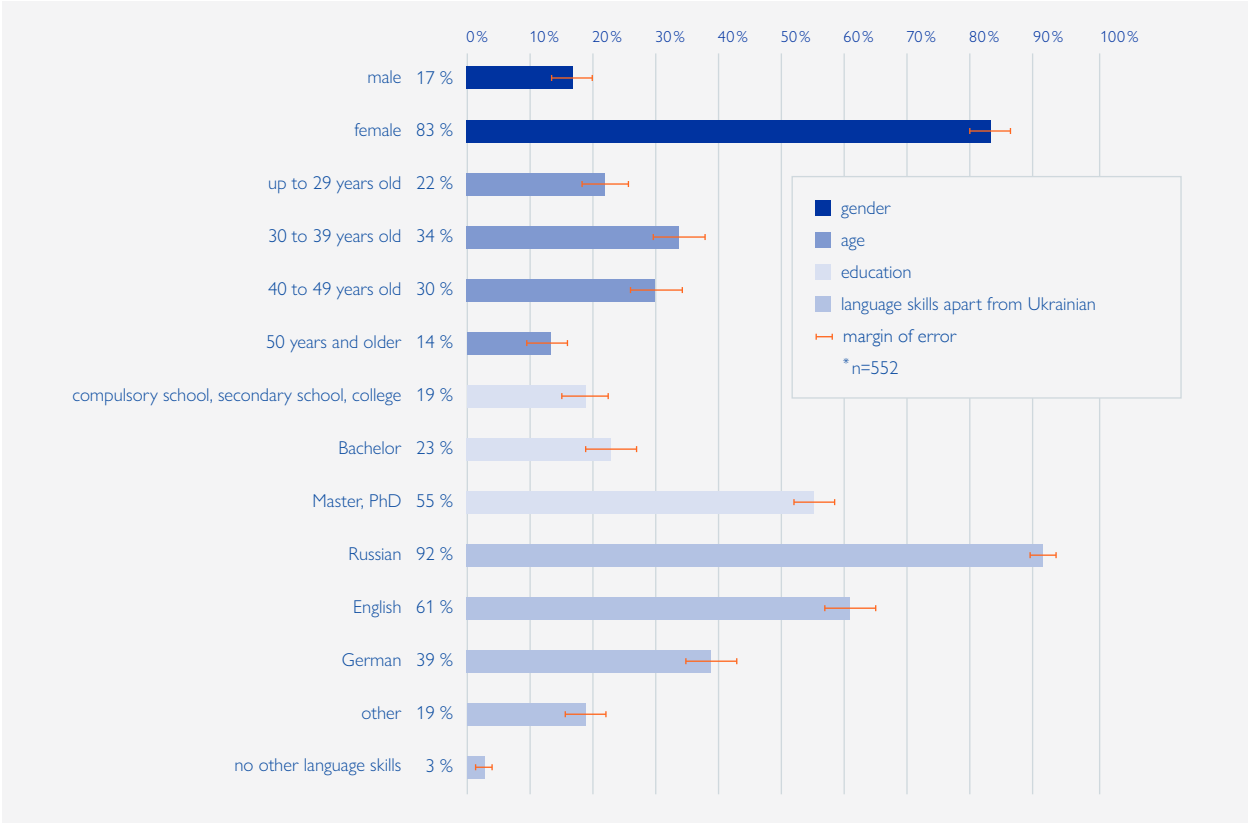
**Figure 1: Place of residence\***



Source: Mol/AIF/IOM, 2023.

Eighty-three (83) per cent (+/- 3.1) of the sample are female. Sixty-four (64) per cent (+/- 4.0) are between the ages of 30 and 49. Seventy-eight (78) per cent (+/- 3.5) have an academic degree (Bachelor, Master, PhD). In addition to Ukrainian, 92 per cent (+/- 2.3) also speak Russian (mostly very good, 89% +/- 2.7), 61 per cent (+/- 4.1) speak English (mostly good or basic, 30% +/- 3.8 and 39% +/- 4.1 respectively) and 39 per cent (+/- 4.1) German (mainly basic knowledge, 74% +/- 3.7; see figure 2).

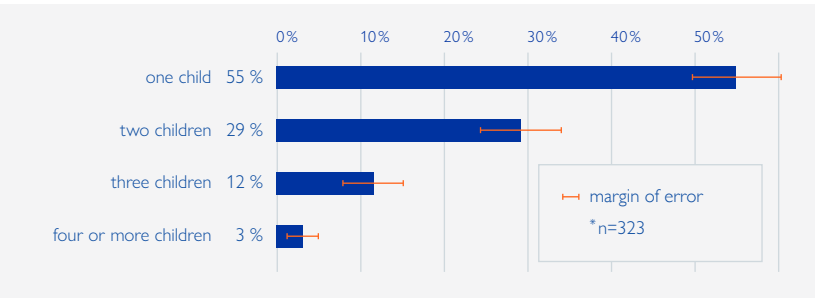
**Figure 2: Composition of respondents\***



Source: Mol/AIF/IOM, 2023.

According to Kohlenberger et al., the persons who have fled to Austria differ considerably from the total population of Ukraine in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics. Fifty-four (54) per cent of the population in Ukraine are female, about 31 per cent are between 30 and 49 years old and about 30 per cent have an academic degree. The difference in the sociodemographic composition of displaced persons and the population of the country of origin could be explained by the fact that certain groups of people are more likely to migrate than others (Aksoy and Poutvaara, 2021). In comparison to Poland, Kohlenberger et al. come to the conclusion that this self-selection is more pronounced with increasing distance from the country of origin, i.e. the higher their human capital and socioeconomic background (Eurostat, 2023b; Kohlenberger et al., 2022). Displaced persons in Austria are therefore more often highly educated and at their prime age.

**Figure 3: Displaced Ukrainians with children in one household\***



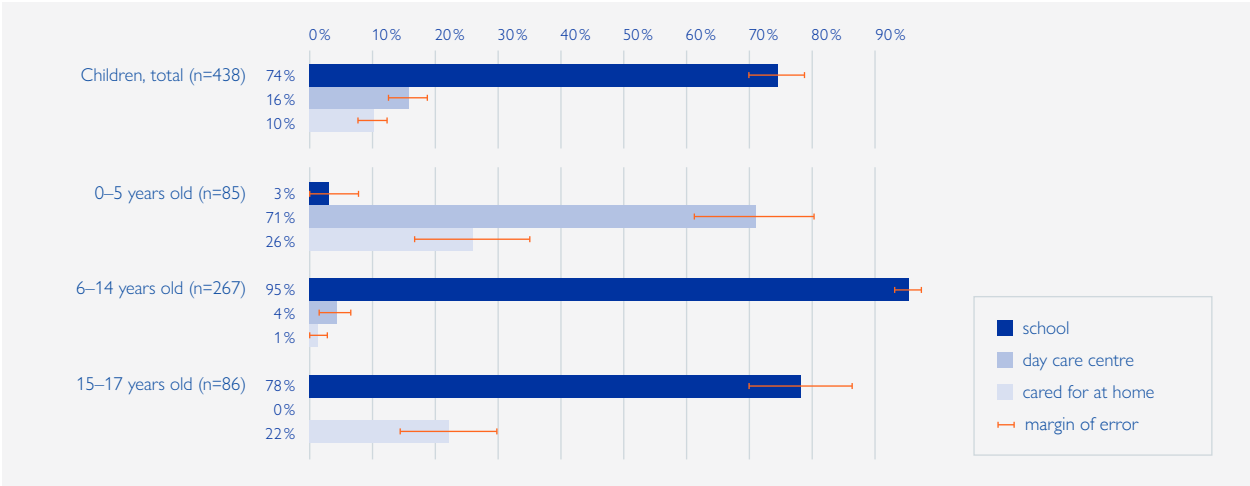
Source: Mol/AIF/IOM, 2023.

In addition to persons with disabilities (5% +/- 1.8 of respondents), particularly vulnerable groups also include children. Thirty-two (32) per cent of households in Austria have children (Kaindl and Schipfer, 2022:15). In comparison, 59 per cent (+/- 4.1) of displaced persons from Ukraine surveyed lived with children in one household,<sup>25</sup> 55 per cent (+/- 5.4) with one child (see figure 3) – on average 1.9 children. The children are predominantly of school age (6–14 years; 60% +/- 4.3). Twenty (20) per cent each (+/- 3.5) are in infancy or toddler age (0–5 years) and adolescent age (15–17 years).

The majority of respondents living in a household with a child are themselves responsible for custody as parents or parents living in the same household as the respondents are responsible for custody (89% +/- 3.2). In six per cent of cases (+/- 2.5), a relative living in the same household is entitled to custody. In two per cent of cases (+/- 1.5), the legal guardian responsible for the children has remained in Ukraine, i.e. these are unaccompanied or separated children.

The majority of the respondents' children go to school (74% +/- 4.1) or day care (16% +/- 3.4) in Austria. Only 10 per cent of children (+/- 2.8) are cared for at home – among children of compulsory school age, the figure is only one per cent (+/- 1.2). However, 22 per cent (+/- 8.8) of children beyond compulsory school age are cared for at home (see figure 4).

**Figure 4: Access to education**

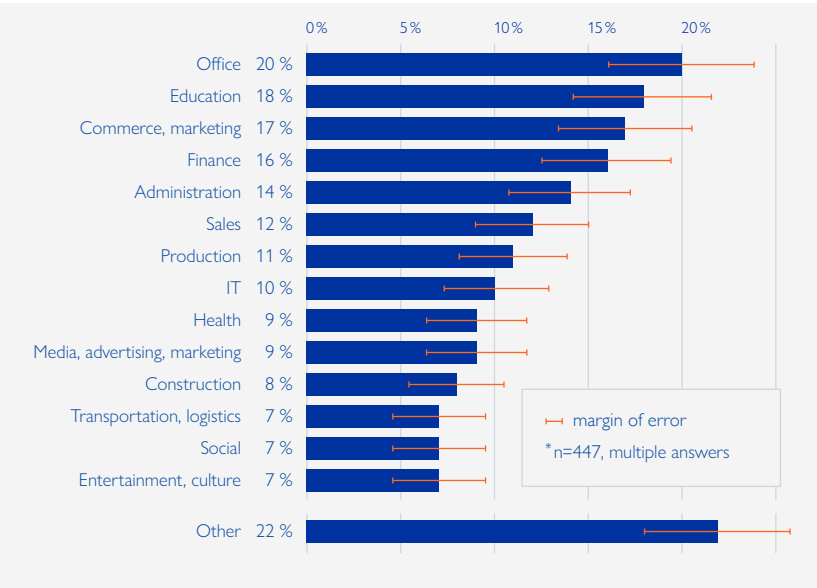


Source: Mol/AIF/IOM, 2023.

