

УДК 330.322  
UDC 330.322

DOI:10.33744/0365-8171-2025-118.1-225-232

## ТРУДОВА МІГРАЦІЯ ТА ЗАХОДИ ПОДОЛАННЯ ЇЇ ВІДТОКУ З УКРАЇНИ

### LABOR MIGRATION AND MEASURES TO OVERCOME ITS OUTFLOW FROM UKRAINE



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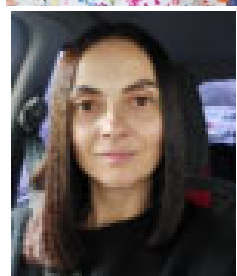
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**Abstract.** The article examines the causes and consequences of labor migration in Ukraine, and also considers ways to overcome the outflow of workers to restore the country's economic potential. The object of the study is labor migration in Ukraine and its impact on key sectors of the economy, including construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and logistics.

The purpose of the research is to study the ways of reducing the shortage of personnel and reintegrating workers to ensure the economic development of Ukraine in the conditions of martial law.

The research method is analytical.

Labor migration is one of the key challenges brought about by the war, which has caused labor attrition and shortages in a number of critical sectors of the economy. The difficult situation on the labor market requires active measures, such as professional retraining and attracting foreign investment, in order to create new jobs and maintain the workforce.

The conducted research shows that in order to stabilize the labor market, it is necessary to develop support programs for employees, in particular internally displaced persons and labor migrants, which can significantly contribute to the economic recovery of the country.

**Key words:** labor migration, economy, shortage of personnel, vocational training, investment, labor market, internally displaced persons

**Problem Statement.** The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 has resulted in notable changes in the labor market at the present level of national economic development, especially resulting in an outflow of the workforce and a shortage of employees in important economic sectors. Millions of Ukrainians have been compelled by martial law to flee or seek safety elsewhere, so influencing labor availability and economic growth inside their own nation. The Ministry of Economy of Ukraine claims that there will be a shortage of almost 4.5 million workers by 2024, endangering further economic growth and post-war rehabilitation. This paper investigates the main reasons of labor migration, its effects, and possible solutions to slow down workforce outflow from Ukraine.

**Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** The writings of domestic scholars including Kravchenko V., Pishchulina O., Yurchyshyn V., Mytsenko I.M., Stezhko N.V., and others have examined many facets of labor migration theory and practice. These analysts of labor migration problems in Ukraine concentrate on their causes and effects.

**Research Objective.** This article aims to explore how labor migration has been affected by martial law in Ukraine and to look for possible ways to reduce the outflow of the workforce.

#### **Presentation of the Main Material.**

The term "*migration*" comes from the Latin *migratio*, *migro*, meaning "to relocate," and generally refers to movement or resettlement. **Population migration** involves the movement of people, typically associated with a change of residence. The concept of *international migration* was introduced in 1922 during the International Labour Conference held by the International Labour Organization (ILO). According to the ILO, a *migrant* is someone who moves from one country to another and requires international migration services provided by global institutions. Unlike internal migration, international migration involves crossing national borders, which means it is subject to state control – both at the point of departure and, more critically, upon arrival. It also usually entails the migrant's continued stay in the destination country, often for the purposes of employment, education, or internship programs. Migration processes are shaped by a wide range of factors, including socio-economic, political, legal, psychological, environmental, and cultural influences. However, one of the most significant reasons individuals decide to emigrate is the difference in actual income levels for identical work in different countries [1]. Labor migration has specific features. First, individuals have the legal

