

## **UKRAINIAN REFUGEE CRISIS: CAUSES, EVOLUTION, IMPLICATIONS**

My research focuses on the migrations of the Ukrainian people due to the current war initiated by Russia. I will briefly explain the reasons for migration, then obviously the explosion of the conflict, the dynamics with which it is moving, how the countries of destination are reacting and welcoming the refugee population, and above what measures the European Union is adopting in this regard.

This refugee crisis comes from a serious political crisis, which has progressed to the brink of a war in Ukraine between superpowers: NATO and Biden's US against Putin's Russia, and that could also have catastrophic repercussions on the international economy of the countries of the European Union. The crisis has distant origins: we speak of 1991, the year of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine. As with other former Soviet republics, the transition has not been easy, and political and identity issues have remained unresolved to this day, but also linked to economic relations with Russia. This has led to the diplomatic clash we are currently witnessing. Various stages explain the evolution of relations between Ukraine and Russia, but the breaking point is the start of the war in the Donbass on 6 April 2014, when the separatist People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk proclaimed their independence following the example of Crimea. On 21 February 2022 Putin officially recognised the independence of the two Donbass Republics and on 24 February 2022 at 6 a.m. began the war between Putin's Russia and Ukraine, backed by Biden's US with NATO support. Diplomacy fails and negotiations break down. Russia bombs the cities of Odessa, Kharvik, Mariupol, L'viv and the capital Kiev. The targets are airports and military bases; the motivation for the intervention is the protection of the population of the Donbass.

Two million people have been forced to leave Ukraine to escape the war. Figures released by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi provide a dramatic picture of the consequences of Russia's invasion of the country. Nearly 5 per cent of the 44 million inhabitants have had to flee abroad, including hundreds of thousands of children, many of whom have been separated from their parents. The dramatic impact of the war on the lives of Ukrainians can also be seen in the statistics from the electronic devices monitored by Apple. The data collected by the Californian company shows a surge in car movements in the country on 24 February, the day of the start of the invasion by Russian troops, with a movement almost five times higher than the average for the previous days, probably citizens leaving their usual residences.

Concerning internal and external dynamics, this diaspora has gathered extraordinary numbers. According to the UN, such high numbers have not been experienced since the Second World War. Russia is using a strategy of mass and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. More than 953 civilians have been killed, including at least 78 children, not counting the attack on housing. According to the UN Human Rights Commission, the actual number could be much higher. Another problem is the attack on humanitarian corridors, especially the one in Mariupol. There had been a ceasefire agreement for at least twelve hours. Not only was the agreement violated, but soon bombs were dropping on the territory, preventing the Ukrainians from leaving it and leaving them stranded, without water or food supplies. Without electricity or gas.

The UN agency's daily updated estimates give an idea of the destination of this mass of people fleeing the conflict that began on 24 February. As the map produced by UNHCR shows, the flow of displaced people has grown over time and has accelerated in recent days with the intensification of the Russian offensive, which is increasingly hitting civilian targets. The main humanitarian corridor is in Poland, the country that has taken in the largest number of refugees, well over a million in the last few days, as testify the images of the crowds at the station in the Polish city of Przemysl, one of the arrival points for those fleeing Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of people have also found shelter in Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova. It is precisely the small former Soviet republic that hosts the highest per capita number of refugees after Poland.

The initial situation in the border areas of Poland and the solidarity machine is explained by Guido Calvi, coordinator of the humanitarian missions of the AVSI Foundation. The situation at the borders is critical, there are structural difficulties; the border stations are extremely small, and controls take time. Those who arrive need everything, food, hygiene products, medicines, but also psychological support. One of the biggest problems is getting supplies to those who remain within Ukraine's borders. The resources are there, but it is

difficult to get them into Ukrainian territory and organize transport. Most of the refugees are heading elsewhere, especially to Italy, where they already have contacts with family and friends and, once they have recovered their strength, have every intention of joining them.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, more than one hundred thousand people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine have arrived in Italy so far. The destination cities declared upon entry into Italy continue to be Milan, Rome, Naples and Bologna. «Welcome to Italy» is the sheet downloadable from the official website with the indications available also in Ukrainian, English and Russian for the stay of Ukrainian refugees on the national territory. It illustrates the sanitary obligations to be respected according to the anti-Covid 19 regulations, who to contact for accommodation, how to regularize the status in Italy and other useful information. In particular, "Prefecture Vademecum" indicates the procedures refugees must follow to remain in Italy, depending on whether they already have independent accommodation available or not; refugees who do NOT have their accommodation, who refer to the Reception Point, the first support for their stay, or First Reception Hotels: structures made available by the regional civil protection system to cope with short-term stays if it is not possible to immediately activate the CAS procedure (Extraordinary Reception Centres).

The effects of this migration are ambiguous. The first is about the outrage of other people with different skin colour and passports waiting in line, in addition to the Ukrainians: Senegalese, South Africans, Nigerians or, more generally, other human beings fleeing from other conflicts. But they could not pass. The substantial difference in the level of refugees also emerges from Brussels' decision to grant temporary protection to fleeing Ukrainians, outlined in Directive 55/2001, which allows refugees to move and work within Europe for up to three years without having to apply for asylum. Secondly, the outburst of generosity that in the first few days led European states, particularly Italy, to open their borders and families to open the doors of their homes to those fleeing war is now being put to the test. It is a question of space since private individuals have taken in people in flats that are not large. And then there is an economic issue: the expenses of host families have increased. With ordinance 881 of 29 March signed by the head of the Civil Protection Department, Fabrizio Curcio, support was provided to host families. In addition, the government launched the decree for economic aid to refugees, who will be able to benefit from 300 euros per month for three months (by going to a bank counter), will be able to have a tax code and will be able to work. Although these measures seem to consolidate the form of reception, they could prove unsatisfactory because of the estimated 800,000 people who could end up in Italy at the end of this drama.

In conclusion, the reception of Ukrainian refugees is a real problem and requires attention before it becomes unmanageable. Solidarity needs resources and funds to last. The Italian system is not consolidated, there are several flaws and Italian citizens themselves have been complaining about shortcomings for years. In addition, let us remember that just under a month ago the state of emergency ended because of the Covid-19, which damaged the system in all its spheres (political, economic, educational). From a legal point of view, we saw that refugees are war refugees, so they are required to return to their homeland when the war is over. But seems that this situation will not end in a short time, and in this case, those migrants will try to start a real path of integration into the host countries and start a real path of integration. Moreover, this crisis is triggering others that will affect even the richest and most consolidated countries (gas and petrol crises). So, the government will not be able to maintain the generous measures it is taking now, and it is not certain that it can rely on "strong" countries.

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