Eighty-one (81) per cent (+/- 3.3) of the respondents were employed in Ukraine (55% +/- 9.6 of persons with compulsory school, secondary school or college degree; 86% +/- 3.3 of persons with Bachelor, Master or PhD). The sectors of employment are very diverse. For example, 20 per cent (+/- 3.7) worked in an office, 18 per cent (+/- 3.6) in education and 17 per cent (+/- 3.5) in commerce/marketing (see figure 5).

When asked about their current sources of income (multiple answers were possible), 70 per cent (+/- 3.8) of respondents answered that they receive basic care. Persons living in public accommodation are more likely

**Figure 5: Sectors of employment in Ukraine\***

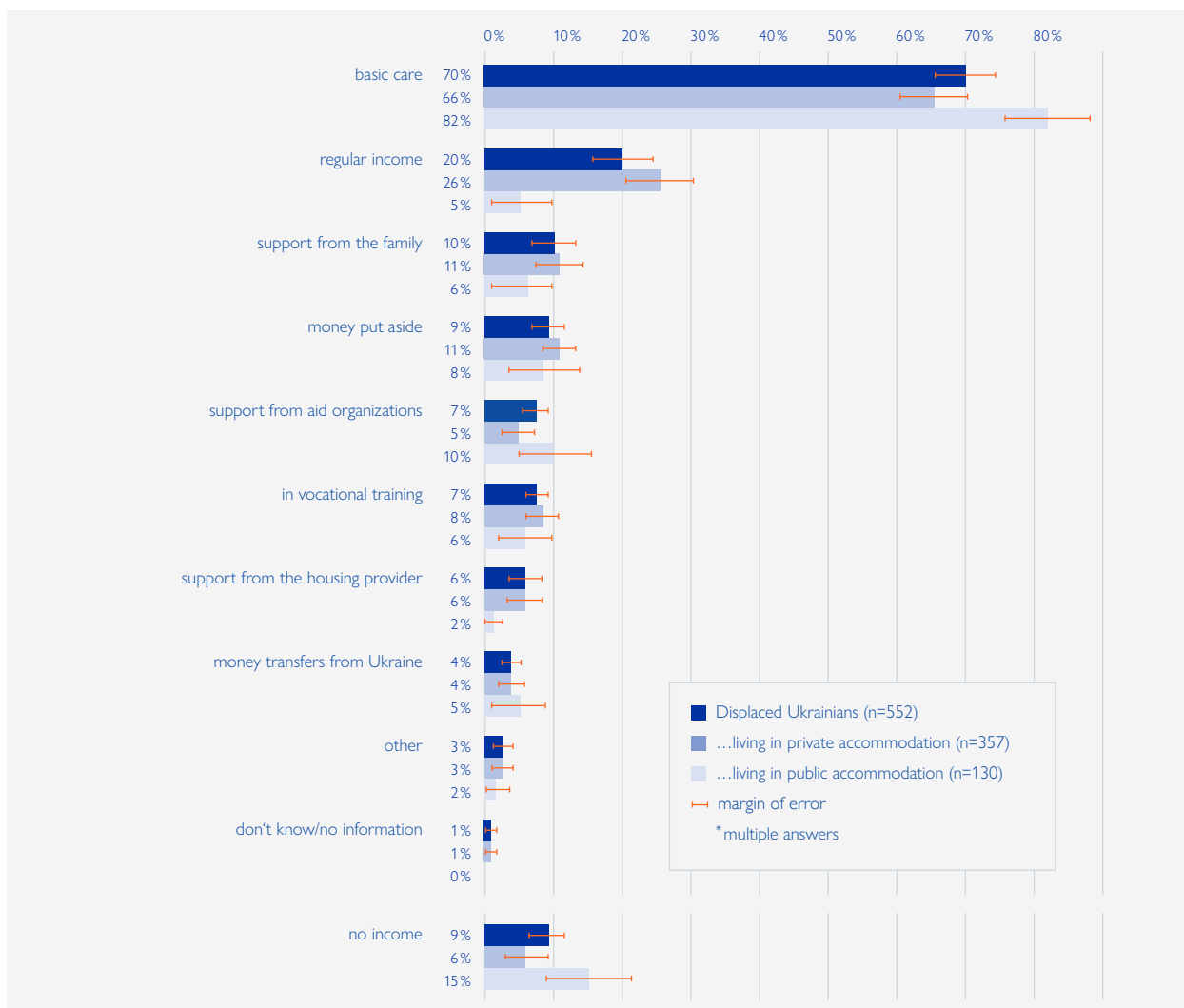


Source: Mol/AIF/IOM, 2023.

25 Household is defined as a residential and economic community of one or more persons. It does not include the host(s) in the context of private housing.

to receive basic care (82% +/- 6.6 vs 66% +/- 4.9) and significantly less likely to have a regular income (5% +/- 3.7 vs 26% +/- 4.6) and more likely to have no income at all (15% +/- 6.1 vs 6% +/- 2.5) than persons who live in private accommodation. It should also be emphasized that six per cent (+/- 2.0) are financially supported by their housing provider (see figure 6).

**Figure 6: Sources of income\***



Source: Mol/AIF/IOM, 2023.

The majority of respondents (75% +/- 3.6) rate their financial situation as “not so good” or “not good” (see figure 7). Displaced persons who indicated their source of income was basic care are in a worse financial situation (83% +/- 3.8 rate their financial situation as “not so good” or “not good”). Persons with a regular income in Austria rate their financial situation as often as “very good” or “good” (50% +/-9.3) as they rate their financial situation as “not so good” or “not good” (51% +/-9.3).

**Figure 7: Self-assessment of financial situation\***

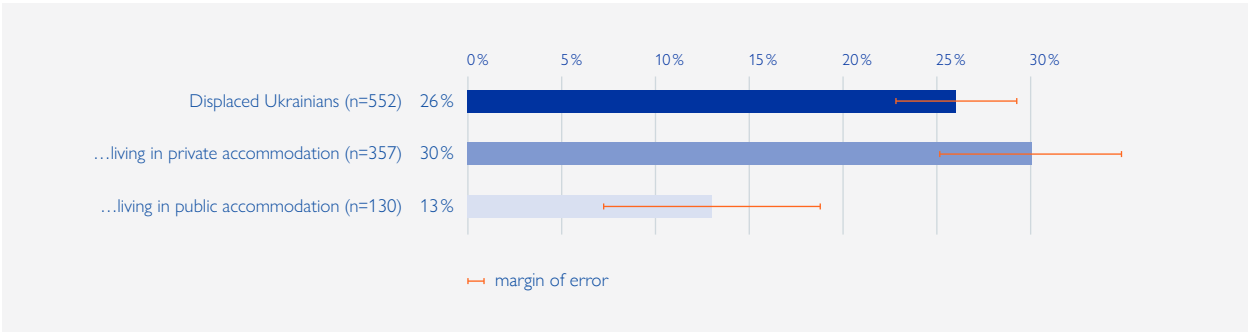


Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.



Only 26 per cent (+/- 3.7) stated that they were employed in Austria. Persons who have private accommodation were more likely to be employed (30% +/- 4.8) than those who lived in public accommodation (13% +/- 5.8; see figure 8).

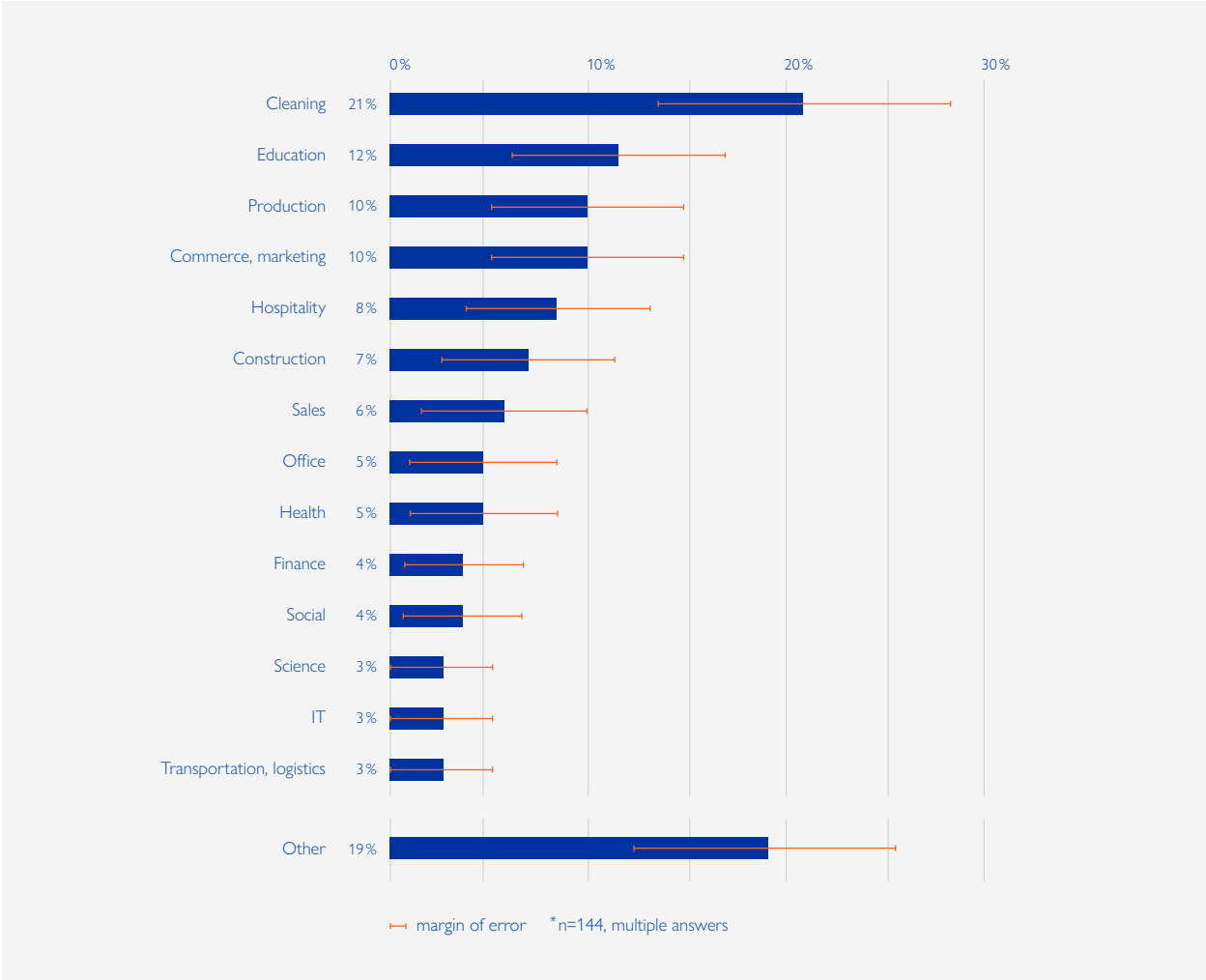
**Figure 8: Displaced Ukrainians in employment in Austria by type of accommodation**



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Twenty-one (21) per cent (+/- 6.7) of respondents in employment are employed in cleaning, 12 per cent (+/- 5.3) in education and 10 per cent (+/-4.9) each in production and commerce/marketing (see figure 9).

