

LABOUR MARKET IN HOST COUNTRIES FOREMPLOYMENT OF MIGRANT WOMEN FROM UKRAINE

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Abstract. Migration is not a new phenomenon in the modern world, but the war against Ukraine initiated by Russia in 2022 has transformed it into an unprecedented global challenge. The aim of this work is to analyze labor market, employment, and job opportunities in host countries for migrant women from Ukraine. A qualitative analysis of scientific publications, documents, and statistical reports is used in this work. Our results reveal that economies in the host countries, namely Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Türkiye, are projected to show robust growth. Therefore, the labor market in these countries will accordingly increase. However, there is a discrepancy between required professions and actual employment of Ukrainian females in host countries. Czech Republic and Germany preferable need employees in engineering and technical fields while Poland and Türkiye experience the lack of employees in the service sector (health and hospitality, accordingly). In host countries, Ukrainian females have to simultaneously combine their jobs with caring about their family's disadvantaged members (children and older generation representatives) and language courses. These issues, namely skill recognition, language proficiency, and family situation, postpone the employment of Ukrainian females in jobs in host countries relevant to their educational and employment background.

Keywords: employment; host countries; job opportunities; labor market; migrant women

INTRODUCTION

Migration is not a new phenomenon in the modern world, but the war against Ukraine initiated by Russia in 2022 has transformed it into an unprecedented global challenge. According to the UN Refugees Operational Data Portal (UNHCR), more than 9.855 million Ukrainians are forced to leave their homes and be migrants because of war in 2024. Among these individuals, 3.555 million have been displaced internally within Ukraine, while 6,3 million have sought refuge abroad, including 5.9 million in Europe.

A striking characteristic of this forced migration is that 80% of the displaced individuals are women with children. These women, upon arriving in host countries, face numerous challenges including language barriers, difficulties in securing employment, social isolation, legal and administrative hurdles, non-recognition of qualifications and restricted access to education and training opportunities. As both caregivers and breadwinners, many of these women have lost their previous jobs and experienced a sharp decline in their social and economic status, further complicating their efforts to rebuild their lives.

The aim of this work is to analyze labor market, employment, and job opportunities in host countries for migrant women from Ukraine.

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative analysis of scientific publications, documents, and statistical reports is used in this work. The research was motivated by the research question: What kind of job opportunities exist in host countries for migrant women from Ukraine? It should be mentioned that host countries, namely Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Türkiye have been selected due to their participation in the Erasmus+ project "WINGS: Women's Initiative for New Growth and Skills – Empowering Migrant Careers". The purpose of the study was to evaluate employment opportunities exist in host countries for migrant women from Ukraine. The analysis took place in the period between January-September 2025.

RESULTS

The present section describes labor markets and employment opportunities in Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Türkiye.

1. Czech Republic:

Czechia's economy has been growing, and it is forecasted to accelerate to 2.4% in 2025 and 2.7% in 2026, providing more job opportunities. Also, the unemployment rate is the lowest in the EU (2.6%) (European Commission, 2025).

Table 1

Projection of Economic Activity in Germany, compared to 2024

Indicators	2024	2025	2026
GDP growth (% yoy)	1,1	1,9	2,1
Inflation (% yoy)	2,7	2,2	2,0
Unemployment (%)	2,6	2,6	2,6
General government balance (% of GDP)	-2,2	-2,3	-2,2
Gross public debt (% of GDP)	43,6	44,5	45,4
Current account balance (% of GDP)	1,2	0,8	0,5

Key industries in Czech Republic that offer employment opportunities include those in the car, aviation, engineering, environmental technologies, electronics and electrical engineering, chemical, glass and ceramics, furniture and interior design, ICT, building, and food industries.