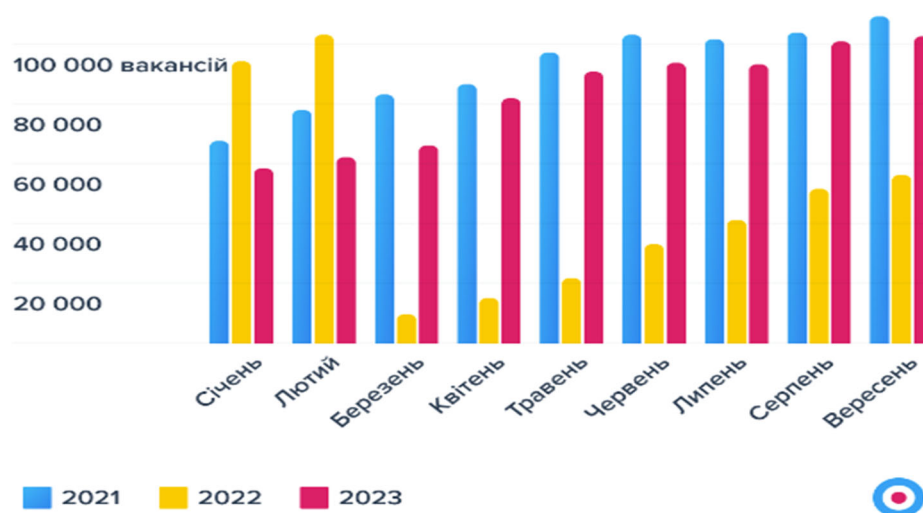
right to decide how and where to apply their labor. Second, there must be demand for additional labor in the recipient country. And third, the sum of all motivating migration factors must outweigh the desire to stay in one's home country. From a worker's point of view, labor migration represents a chance to secure a decent job and improve one's standard of living by offering their labor on a more favorable labor market abroad. For employers, it offers a temporary opportunity to access qualified labor at lower costs compared to hiring within the domestic workforce. Today, international labor migration spans all continents and has become a truly global phenomenon. According to expert estimates, more than 3% of the world's population now lives outside their country of origin [6]. According to calculations by the World Bank, migration generates greater benefits for the global economy than international trade. A theoretical model of global economic equilibrium suggests that an 8% increase in the number of migrants by 2025 compared to the year 2000 would result in a 0.6% growth in global income – including 0.4% growth for developed countries and 1.8% for developing countries. In other words, migration not only drives global development but also contributes to a more equitable distribution of global wealth.

Among the economic factors contributing to the rise in labor migration from Ukraine, one of the most significant is the uneven implementation of economic reforms, which has led to a noticeable decline in living standards for a large segment of the population. The collapse of inter-enterprise ties and the shrinking of production at major industrial enterprises triggered mass layoffs, further deteriorating the socio-economic well-being of workers and fueling outbound migration. Since 1993, the outflow of labor migrants from Ukraine has been growing steadily. In light of this, the development of more modern and effective approaches to migration regulation has become increasingly necessary. Several major developments have driven this need: the military conflict in eastern Ukraine and the resulting large-scale internal displacement; the Association Agreement with the European Union entering into force; a westward shift in Ukrainian migration flows; and increasing migration pressure on Europe. While freedom of movement is a core human right that has created new opportunities for Ukrainian citizens, it has also introduced new challenges. In recent years, these challenges have become more acute amid foreign aggression, economic instability, and socio-political uncertainty. Of particular concern is the noticeable rise in emigration, especially labor-related, alongside an increasing share of young professionals among those leaving the country, as well as the growing tendency for temporary labor migration to gradually evolve into permanent emigration. Due to the ongoing war and the fragile state of the economy, Ukraine is currently not an attractive destination for foreign immigrants. Additionally, there is a growing risk that Ukraine may become a transit route for migrants, including those traveling partially illegally toward Western Europe. Ultimately, low income levels and widespread poverty remain among the strongest push factors encouraging Ukrainians to seek work abroad – with EU member states consistently ranking as the most desirable destinations.

Europe continues to hold the top spot as the most sought-after destination for migrants, with around 82 million people living there. Following Europe are the United States, home to 59 million migrants, and Western Asia, with 49 million. Remarkably, nearly half of the world's migrant population resides in just ten countries: the United States (59 million), Germany and Saudi Arabia (13 million each), Russia (12 million), the United Kingdom (10 million), the United Arab Emirates (9 million), and France, Canada, and Australia (8 million each), while Italy hosts 6 million. In total, these ten countries account for a third of all international migrants. Among the countries of origin, India leads with 18 million migrants abroad, followed by Mexico, with 12 million – the second-largest diaspora, then China with 11 million, and Syria with 8 million [7].