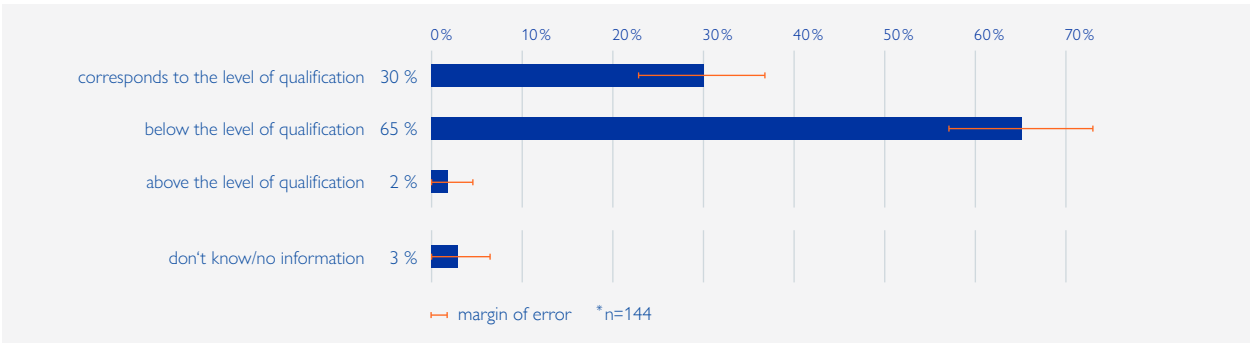
**Figure 9: Sectors of employment in Austria\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Sixty-five (65) per cent (+/- 7.8) of respondents who are in employment said that their work was below their level of qualification (see figure 10). While 78 per cent (+/- 3.5) of respondents have an academic degree (see figure 2), those who are employed, often work in typical entry-level sectors (see figure 9).

**Figure 10: Self-assessment of employment in Austria with regard to level of qualification\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

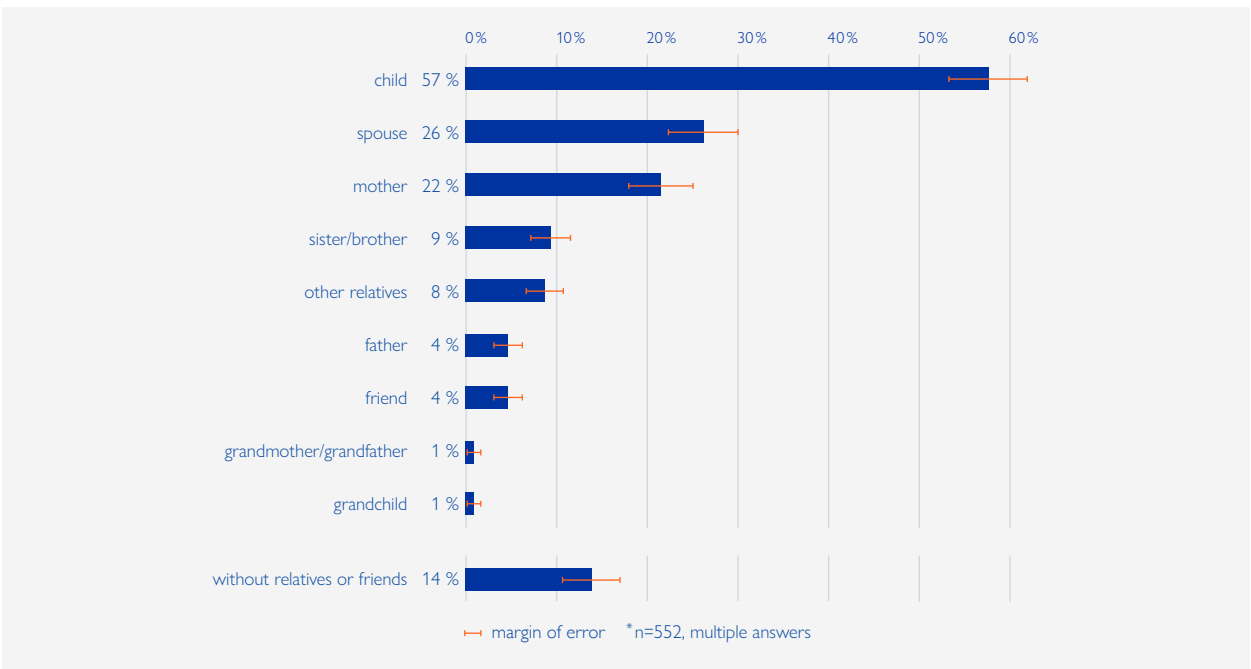
When asked about their intentions to return to Ukraine, 69 per cent (+/- 3.9) of respondents stated that they did not have concrete plans to do so.

### 3.2 HOUSING SITUATION

Almost one in two respondents (49% +/- 4.2) was living in Vienna at the time of the survey, which corresponds to the last places of residence in Ukraine, which were predominantly urban areas (see figure 1). Only 16 per cent (+/- 3.1) lived in a rural community in Austria.

The majority, 57 per cent (+/- 4.1), lived with their children. Forty-five (45) per cent (+/- 4.2) lived with other relatives. Only 26 per cent (+/- 3.7) lived in a household with their spouse. 14 per cent (+/- 2.9) lived without relatives or friends (see figure 11). There is no statistically significant difference between the composition of households in private versus public housing.

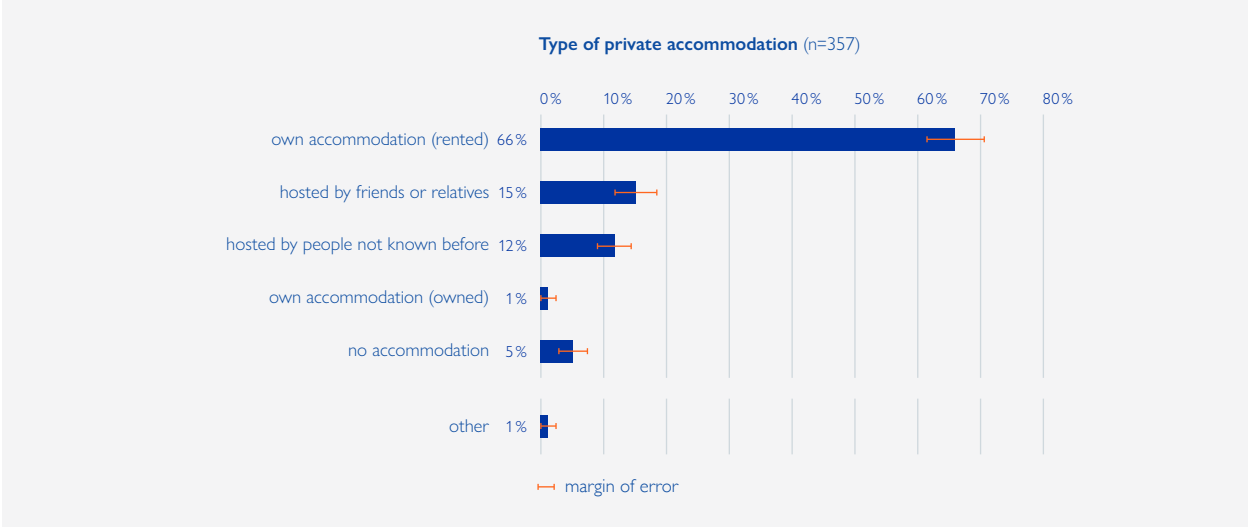
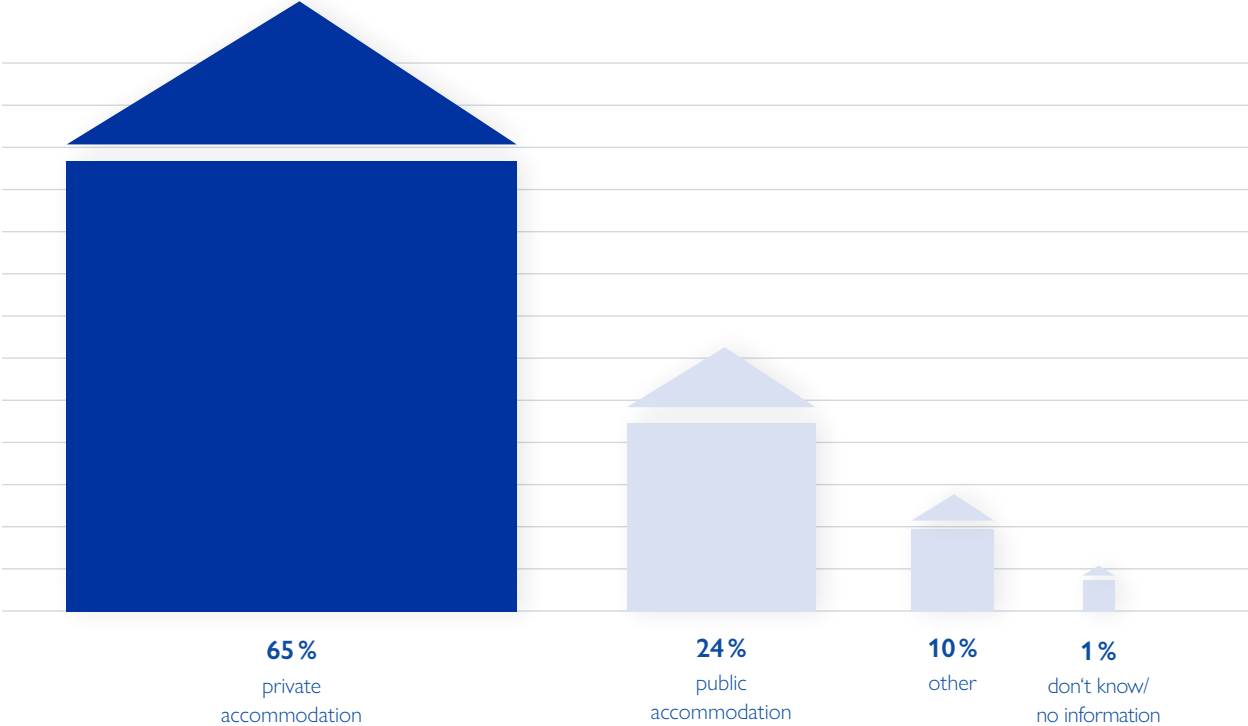
**Figure 11: Relatives or friends living in the same household\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