Recent Ukrainian immigrants are mostly women (66 %), of whom two-thirds are of working age (15-64 years), representing the potential labor force. However, childbearing responsibilities are noted as one of the leading barriers for women to enter the workforce, followed by taking care of a person with a serious health condition in the house or living with someone over 60 years old. Women are often the primary or only caregivers in the family. Almost half of the women in the Czech Republic have children under 18 years old; among these women, more than half are alone with at least one child. Most of the women who are in Czechia with children are not accompanied by a male adult. Women who are alone with children thus face obstacles while trying to balance work and care responsibilities. Another persistent barrier in integration of Ukrainian women is the knowledge of Czech language. Therefore, Ukrainians registered at Labor Office have been chiefly employed in less skilled, physically demanding work, such as machine operators and blue-collar jobs. Three most common occupations for Ukrainian migrant women are elementary occupations, plant and machine operators, and services and sales workers.

2. Germany:

Economic activity in Germany is expected to decline by 0.1% in 2024 (European Commission, 2024). High uncertainty has been weighing on consumption and investment, and the trade outlook has worsened as global demand for industrial goods weakened (European Commission, 2024). Going forward, domestic demand is set to pick up, driven by increases in real wages (European Commission, 2024). This is expected to support a recovery in GDP growth to 0.7% in 2025 and 1.3% in 2026 (European Commission, 2024). The government deficit is projected to decrease and the government debt ratio to stabilize around 63% of GDP (European Commission, 2024) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Projection of Economic Activity in Germany, compared to 2024 (European Commission, 2024)

Indicators	2024	2025	2026
GDP growth (% yoy)	-0,1	0,7	1,3
Inflation (% yoy)	2,4	2,1	1,9
Unemployment (%)	3,3	3,3	3,4
General government balance (% of GDP)	-2,2	-2,0	-1,8
Gross public debt (% of GDP)	63,0	63,2	62,8
Current account balance (% of GDP)	7,1	6,8	6,5

Economic stagnation leaves its mark on the labour market: From January to September 2024, the labour market deteriorated slightly as economic output stagnated (Expatrio, 2024). Labour demand weakened and the number of vacancies fell by 23% y-o-y to 1.3 million in 2024-Q2 (Expatrio, 2024). Germany's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 6.2% in January 2025 from 6.1% in the previous month, in line with market expectations (Expatrio, 2024). The number of unemployed individuals rose by 11,000 to 2.88 million (Expatrio, 2024). The deterioration of the labour market is expected to be contained as economic growth resumes and ageing continues to weigh on labour supply (Expatrio, 2024). Nominal wage growth has been decelerating, but as inflation fell more, real compensation increased by 2.3% y-o-y in 2024-Q2 (Expatrio, 2024). In January 2025, the minimal wage per hour is 12,82 EUR, average wage per month is 3.770,00 EUR (Expatrio, 2024).

Around 60% of Ukrainian refugees who arrived in Germany by October 2023 are female (Heiermann & Atanisev, 2024). Employment ratio among Ukrainian women is 16 percent (Honorati, Testaverde, & Totino, 2024). Ukrainian formal female workers are more likely to be employed in jobs requiring high skills: 22 percent work as specialists or experts (Honorati, Testaverde, & Totino, 2024). Almost one-third of employees work in people-related

service jobs, followed by production jobs (24%), other economic service jobs (21%), commercial and business service jobs (17%), and IT/science jobs (5%) (Honorati, Testaverde, & Totino, 2024). Looking at the occupational change for Ukrainians since December 2021, there has been a shift of Ukrainians working in jobs at helper level (23 percent as of December 2021, 37,2 percent June 2022 and 40 percent September 2022), while the share of Ukrainians working at specialist or expert level has been slightly decreasing from 32 percent in December 2021 to 25 percent and 23 percent in June and September 2022 respectively (Honorati, Testaverde, & Totino, 2024). This could be explained by the fact that, given the wish to integrate quickly in the labor market despite hurdles like skills recognition, refugees from Ukraine may be taking up more low-level jobs than before (Honorati, Testaverde, & Totino, 2024).