One of the main factors behind the outflow of labor from Ukraine is the war, which has triggered mass displacement. According to the International Labour Organization, by early 2024, Ukraine was experiencing

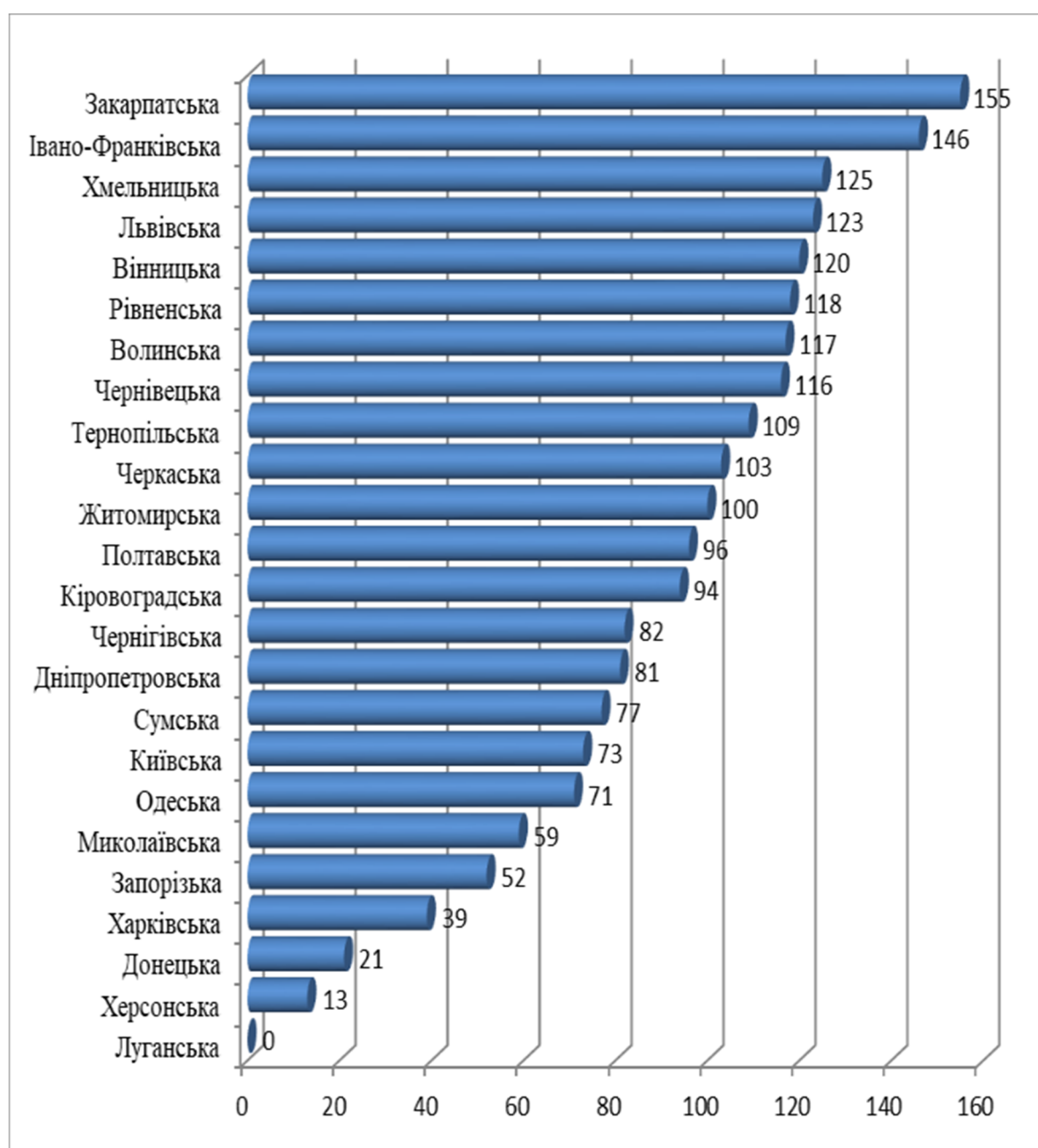
a labor shortage of 8.2 million people. Most of these individuals left either due to the dangers of war or because of the lack of job opportunities under martial law. Since the beginning of the war, around 2.5 million Ukrainians have gone abroad, leading to serious workforce losses in key sectors such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and logistics [2,5]. Figure 1 illustrates the trends in job vacancies from January to September 2023.



**Figure 1** – Dynamics of vacancies from January to September 2023 compared to previous years [2]

The shortage of labor is most acute in regions directly affected by the war. In Donetsk oblast, for instance, the number of available job vacancies currently amounts to only 21% of pre-war levels. In Kherson oblast, the situation is even more critical, with just 13% of previous job postings still active. Many businesses have ceased operations altogether due to severe infrastructure damage, further compounding the issue of unemployment. Conversely, in the western regions of Ukraine—where a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have relocated—the labor market has become oversaturated in certain professions, leading to new economic imbalances [4].