The majority (65% +/- 4.0) lived in private accommodation. Only 24 per cent (+/- 3.6) were housed in public accommodation provided by the city, the municipality or other institutions. The majority of people in private accommodation lived in their own rented accommodation (66% +/- 4.9), 27 per cent (+/- 4.6) were hosted by other persons (friends, relatives or people not known to them before arrival). One per cent (+/- 1) said they had no accommodation (see figure 12).

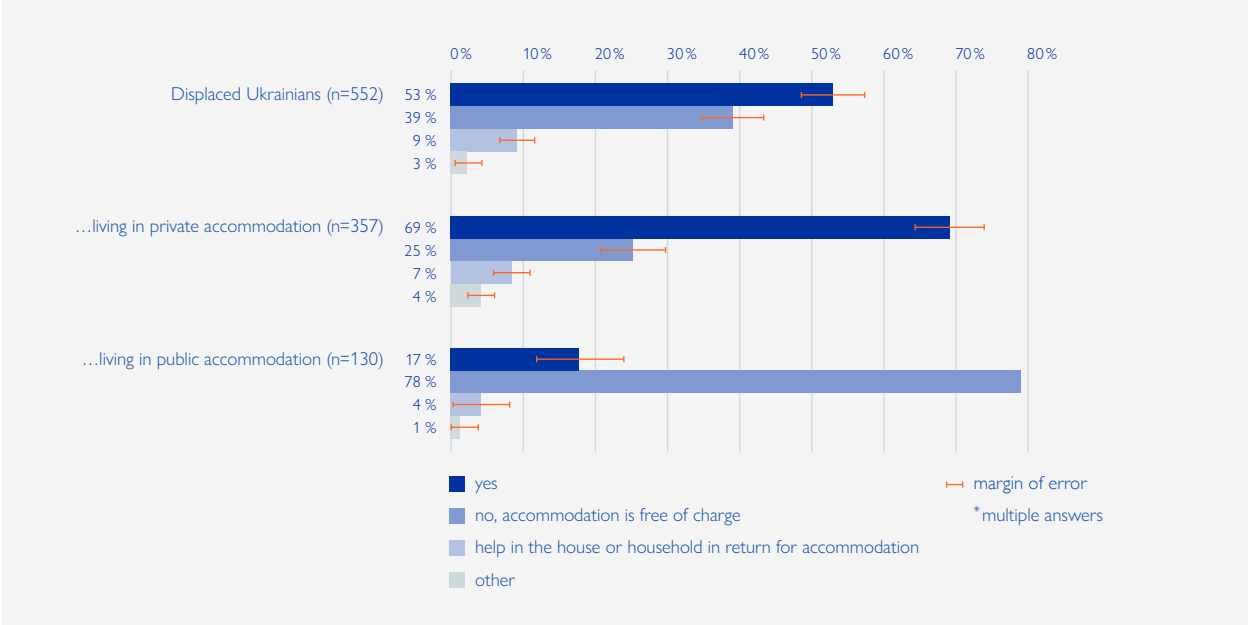
**Figure 12: Type of accommodation (n=552)**



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Fifty-three (53) per cent (+/- 4.2) need to pay for their accommodation; for 39 per cent (+/- 4.1) the accommodation is free of charge. Private accommodation is mostly subject to a fee (69% +/- 4.8) and public accommodation is mostly free of charge (78% +/- 1.7). Nine per cent (+/- 2.4) are expected to help with domestic work in the house or household in return for accommodation (see figure 13).

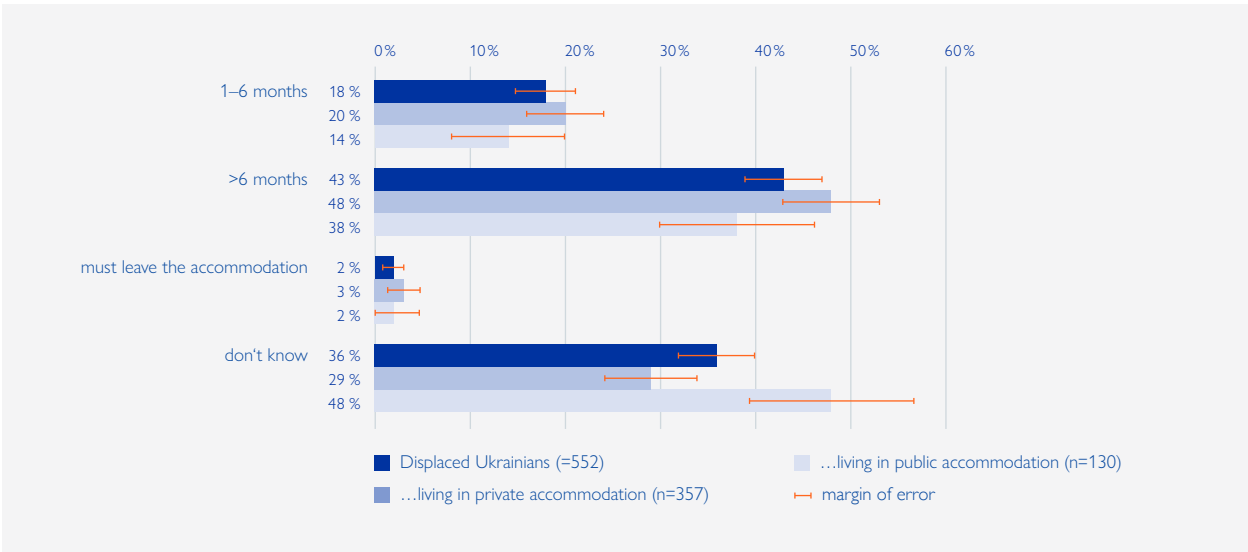
**Figure 13: Payment for accommodation\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

At the time of the survey, 66 per cent (+/- 4.0) had already been living in their accommodation for more than six months. About half of the respondents (51% +/- 4.2) have already changed accommodation since arriving in Austria – an average of 1.7 times. It should be noted that 70 per cent (+/- 3.8) have lived in Austria for 10 months, 98 per cent (+/- 1.2) between 8 and 11 months. 56 per cent (+/- 4.1) of respondents could not count on their accommodation for more than the next six months. They either did not know how long they would be able to stay (36% +/- 4.0) – with uncertainty among persons staying in public accommodation being greater (48% +/- 8.6) than among persons living in private accommodation (29% +/- 4.7) –, they could stay for only between one and six months (18% +/- 3.2) or they would have to move (2% +/- 1.2; see figure 14).

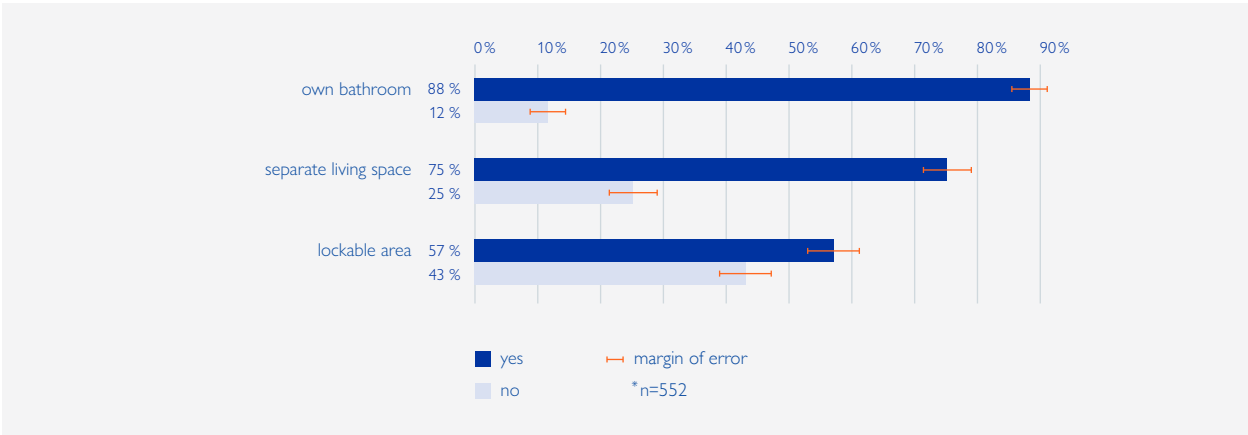
**Figure 14: Future length of stay in accommodation**



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

As far as facilities are concerned, 88 per cent (+/- 2.7) of households have their own bathroom. Seventy-five (75) per cent (+/- 3.6) of households have their own living space, which is separate from the housing provider's space. Fifty-seven (57) per cent (+/- 4.1) have a private, i.e. lockable area (see figure 15). The difference between private and public accommodation is not statistically measurable for all three variables.