The Federal Government provides an overview of the current labor market situation for Ukrainian women migrants in Germany (The Federal Government, 2025):

Green jobs that are the basis for a successful energy transition and promote climate and environmental protection. People who have a qualification in engineering or technical professions as well as those with a link to the manufacturing and construction industry are particularly in demand in the green economy. These professions include: **Craftspeople** (e.g. electronic technicians for energy and building technology, heating engineering, mechatronics, system mechanics and sanitary, heating and air-conditioning technology); **Engineers** (e.g. energy consultants, environmental engineers, design engineers/developers, automotive engineers, automation engineering); **IT specialists** (e.g. software developers, data scientists); These professions are part of the economic sectors of Energy and electrical engineering (e.g. wind power, photovoltaics, solar power technology/installation); Mechanical engineering; Technical equipment and installations; Construction industry; Automotive industry (e.g. electric mobility); Agriculture and farming; and Horticulture. **The nursing profession:** With increasing life expectancy and an ageing society, combined with the decreasing number of young people beginning their professional career, the demand for professional nursing as well as basic medical care is rising. Germany does have a stable healthcare system; nevertheless, nursing professionals remain to be in high demand and their contribution is more important than ever. Hospitals, long-term care facilities and other healthcare facilities are always on the lookout for nurses with various levels of qualification in order to meet the increasing demand in the healthcare and nursing professions. This demand is predicted to increase in the following years. International nurses have long been an important pillar in German hospitals and care facilities. As a result, there are an increasing number of multicultural teams working in German healthcare facilities. A nurse cares for people of all ages and supports them in every phase of their life. In Germany, the title “Pflegefachfrau/-mann” or “Pflegefachperson” is now used for nurses, which includes health and nursing care, paediatric nursing and geriatric nursing. Nurses may work in Inpatient acute care (e.g. hospital); Inpatient long-term care (e.g. nursing home); Ambulatory care (home care for private individuals); Medical rehabilitation (outpatient and inpatient); and Palliative care (outpatient and inpatient). Tasks in the nursing field include independent observation, guidance, support and care of patients, both inpatient and outpatient treatment. Additionally, a nurse may also document and evaluate nursing measures, as well as carry out medical instructions and assist with medical interventions. However, that will depend on the nurse’s individual specialisation and qualification. A nurse is also expected to be an expert contact for the patient’s family. Basic care activities make up a large part of the daily work of nurses in Germany. This is not the responsibility of family members or exclusively of nursing assistants, but to a large extent also of nurses. Basic care activities include personal hygiene, nutrition, mobility, promotion of independence and preventive measures (prophylaxis). **Physicians:** The Federal Republic of Germany is dependent on young medical professionals, namely doctors. With over 6 million employees, the public health service is also a crucial resource for employment; the number of employees has been increasing steadily for years. As of right now, over 428,000 doctors make sure that patients are well cared for. The demand will continue to grow in the years to come – especially since many physicians in hospitals will be retiring. When it comes to local doctors, general practitioners as well as family doctors are in demand. Many doctors can no longer find a successor to take over their practice, namely in Eastern Germany and in rural areas. At the same time, the number of international doctors working in Germany has more than doubled within the last decade. Each year, many doctors from abroad apply to have their foreign qualification recognised as an equivalent to a German qualification. Doctors are often second only to nurses in the list of occupations with the highest number of applications. As a doctor in Germany, there are a wide range of career opportunities available. For instance, an employee can work in hospitals, clinics, healthcare centres, geriatric care services or home care services, also independently as a local doctor in own medical facility. In addition, there are other professional fields such as in medical research and teaching, in public health departments, health insurance companies or in the private sector, e.g. as a scientist in medical technology or the pharmaceutical industry. Out of all academic fields in Germany, doctors earn the highest salaries. **Engineers:** The engineering sector offers many career paths to participate in Industry 4.0 and energy transition in Germany. Germany is famous for its engineering expertise and the quality of its machines and plants, electrotechnical products and cars. The use of digital technologies leads to diverse new perspectives and business models for companies and their employees, especially for engineers. The field of research and development (R&D) currently has a great number of vacant jobs in higher positions for engineers. The following occupations are also particularly in demand: Automation technology; Supervision of construction planning and architecture; Automotive industry, including electromobility and autonomous driving; Renewable energies and environmental protection; Artificial intelligence (AI). An engineer can work in various fields, for example in technical production planning and management, in quality assurance, in construction or in machine and model construction. Many well-qualified engineers work in leadership positions. **IT specialists:** Digital applications and intelligent technology define our day-to-day lives. Tools are printed with 3D printers, languages can be learnt with apps and robots have taken on many tasks. IT specialists in Germany are