Employment challenges are especially pronounced for men of conscription age, many of whom have been mobilized or are unable to leave the country due to legal restrictions related to the ongoing mobilization. Meanwhile, women, children, and elderly individuals who have sought safety abroad often encounter difficulties adapting to foreign labor markets and may not plan to return to Ukraine after martial law is lifted. This reality further intensifies the labor shortage, particularly in vital sectors such as construction, transport, agriculture, and energy [6]. Figure 2 provides an overview of how regional labor markets in Ukraine are recovering, as reflected in job vacancy data.



**Figure 2** – Restoration of regional labor markets of Ukraine by the number of vacancies [8]

- State policy in the field of external labor migration should be implemented in the following directions:
- effective state regulation of external labor migration;
  - ensuring social and legal protection of labor migrants and their families;
  - cooperation with foreign state authorities, international organizations, and public associations interested in solving issues related to external labor migration;
  - measures to prevent illegal external labor migration;

- creating conditions for the return of labor migrants and their families to Ukraine and their reintegration into society;
- enhancing the institutional capacity of Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad to provide legal, informational, and other assistance to labor migrants and their families in the host country;
- conducting research and informational campaigns in the field of external labor migration;
- improving the system of collecting and processing statistical information about labor migrants and their families, as well as monitoring the state of external labor migration;
- promoting the satisfaction of the national, cultural, educational, and language needs of labor migrants and their families;
- signing international agreements on the protection of the rights of labor migrants and their families in the host country.[1]

In the face of ongoing challenges, the Ukrainian government has been stepping up its efforts to reintegrate internally displaced persons (IDPs) and encourage citizens living abroad to return home. One of the government's top priorities is helping people adapt to new labor market conditions by offering professional retraining and upskilling programs. These initiatives are particularly focused on helping IDPs find employment in industries that currently lack sufficient labor resources—such as construction, where the shortage is estimated at over 100,000 workers [2,5].

A key part of the government's strategy also involves attracting foreign investment to boost job creation. Many international organizations are supporting this approach by financing infrastructure projects in areas affected by the war. These efforts not only support economic recovery but also create valuable employment opportunities for local communities. At the same time, there is growing attention on engaging young professionals and recent graduates, who are seen as playing a crucial role in rebuilding Ukraine's economy in the years to come [6].

Expanding international cooperation has also opened new doors for Ukrainians to participate in internships and training programs abroad. These experiences allow participants to gain new perspectives and professional skills that they can later apply at home. In the longer term, such exchanges help build stronger connections between Ukraine and global labor markets, encouraging innovation and more sustainable growth [4].

### **Conclusions**

One of Ukraine's main problems during the martial law era is labor migration. Significant financial losses result from the personnel exodus, which also delays the nation's recovery. Comprehensive solutions are required to address this issue, such as professional retraining, luring foreign investment, establishing new jobs, and reintegrating internally displaced people. Supporting young people and recent graduates is also crucial because they have the potential to be the main drivers of the post-war economy's recovery. Professional internships overseas, experience sharing, and international collaboration are all useful strategies for raising workforce standards and lowering the exodus of skilled workers. After martial law ends, Ukraine has the potential to rebuild its economy and labor pool, despite the many obstacles.

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**Анотація.** У статті досліджено причини та наслідки міграції робочої сили в Україні, а також розглянуто шляхи подолання відтоку працівників для відновлення економічного потенціалу країни.

Об'єкт дослідження – міграція робочої сили в Україні та її вплив на ключові галузі економіки, зокрема будівництво, виробництво, сільське господарство та логістику.

Мета дослідження – вивчення шляхів зменшення дефіциту кадрів і реінтеграції працівників для забезпечення економічного розвитку України в умовах військового стану.

Метод дослідження – аналітичний.

Міграція робочої сили є одним із ключових викликів, зумовлених війною, що спричинила відтік кадрів і кадровий дефіцит у низці критичних галузей економіки. Складна ситуація на ринку праці

вимагає активних заходів, таких як професійна перепідготовка та залучення іноземних інвестицій, щоб створювати нові робочі місця та підтримувати кадровий резерв.

Проведене дослідження показує, що для стабілізації ринку праці необхідно розвивати програми підтримки працівників, зокрема внутрішньо переміщених осіб та трудових мігрантів, які можуть суттєво сприяти економічному відновленню країни.

**Ключові слова:** міграція робочої сили, економіка, дефіцит кадрів, професійна перепідготовка, інвестиції, ринок праці, внутрішньо переміщені особи.

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*Дата надходження до редакції 15.05.2025.*