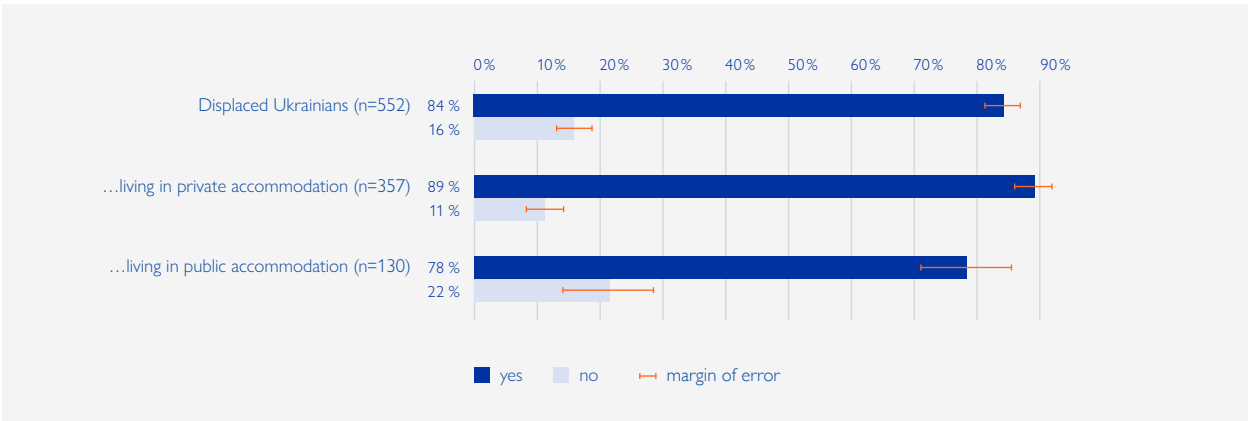
**Figure 15: Facilities, per household\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Sixteen (16) per cent (+/- 3.1) of respondents stated that they could not leave their accommodation as they please. This is more likely to affect those living in public accommodation (22% +/- 7) and less often people staying in private accommodation (11% +/- 3.2; see figure 16).

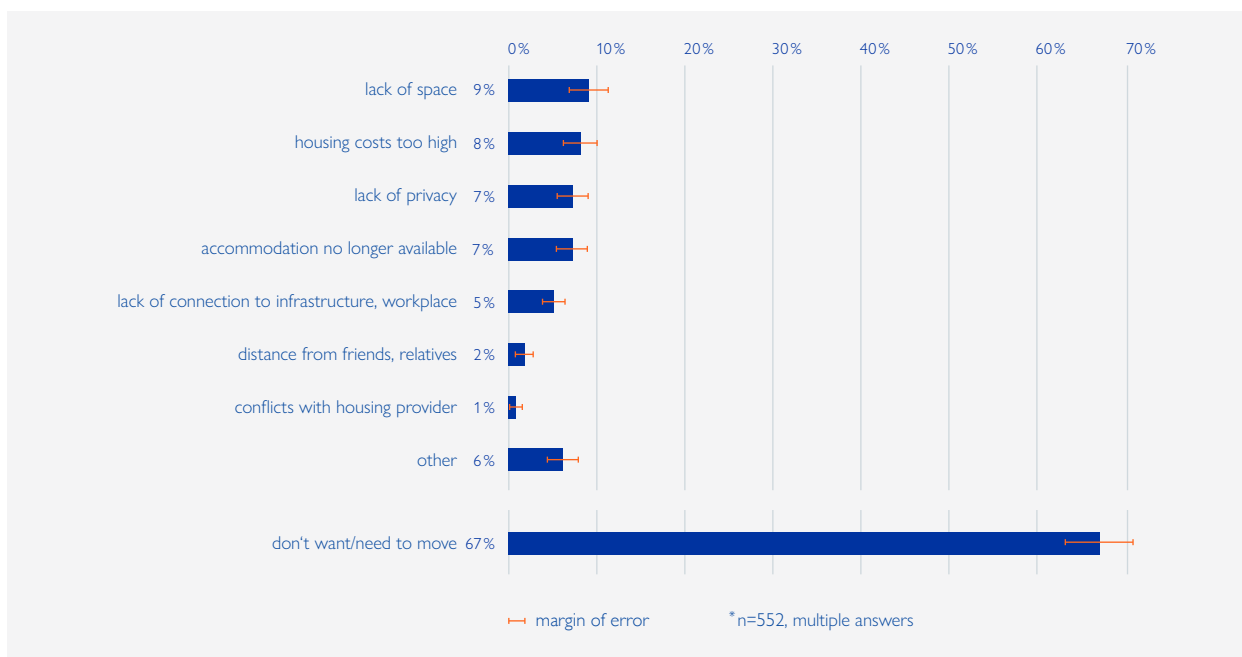
**Figure 16: Freedom to leave the accommodation at any time**



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Thirty-three (33) per cent (+/- 3.9) of respondents would like to or need to move. The main reasons are lack of space, housing costs being too high, lack of privacy and accommodation being no longer available (see figure 17). There is no statistically significant difference between the reasons mentioned by persons who live in private housing versus those who live in public accommodation. In addition, employment is a reason to move. For example, several respondents said they would have to move if they were going to take up employment.

**Figure 17: Reasons for wanting to move or having to move\***



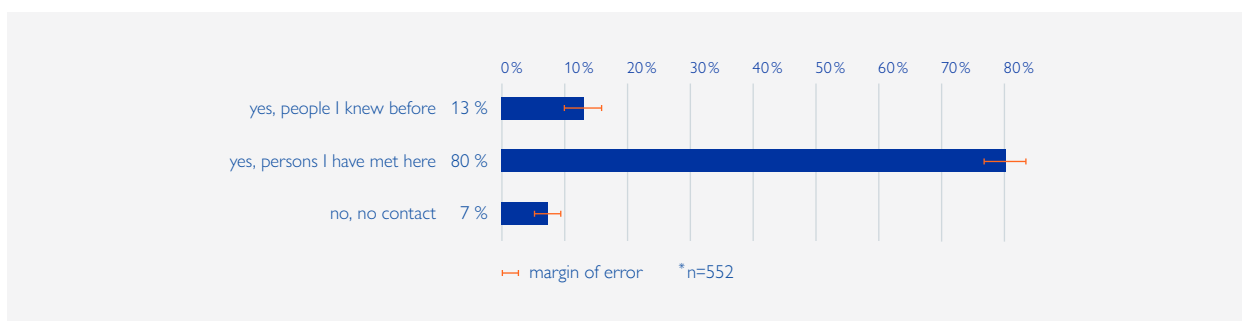
Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Twenty-three (23) per cent (+/- 3.5) of respondents stated that they were very satisfied with the conditions of their accommodation. Another 65 per cent (+/- 4.0) were satisfied. This is surprising, as it appears to contradict other information provided by respondents. For example, 33 per cent (+/- 3.9) said they wanted or needed to move (see figure 17) and 16 per cent (+/- 3.1) report household disputes (see figure 24), which mostly resulted from the poor housing situation. Ten (10) per cent (+/- 2.5) said they were less satisfied and one per cent (+/- 0.8) were not satisfied. It makes no statistically relevant difference whether the person lives in private or public accommodation.

### 3.3 ACCESS TO NETWORKS, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Ninety-three (93) per cent (+/- 2.1) of respondents had contact with people who had fled Ukraine and whom they met in Austria or with relatives and friends whom they knew before (see figure 18).

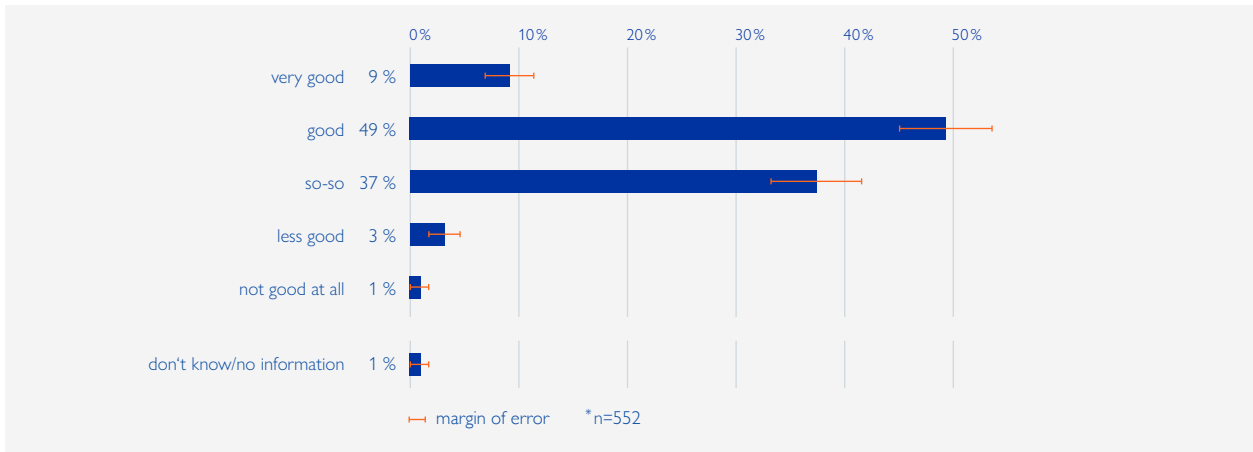
**Figure 18: Contact with other persons from Ukraine who also fled to Austria\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Fifty-eight (58) per cent (+/- 4.1) of respondents felt “very well” or “well” informed about life in Austria (see figure 19).