more in demand than ever. In 2023, around 149,000 job positions in the IT sector remained vacant. Experienced or qualified IT specialists can therefore hope for attractive jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises, in the manufacturing industry or in large international companies. Specialists in the following fields are particularly in demand: A) Software development: a software developer designs and implements software using the appropriate programming language. Work is user-oriented and focuses on programming complete applications or individual building blocks. B) Application support: IT specialists maintain and provide support for software and hardware, such as SAP or SharePoint. Working in application support is a central point of contact for the company's products. C) IT security: an IT security expert is responsible for the protection of the company's data. Continuous further training to stay up to date as well as working on novel solutions for software systems are part of the field of responsibility. D) Data science: a data scientist analyses large quantities of data and deduces the appropriate solutions. Various methods in information technology and mathematics are used. **Scientists:** Germany has a demand for a variety of occupational fields in natural sciences such as pharmaceuticals, chemistry or energy and environment technology, the car industry and its mechanical and process plant engineering. Germany has a plethora of jobs for scientists and mathematicians. Aside from the usual positions in research, teaching and management, scientists and mathematicians also work in the IT sector, in marketing and sales, in the fields of administration and law, and in the financial sector. The industries that are mostly looking for scientists and mathematicians are the following: Chemistry; Research and Development; Pharmaceuticals; Financial analysis; Architecture/Engineering; Energy engineering and electrical engineering. **Craftspeople:** German crafts and trades stand for customer-friendliness, high-quality products and practical solutions. The skilled crafts and trades are directed towards private individuals as well as the manufacturing industry, commerce and the state sector. They include the following areas: Construction and development; Metal and electronics; Wood and plastics; Industrial cleaning; Artisanal food production; Healthcare and personal hygiene; Clothing, textile and leather; and Graphic design. Qualified professionals are needed in crafts and trades: A **floor layer** is part of projects from the beginning to the end, i.e. from customer consultations to preparation of the ground, laying of the floor itself and, if required, further surface finishing. A master craftsman or master craftswoman qualification in the field of parquet laying can be obtained. **Electrical engineers** with a specialisation in energy technology: in this profession, the involvement from the moment of design/planning and production/installation of the electronic systems up until the final handover and after-sales support is needed. Vacant positions are mainly found in automation engineering, electric utility, mechanical engineering and plant construction as well as vehicle construction. **Automotive mechatronics engineer** is responsible for the maintenance of motor vehicles such as cars, motorbikes, etc. The systems are inspected, measurements (e.g. of exhaust gases) are carried out, accessories are repaired and installed. Automotive mechatronics engineers can also work in the field of electromobility. **Careers in transport** (professional driver of trains, HGVs or ships): **Logistics** is one of the country's largest economic sectors. Several thousand transport requests are met daily in Germany. The majority of goods are currently transported by heavy goods vehicle (HGV). Next comes rail transport, followed by maritime shipping and inland navigation. The German economy is highly dependent on qualified drivers for all transport routes – but not only for transporting freight. **Passenger transport** is also of great importance for the German economy and society. The number of people using local public transport has never been as high as it is today. Germany's transport transition – the shift towards a decarbonised transport system – is alone expected to result in a one-third increase in the use of buses and trains in local public transport by 2030. We need qualified staff to operate these vehicles. **Other professions in demand:** other professions in demand in the fields of medicine and health, medical engineering, hospitality and catering, as well as education: A) Medical professions: Dental assistant; Medical assistant; Veterinary assistant; Physiotherapist; Occupational therapist; Pharmacist, pharmacologist; Medical technical professions in radiology: e.g. radiologic technologists; Surgical technologist, anaesthesiologist assistant; Paramedic, emergency medical technician, and Podiatrist; B) Professions in medical engineering: Dental technician; Hearing aid acoustician; Optician; Orthopaedic technician; C) Hotel and catering industry: Hotel industry expert; Restaurant expert/specialist; Systems catering expert; Restaurant and event catering expert; Cook; D) Professions in education: Educator; Social education worker and social worker; Teacher (selected subjects and types of school).

The family constellations of Ukrainian female refugees, particularly the high proportion of single mothers, and their comparatively poor health negatively impact employment rate development. Conversely, their high level of education, anticipated improvement in language skills, and favorable institutional conditions – especially the abolition of the asylum procedure – positively influence employment outcomes.

3. Poland:

Poland's economy demonstrated resilience and growth in 2024, with the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expanding by 2.9%, surpassing many forecasts (Xinhua, 2025).

Looking ahead, projections indicate a continued upward trajectory, with GDP expected to grow by 3.6% in 2025, according to forecasts from the European Commission (Poland Insight, 2024). These figures reflect a positive economic outlook for Poland, highlighting the country's capacity for continued growth despite global economic challenges. However, as of January 2025, the unemployment rate in Poland was 5.4%, reflecting a slight increase from previous months (CEIC, 2025).

Ukrainian migrant women in Poland predominantly find employment in sectors such as hospitality, catering, retail, personal services (including domestic and caregiving roles), healthcare, and education (Zyzik, Baszczak, Rozbicka, & Wielechowski, 2023). Limited proficiency in Polish can restrict access to certain job opportunities, underscoring the importance of language acquisition.

Employers are actively seeking candidates with skills in (EURES, 2025): **Healthcare**: Nurses, caregivers, and medical assistants are in high demand. Recognizing foreign medical qualifications and providing necessary certifications can facilitate entry into this field. **Information Technology**: Roles such as software developers, data analysts, and IT support specialists are sought after. **Engineering & Skilled Trades**: Civil, electrical engineers, electricians, welders are experiencing shortages. **Finance & Accounting**: Accountants, financial analysts, auditors. **Sales & Marketing**: Sales reps, digital marketers, customer service. **Education & HR**: Teachers, HR managers, trainers.

4. Türkiye

Türkiye, with its strategic geographical location bridging Europe and Asia, has a dynamic and evolving labor market influenced by economic growth, demographic shifts, and migration flows. Over the past decade, Türkiye has witnessed significant structural changes in its economy, affecting employment trends, workforce participation, and labor market conditions.

Türkiye's economy has shown resilience in recent years despite external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and fluctuating global market conditions. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK, 2024), Türkiye's GDP growth rate was estimated at 4.2% in 2023, with a projected moderate increase in 2024 and 2025. The economy remains heavily driven by manufacturing, services, tourism, construction, and agriculture, with digital transformation accelerating growth in e-commerce, technology, and logistics sectors. Inflation remains a challenge, with the annual rate reaching 47.8% in early 2024 (Central Bank of Türkiye, 2024). This inflationary pressure impacts wages, cost of living, and employment stability, especially for vulnerable groups, including migrants and women.

Türkiye's labor market has undergone substantial transformation, with increasing urbanization and industrialization. Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK, 2024) points that total labor force participation rate in 2024 is 53.4%, male participation rate is 72.3%, female participation rate is 36.9%, unemployment rate is 10.5% (higher for youth at 19.3%), formal employment rate is 65.7% (with informal work still prevalent in sectors like agriculture and domestic work). Despite improvements, women's labor force participation remains significantly lower than men's. Cultural barriers, childcare responsibilities, and limited access to professional networks continue to hinder women's full integration into the workforce. The aging population and increasing demand for home-based elderly care and nursing create job openings for women, especially Ukrainian women with medical training in home-based healthcare services. However, diploma equivalency and licensing procedures remain a challenge. Limited Turkish proficiency restricts job choices.