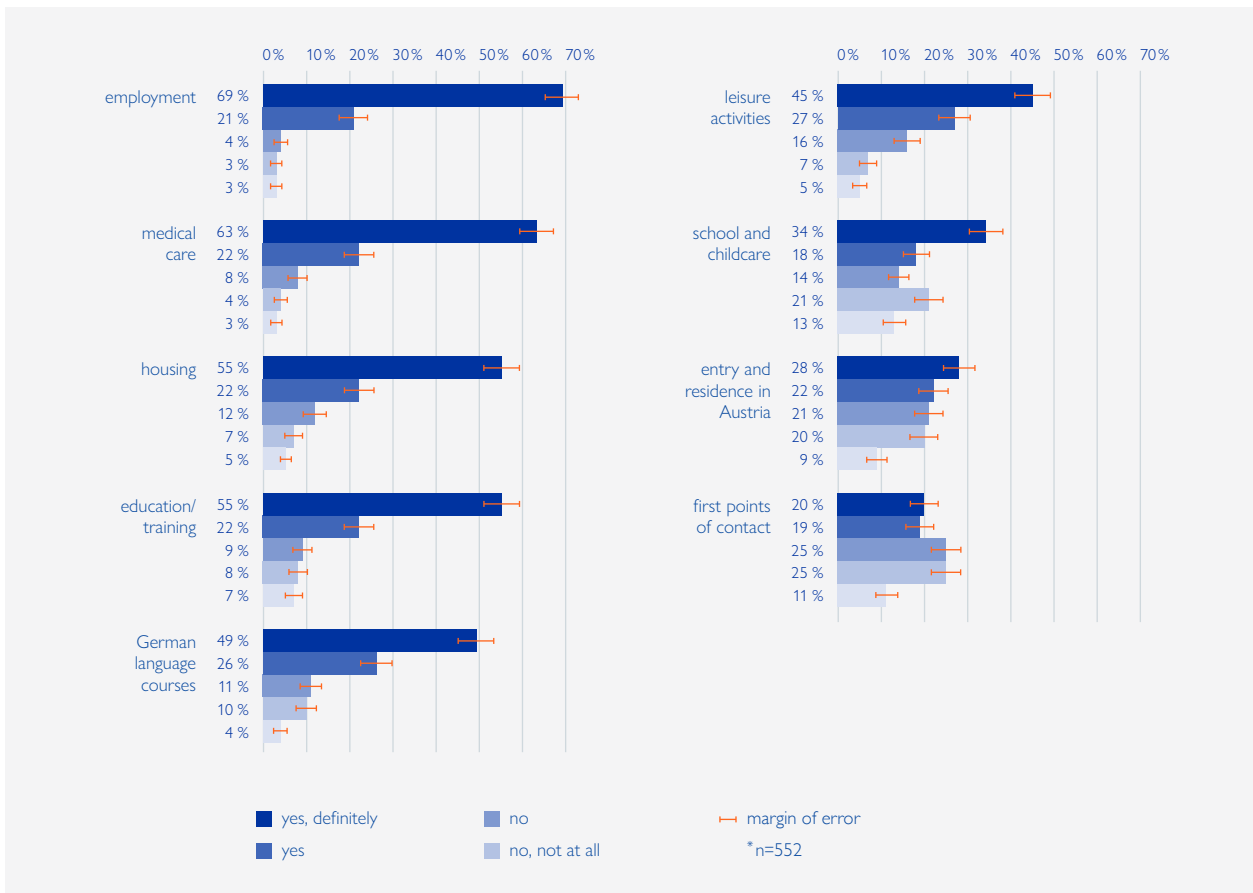
**Figure 19: Level of information about life in Austria\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Employment (42% +/- 4.1), housing (40% +/- 4.1) and education/training (32% +/- 3.9) are the top three topics about which respondents felt less or not well informed. Accordingly, employment (90% +/- 2.5), housing (77% +/- 3.5) and education/training (77% +/- 3.5) as well as medical care (85% +/- 3.0) were among the topics that displaced persons from Ukraine would like more information about (see figure 20).

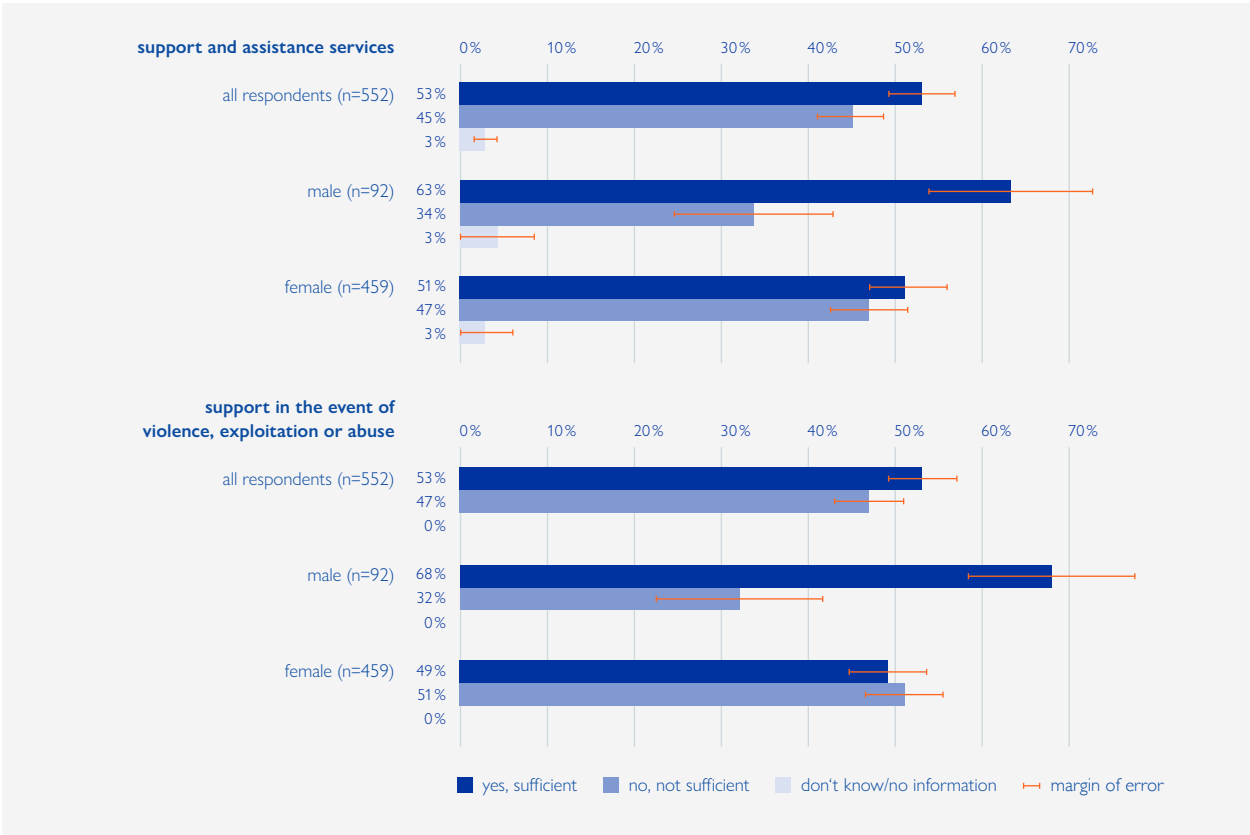
**Figure 20: Information needs\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Forty-five (45) per cent (+/- 4.2) of respondents felt rather underinformed about general support and assistance services. Forty-seven (47) per cent (+/- 4.2) of respondents did not know whom they could turn to in the event of violence, exploitation or abuse; women had particularly low knowledge of support structures compared to men (see figure 21).

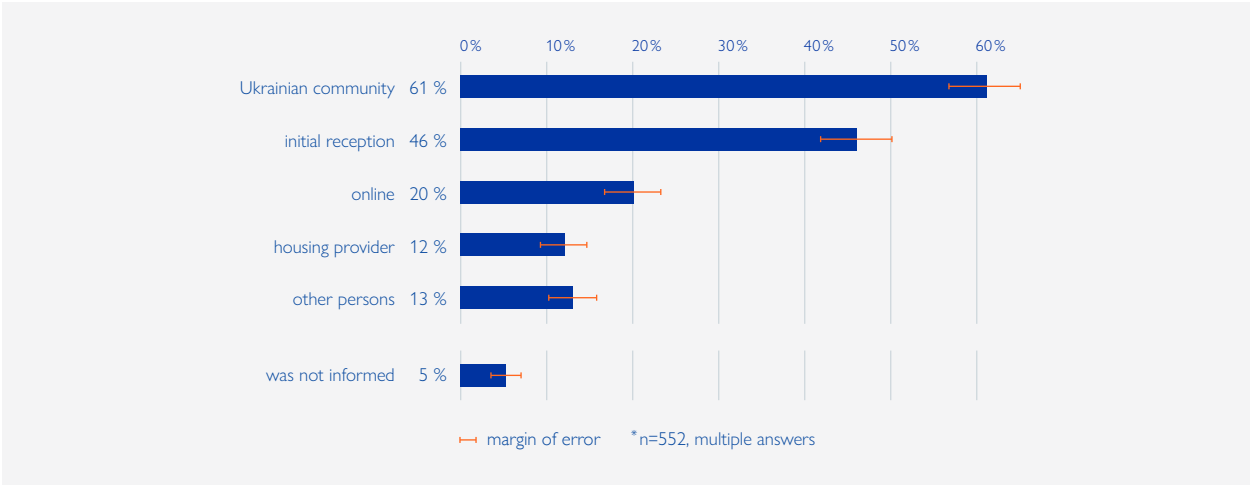
**Figure 21: Level of information about ...**



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Information is obtained primarily from the Ukrainian community (61% +/- 4.1) or after arriving at the initial reception (46% +/- 4.2). As many as 12 per cent (+/- 2.7) obtained information from the housing provider (see figure 22).

**Figure 22: Sources of information about possible support and assistance services\***



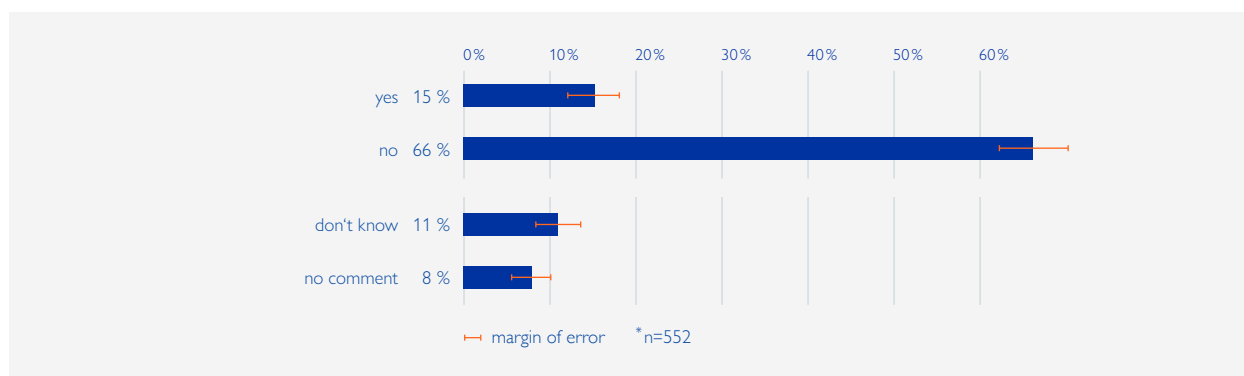
Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.



### 3.4 EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND OTHER SITUATIONS

Fifteen (15) per cent (+/- 3.0) of respondents reported having experienced perceived unfair or unequal treatment in Austria based on their nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religion (see figure 23). Those affected reported rude treatment in everyday life, discrimination when looking for employment and often problems finding housing. Respondents referred to landlords who do not want to rent to Ukrainians, foreigners or non-German speakers. Requests for excessive deposits and proof of income were also a problem.

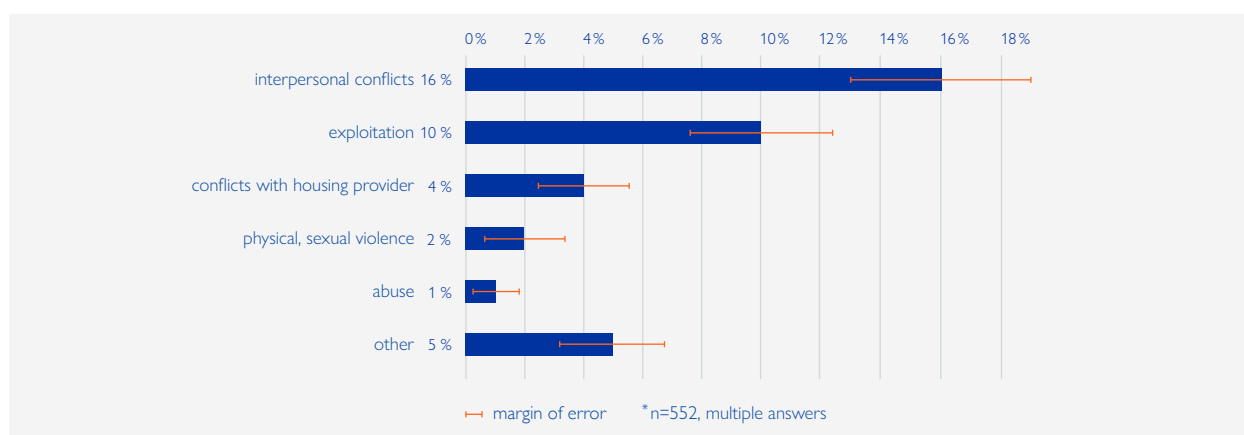
**Figure 23: Experience of unfair/unequal treatment on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religion\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Some of the respondents reported having experienced or witnessed one or more of the following situations: conflicts, exploitation, violence, abuse or other situations (see Figure 24). There is no statistically significant difference between persons living in private housing and those living in public accommodation or between women and men. It should be noted that the sample size was small and that further research on the prevalence of exploitation, violence and abuse is needed.

**Figure 24: Experiences with or witnessing of interpersonal conflicts, exploitation, violence or abuse\***



Source: BMI/ÖIF/IOM, 2023.

Sixteen (16) per cent (+/- 3.1) of respondents reported interpersonal conflicts. An analysis of the responses provided by the persons<sup>26</sup> surveyed shows that these occur in the household and mostly result from a lack of living space and privacy; sharing a kitchen, bathroom, toilet and common rooms; and living with persons from another household. In fact, compared to the total sample, individuals who report interpersonal conflicts are more likely to live with their mother (42% +/- 10.3 vs 22% +/- 3.5) or their siblings (22% +/- 8.7 vs 9% +/- 2.4). For example, respondents report the following:

26 The respondents had the option to provide further information if their answer to the question whether they had experienced or witnessed interpersonal conflicts, exploitation, conflicts with the housing provider, physical or sexual violence, abuse or other was "yes".

“It is difficult to live with my mother, from whom we lived separately for more than 15 years” or “In Ukraine, I, my father, my sister and my niece lived separately. Unfortunately, we had to leave our home and live together for a while. That’s why there were quarrels.”

Ten (10) per cent (+/- 2.5) of the persons interviewed stated that they had either experienced or witnessed exploitation. A wide variety of experiences were described.<sup>27</sup> The largest share – 38 per cent (+/- 13.2) – could be attributed to labour exploitation. It was mainly underpaid or unpaid work. Victims/witnesses also stated that they had been exploited by accommodation providers as workers. For example, one respondent reported: “I worked for 5 euros an hour [...]. The employer does not officially hire, but only makes promises. Many Ukrainian women work there under such bad conditions.” Another person said: “The Ukrainian woman was used by the landlords and forced to clean.”

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<sup>27</sup> The respondents had the option to provide further information if their answer to the question whether they had experienced or witnessed interpersonal conflicts, exploitation, conflicts with the housing provider, physical or sexual violence, abuse or other was “yes”.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

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The data as described in chapter 3 are analysed and interpreted below using the Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability Model (see chapter 2.3). The model looks at risk factors (which contribute to vulnerability) and protective factors (which increase resilience) and how they interact. The survey collected data on a range of individual factors (such as sex, age, educational level), household/family factors (such as number of children, income level) and a number of community factors (such as social networks, access to information). The survey findings are now analysed against these factors in order to identify the presence of factors that potentially decrease and increase the risk of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse. Keeping in mind that the results cannot be generalized to a larger population because the sample is not representative, we nevertheless conclude with some considerations for policy and practice.

### Likely protective factors that potentially increase resilience

Several likely protective factors could be identified that potentially increase the resilience of the respondents. These include legal status in Austria, education and languages, work experience, children having a legal guardian, children's access to education, mode of accommodation and access to networks.

Their social and personal characteristics such as **legal status** (98% +/- 1.2 have an ID card for displaced persons) – which provides a wide range of rights – and also **educational level** (78% +/- 3.5 have an academic degree), **work experience** (81% +/- 3.3 were employed in Ukraine) and **language skills** (61% +/- 4.1 speak some or good English and 39% +/- 4.1 some German) potentially enable the respondents surveyed to be relatively better informed, to understand their rights and to advocate for themselves. They also tend to have more resources and to be more likely to have work opportunities.

Looking at children living in the same household as respondents and at respondents' children, it becomes evident that protective factors are present. These include **access to education and childcare** (90% +/- 2.8 go to school or kindergarten) and having a **legal guardian** (89% +/- 3.2 of respondents are either the parents or live with the parents in one household).

The majority of respondents live in **private accommodation** (65% +/- 4.0). They are less likely to receive basic care (66% +/- 4.9 vs 82% +/- 6.6) and significantly more likely to have a regular income (26% +/- 4.6 vs 5% +/- 3.7) than individuals living in public accommodation. Of those in private accommodation, the majority are renting their own accommodation (66% +/- 4.9).

All housing conditions, both public and private, mostly allow for **privacy for households** (88% +/- 2.7 have their own bathroom, 75% +/- 3.6 a living space that is separate from the housing provider's space, 57% +/- 4.1 a private area that can be locked), which can be considered a protective factor. The vast majority are very satisfied (23% +/- 3.5) or satisfied (65% +/- 4.0) with the conditions of their accommodation.

We also find that the displaced persons from Ukraine surveyed are **well connected amongst each other** (93% +/- 2.1), which makes them potentially more resilient as they are able to reach out to others for support. These support networks also act as a main source of information, as 61 per cent (+/- 4.1) of respondents report. The majority of respondents feel very well or **well informed** about life in Austria in general (58% +/- 4.1).

### Likely risk factors that potentially increase vulnerability

The following factors, which are considered risk factors that increase vulnerability to violence, exploitation or abuse, were identified in our survey: female single-headed households with children, a weak financial situation, not having one's own accommodation but living at someone else's home, unstable housing situation, interpersonal conflicts, lack of information, unequal treatment, having experienced or witnessed exploitation, violence or abuse.

Individuals in our sample tend to be more vulnerable, as they are mainly **female** (83% +/- 3.1), **single-headed households** (only 26% +/- 3.7 live with their spouse) with **children** (59% +/- 4.1 are living with children).

Several likely risk factors potentially contribute to increased vulnerability. These include the respondents' **financial situation**, with 70 per cent (+/- 3.8) relying on basic care, only 26 per cent (+/- 3.7) being employed and 75 per cent (+/- 3.6) rating their financial situation as "not so good" or "not good". This makes it challenging for individuals to meet their needs, including housing, exposing them to various forms of insecurity and increasing their likelihood of engaging in low-paid and insecure work.

A non-negligible number of those in private accommodation (27% +/- 4.6 or 96 persons) are **hosted by friends, relatives or people not known to them before arrival**. In combination with a weak financial situation, this could create an assumed or actual dependence on the housing provider, which can be considered a likely risk factor. This is especially true of those who are financially supported by their housing provider (6% +/- 2.0 or 33 persons) or who work in the house or household in exchange for accommodation (9% +/- 2.4 or 50 persons). Another group at risk are those living without relatives or friends (14% +/- 2.9 or 77 persons) who thus might be isolated and those who cannot leave their accommodation as they please (16% +/- 3.1 or 88 persons), which could indicate some sort of confinement.

The **stability of the housing situation** could also be considered a risk factor. Even though it is stable for some (66% +/- 4.0 have been living in their current accommodation for over six months), 56 per cent (+/- 4.1) of respondents could not count on their accommodation for more than the next six months (36% +/- 4.0 did not know how long they could stay – with uncertainty being higher among persons who are accommodated in public housing –, 18% +/- 3.2 could stay for only between one and six months, 2% +/- 1.2 would have to move). Also, respondents relocate frequently, with 51 per cent (+/- 4.2) having changed accommodation an average of 1.7 times during a period of eight to 11 months. A lack of stable and longer-term housing can have a negative impact on displaced persons' access to education, work and social protection as well as increase their vulnerability to exploitation.

There is a **lack of information** about employment (42% +/- 4.1) and housing (40% +/- 4.1). Accordingly, employment (90% +/- 2.5) and housing (77% +/- 3.5) were among the topics that respondents would like more information about. At the same time, there is also a lack of information regarding support structures and services (45% +/- 4.2) and limited knowledge of where to turn in the event of violence, exploitation or abuse (47% +/- 4.2; men: 32% +/- 9.5; women: 51% +/- 4.6).