Türkiye has become a significant destination for Ukrainian migrants, particularly women, following the Russia-Ukraine war. With many possessing high qualifications and advanced education (approximately 60% possess a university degree), integrating them into Türkiye's labor market presents both opportunities and challenges. Ukrainian women migrants in Türkiye are actively participating in the labor market, though often in roles different from their qualifications. Their employment is concentrated in hospitality, domestic work, tourism, and informal caregiving sectors. However, a growing number are entering professional fields such as education, IT, and healthcare through freelance or contractual work arrangements. A significant number of Ukrainian women in Türkiye are engaged in informal employment, particularly in housekeeping, elderly care, and textile industries. The number of Ukrainian women working remotely or in freelance digital jobs has increased, particularly in translation, graphic design, content creation, and software development. The tourism and hospitality sector has seen a resurgence post-COVID-19, providing seasonal and full-time job opportunities. Türkiye's tech industry is increasingly open to remote IT specialists, making it easier for qualified Ukrainian women to work for international companies while residing in Türkiye.

Several industries in Türkiye offer promising employment opportunities for Ukrainian women migrants:

Hospitality and Tourism: Türkiye is a leading global tourism hub, with cities such as Istanbul, Antalya, and Bodrum hosting millions of visitors annually. Ukrainian women, particularly those fluent in Russian, Ukrainian, and English, have strong employment potential in: **Hotels and resorts** (front desk staff, customer service, guest relations); **Restaurants and cafes** (hospitality management, waitressing); **Tourism agencies** (tour guides, travel consultants). These industries align with market demand, workforce shortages, and transferable skills. This Sector demands for multilingual professionals is high. Many positions offer seasonal or flexible work schedules, which can benefit migrant women balancing family responsibilities.

The elderly care and childcare sector is one of the largest employers of Ukrainian women in Türkiye. Many work as live-in caregivers for elderly individuals, childcare providers for middle-to-upper-class families, and home assistants for expatriate and high-income Turkish families. Challenges are work permit restrictions make it difficult for some to formalize employment; lack of social security in informal caregiving jobs.

Türkiye's textile and garment industry is one of the largest employers of women. Ukrainian women are increasingly working in: **Sewing and tailoring** roles in large-scale garment factories; **Quality control and textile inspection**; **Handmade and artisanal crafts**, selling products online through Etsy, Instagram, or local bazaars; **IT and Digital Services**.

The rise of remote work has allowed many Ukrainian women to continue their professional careers without local work permit restrictions. Common roles include: Software developers, UX/UI designers; Content creators, social media managers; Online customer service representatives.

Advantages in these sectors are higher salaries compared to local job market standards, no requirement for in-person work, reducing discrimination risks, remote job boards like Upwork, Fiverr, and LinkedIn provide access to global

employment. Challenges include need for high-speed internet and digital infrastructure, and freelancers may struggle with tax and financial regulations in Türkiye.

Education and Language Teaching: many Ukrainian women have teaching qualifications, making language education a natural career path.

CONCLUSIONS

In the nearest future, economies in the host countries, namely Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Türkiye, are projected to show robust growth. The expected growth in these countries can be of different extend, e.g. by around 2.1% in Germany, 2.4% in Czech Republic to 3.4% in Poland and 3.9% in Türkiye. Therefore, the labor market in these countries will accordingly increase.

However, there is a discrepancy between required professions and actual employment of Ukrainian females in host countries. Czech Republic and Germany preferable need employees in engineering and technical fields while Poland and Türkiye experience the lack of employees in the service sector (health and hospitality, accordingly). Despite that, Ukrainian females in Czech Republic, Poland, and Türkiye are mainly employed in low-level job in comparison to their employment in Ukraine. This can be explained by the wish of Ukrainian females to integrate quickly in the labor market as they are often the only breadwinners and caregivers in their families while their skill recognition needs a longer period of time in host countries. Additionally, Czech Republic, Poland, and Türkiye require a certain language proficiency level for employment. Thereby, Ukrainian females have to simultaneously combine their jobs with caring about their family's disadvantaged members (children and older generation representatives) and language courses. These issues, namely skill recognition, language proficiency, and family situation, postpone the employment of Ukrainian females in jobs in host countries relevant to their educational and employment background.

The present work is limited by only theoretical analysis of relevant literature (published scientific works, statistic data, and documents).

Further research intends to investigate the links between the employment of Ukrainian females in host countries as well as their educational and employment biographies.

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