This represents a likely risk factor, given that 10 per cent (+/- 2.5; 55 persons) have experienced or witnessed **exploitation**, two per cent violence (+/- 1.2; 11 persons) and one per cent abuse (+/- 0.8; 6 persons). The partial lack of information about relevant professional support when in need potentially puts these persons at an increased risk of being subjected to (further) exploitation and may have negative psychological and physical effects.

Furthermore, 16 per cent (+/- 3.1; 88 persons) have experienced or witnessed **interpersonal conflicts** in their households, mainly caused by challenging living conditions but also by living with relatives with whom they are not used to living. Fifteen (15) per cent (+/- 3.0; 83 persons) have experienced perceived **unfair or unequal treatment** in Austria based on their nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or religion, often in the context of housing.

### Considerations for policy and practice

The analysis of various individual, household/family and community factors within the framework of Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability Model showed that we are concerned with a group of persons that tends to be at a higher risk of potential vulnerability as it consists of female single-headed households with children. Potential risks of vulnerabilities are further increased by the respondents' weak financial situation. This creates a number of additional likely risk factors in the area of housing such as assumed or actual dependence on the housing provider and interpersonal conflicts between household members and between housemates caused by challenging living conditions. Added to this is a lack of information about support structures and services, particularly on employment and housing, as well as a lack of information on support in the event of violence, exploitation or abuse. At the same time, several likely protective factors are present such as legal status, level of education, work experience, language skills, well-established networks amongst displaced persons from Ukraine and others. According to the Determinants of Migrant Vulnerability Model and as discussed above, these are significant protective factors since it means that individuals enjoy rights, are better able to understand and advocate for

those rights, tend to have more resources, to be more likely to have work opportunities, are relatively more informed and are able to reach out to others for support. This indicates that the population at hand is also characterized by resilience.

To strengthen resilience of displaced persons from Ukraine in Austria and address their potential vulnerabilities, we recommend addressing two key risk factors: the precarious financial situation and lack of information. Certain policy decisions and interventions have the potential to convert these likely risk factors into protective factors, and the overall resilience of the population in question – and thus their housing situation – could be significantly improved.

1. Improving the **financial situation** of the Ukrainian displaced population in Austria will ensure affordability of more suitable accommodation and create financial independence. The inclusion of displaced persons from Ukraine in the labour market would strengthen their social participation and thus social cohesion in Austria and benefit the Austrian economy.
2. Providing additional **information** about key areas such as employment and housing as well as information about available support structures and services to displaced persons from Ukraine. This will allow for better access to employment and housing, will enable displaced persons to reach out to support in case of need and thus will overall enable empowerment and independence.

Various solutions are currently being discussed in Austria:

#### TEXT BOX 2: CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE TO ADDRESS TWO KEY RISK FACTORS – “PRECARIOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION” AND “LACK OF INFORMATION”

**Access to social assistance:** The survey has shown that 70 per cent rely on basic care as their source of income. However, basic care is a temporary support for those in need of assistance and protection, but it is not an instrument that is designed to facilitate labour market insertion and integration in general of those in receipt of basic care. UNHCR Austria and various non-governmental organizations propose providing displaced persons from Ukraine who do not have sufficient income with access to social assistance. The amounts of social assistance were noticeably higher than the maximum cost rates of basic care and could thus improve livelihoods (Asylkoordination et al., 2022; Caritas Austria, 2023; Diakonie Austria, 2023; SOS Children's Village, 2023; UNHCR Austria, 2022:4f). At the same time, those persons would be registered as unemployed with the Public Employment Service and would therefore have access to support services, which in turn would encourage them to take up work and thus improve their financial situation (UNHCR Austria, 2022:5).

**Further increase in basic care:** As long as the majority of displaced persons from Ukraine rely on basic care (70% according to our survey), a further increase in basic care – especially for those in private accommodation (according to our survey, 65% live in private accommodation) – would provide remedy. Most recently, on 1 December 2022,<sup>28</sup> the rent subsidy increased by EUR 15 for individuals and EUR 30 for families per month and the assistance for daily necessities by EUR 45 for adults and minors per person per month.<sup>29</sup> According to representatives of civil society organizations, this is not yet sufficient to cover living costs (SOS Children's Village, 2023).

**Raising the additional earnings limit:** Very few displaced persons from Ukraine are in employment (26% of the people we interviewed). This may be related to the fact that the so-called “additional earnings limit” for persons in basic care represents a barrier when taking up employment.<sup>30</sup> If a person or a family receives an income<sup>31</sup> in excess

28 With the possibility of retroactive offsetting of the increased maximum cost rates from 1 March 2022.

29 Article 4 Agreement between the Federal Government and the Provinces pursuant to Art. 15a Federal Constitutional Act, establishing in particular an increase in selected maximum cost rates under Article 9 of the Basic Care Agreement as well as a lump sum for initial care, FLG I No. 197/2022.

30 The additional income limit for displaced persons from Ukraine is currently EUR 110 per month and EUR 80 for each additional family member living in the same household (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, 2022).

31 This also includes the financial benefit of the childcare allowance, which can be applied for, for a certain period of time (maximum 851 days) after the birth of a child (Federal Agency for Reception and Support Service, n.d.).

of this limit, this amount is deducted from the basic care or the entitlement to basic care ceases and it may lead to repayment claims. This can be problematic, since it cannot be assumed that when displaced persons from Ukraine find employment, they will immediately earn enough to cover their living and housing costs (Asylkoordination, 2022) as they are often employed in the typical entry-level industries (see below). In October 2022, after the approval of all provinces, a model proposed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior for increasing the additional earnings limit was presented to the Federal State-Provinces Coordination Council (Mol, 2022). In early 2023, most provinces started implementing the new model, but details are not known. Non-governmental organizations, researchers and the provincial government of Carinthia note, that this increase should apply to all persons receiving basic care (Catholic Church Austria, 2022; Langthaler, 2022:6; Rosenberger and Lazareva, 2022:4).

**Targeted support measures for labour market integration:** The majority of displaced persons from Ukraine are women (77% of adult Temporary Protection holders residing in Austria) and children (35% of Temporary Protection holders residing in Austria; Eurostat, 2023a). If this is taken into account in the support measures offered, participation can be facilitated and the chances of finding employment can be increased. For example, the Expert Council for Integration suggests offering German courses and labour market integration measures with childcare or part-time in the evening (Expert Council for Integration, 2022:6f).<sup>32</sup> In addition, many displaced persons in Austria have an academic education (78% of our sample) and bring work experience (86% of respondents with academic education were employed in Ukraine). This requires rapid clarification and recognition of qualifications,<sup>33</sup> post-qualification offers as well as intensive and job-specific German language courses to support this group in taking up adequate employment (Expert Council for Integration, 2022:6f.; UNHCR Austria, 2022:4). In this way, deskilling (65% of the persons surveyed who worked at the time of the survey did so below their level of qualification) and employment in the typical entry-level sectors can also be counteracted (according to the Public Employment Service, 18% are employed as cooks/kitchen assistants, 16% in hotel and restaurant professions, 14% in assistant jobs and 14% as building cleaners).<sup>34</sup>

**Creation of long-term residence prospects:** According to our survey, most respondents (69%) do not have concrete plans to return to Ukraine. However, the right of residence for displaced persons from Ukraine is currently valid only until 4 March 2024. The uncertainty arising from this limitation has a negative impact on the chances of finding employment and housing or starting vocational training that lasts for several years. It can also discourage displaced persons from carrying out a time- and resource-intensive recognition process for foreign qualifications or from learning German (Caritas Austria, 2023; Diakonie Austria, 2023; UNHCR Austria, 2022:3). Conversely, the creation of a longer-term residence perspective would improve the employment opportunities and thus the financial situation of displaced persons from Ukraine. Non-governmental organizations suggest, for example, to provide asylum (Langthaler, 2022:6).

**Information and support for displaced persons and housing providers:** Sixty-five (65) per cent of persons surveyed live in private accommodation. Of those, 27 per cent are hosted by friends, relatives or people not known to them before arrival. These provide not only housing, but also information and additional support.<sup>35</sup> Researchers and civil society organizations have observed signs of fatigue in civil society when it comes to offering support (Rosenberger and Lazareva, 2022:30). They see a need for additional social counselling and support for displaced people as well as for housing providers and municipalities (Asylkoordination et al., 2022:3; Rosenberger and Lazareva, 2022:30). A telephone hotline especially for volunteers and housing providers, as set up by Lower Austria, can help (Land Niederösterreich, 2022). Offering information and support to housing providers would ultimately also benefit accommodated displaced persons, as 12 per cent of respondents obtain their information from their housing provider.

32 For example, the Austrian Integration Fund has already expanded its online German course offerings specifically for displaced persons from Ukraine in order to enable flexible and demand-oriented learning. The number of places in evening courses has also been increased and German courses with childcare are offered (Austrian Integration Fund, 2023).

33 Since June 2022, the special procedural provisions for the recognition and evaluation of foreign educational qualifications or professional qualifications that apply to persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection (Art. 8 of the Recognition and Evaluation Act), are also applicable to displaced persons (Federal law amending the Integration Act, the Recognition and Assessment Act and the Education Documentation Act 2020, FLG I No. 76/2022).

34 Data provided by Public Employment Service Austria on 7 February 2023.

35 The support includes, for example, registration, search for a school, support in legal matters, in applying for bank cards, material and financial support (Langthaler, 2022:7; Rosenberger and Lazareva, 2022:18).

In addition, counselling services for displaced persons such as provided by Diakonie (Diakonie Austria, n.d.) are essential in providing information and support for finding accommodation or clarifying social entitlements and benefits.

**Raising awareness of central points of contact:** Our data collection shows that there is a non-negligible number of individuals who have experienced or witnessed exploitation (10%). This means that authorities, support organizations and volunteers need to be aware and able to adequately respond when a case of exploitation materializes. IOM Austria provides trainings to raise awareness on exploitation and human trafficking together with victim protection organizations and the police (IOM Austria, 2022). More of these initiatives could be implemented.

It would be advisable to continue panel data collection – ideally with a representative sample – to ensure ongoing monitoring of factors of vulnerability and resilience. In addition, in-depth qualitative interviews would help situations of violence, exploitation and abuse to be better understood and thus an adequate policy response to be formulated to improve prevention and protection.

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To learn more about IOM's work in Austria, please visit: <https://austria.iom.int>.



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