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Mapping Report:

ENGAGEMENT OF UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN POLAND IN RECONSTRUCTION, RETURN, AND COMMUNITY-BASED REINTEGRATION

U-SUPPORT: Ukrainian Information Support Network

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
CBOS	Centre for Public Opinion Research (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej)
CES	Centre for Economic Strategy
CUKR	Three-year residence permit for war-displaced Ukrainians in Poland, issued since 2026
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
EUDiF	European Union Global Diaspora Facility
GBV	Gender-based violence
GUS	Central Statistics Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny)
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KRS	Polish Court Register (Krajowy Rejestr Sądowy)
NBP	National Bank of Poland
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPP	Public Benefit Organisation status in Poland (Organizacja Pożytku Publicznego)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PESEL UKR	Special national identification status for Ukrainians under temporary protection in Poland
PIE	Polish Economic Institute
UDSC	Office for Foreigners (Urząd Do Spraw Cudzoziemców)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
U-SUPPORT	Ukrainian Information Support Network project, funded by the European Union in the framework of the Migration Partnership Facility

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Diaspora

Population living outside the country of origin while maintaining a sense of shared identity, cultural ties, and connection to the homeland. In the Polish context and for the purpose of this study, the Ukrainian diaspora is understood as long-established communities – ethnic Ukrainians who have lived in Poland for generations – and more recent arrivals, labour migrants, and displaced persons. These communities tend to be characterised by a sense of belonging to Ukraine and by identity-based engagement with the Ukrainian cause, even where their histories, migration pathways, legal status and social positions differ profoundly.

Displaced person from Ukraine

Person who has undertaken forced migration from their place of habitual residence. In the Polish context, Ukrainian displaced persons comprise primarily those who fled their place of residence following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The term carries no specific legal definition under Polish legislation, and the collective term is widely used in humanitarian and policy contexts to describe the overall foreign population in need, regardless of formal status.

Integration

Process by which a person who has migrated (e.g. displaced person) becomes an active, self-sufficient participant in the host society, while the society, communities and institutions adapt toward the newcomer. It encompasses language acquisition, labour market activities, education, healthcare, and social participation primarily. It is a two-way process involving openness among the newcomers and the host society, communities, and institutions.

Reintegration

The process which enables individuals to re-establish the economic, social, and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity, and inclusion in civic life.

Labour migrant

Individual who moves to another country for work purposes. In the case of Ukraine, large numbers of Ukrainian labour migrants were engaged in the Polish economy before February 2022, typically residing in Poland through various types of visas and residence permits. Ukraine had been the largest source of labour migration to Poland after 2014, with hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians working in the construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and domestic service sectors.

National minority

Group distinct from the majority population by virtue of nationality/ethnic origin, language, culture, or religion. In Poland, Ukrainians have been officially recognised as one of nine national minorities since the introduction of the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Languages in 2005. Legal rights apply specifically to autochthonous Ukrainians historically rooted in Polish territory, particularly in the Podkarpacie region and along the eastern border, as well as the descendants of Ukrainians targeted under Operation Vistula, forcibly resettled in 1947. Post-2022 arrivals do not hold national minority status.

Permanent residence permit

Document granting a foreigner the indefinite right to reside and work in the host country. For third-country nationals in Poland, it is generally accessible after five years of continuous, legal residence and work in Poland (EU long-term resident status), or provided on certain grounds such as Polish ancestry or marriage to a Polish citizen (*stały pobyt* status).

Temporary Protection (EU)

Mechanism established under EU Council Directive 2001/55/EC and activated for the first time in March 2022 in response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. It grants Ukrainian citizens and permanent residents fleeing Ukraine after February 2022 immediate, collective protection across EU Member States without requiring individual asylum procedures. In Poland, persons under Temporary Protection receive PESEL UKR status – a special national identification number which grants the right to reside and work under a simplified procedure; access to healthcare, housing, and certain forms of social assistance previously granted was significantly limited by amendments adopted in 2025 and 2026. The temporary protection is currently in place until 4 March 2028 with access further restricted to individuals who comply with their military obligations in Ukraine.

Temporary residence permit

Formal authorisation allowing a foreigner to reside legally in a host country. In Poland, temporary residence permits are issued to third-country nationals for periods ranging from three months to three years for a specific declared purpose, such as work, study, family reunification, or humanitarian grounds.

Ukrainian community abroad

Frequently referred to as Ukrainian Diaspora, the group of ethnic Ukrainians and people of Ukrainian descent living outside the borders of the Ukrainian state.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mapping report on Engagement of Ukrainian Diaspora in Poland in Reconstruction, Return, and Community-based Reintegration assesses the current state of the Ukrainian diaspora organisational landscape in Poland, its capacity to support Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, and the eventual return and reintegration of persons displaced by the war in Ukraine. It was produced under the Ukrainian Information Support Network (U-SUPPORT) project, drawing upon the broader work of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) on diaspora engagement in Ukraine's post-war recovery.

In producing the report, the author employed a combination of desk research, statistical analysis, in-depth interviews with Ukrainian diaspora organisation representatives and Ukrainian and international diaspora policy experts (conducted between April and May 2026), structured mapping of Ukrainian diaspora organisations active in Poland (undertaken during the first half of 2026), participatory observation of discussions during the Networking Workshop for Ukrainian Diaspora Organisations, implemented under the U-SUPPORT project, held in Warsaw in June 2026, and comparative review of relevant international best practices.

Providing an **overview of the Ukrainian community in Poland**, the report sets out the parameters of this group comprising approximately 1.7 million people in mid-2026, made up of 3 distinct populations: an autochthonous national minority of approx. 50,000; over 600,000 pre-2022 labour migrants; and almost 1 million post-2022 displaced persons under temporary protection. This is the largest concentration of Ukrainians within the European Union (EU) and is geographically and demographically the closest to Ukraine among any major host countries.

Providing in-depth analysis of the **Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland**, the report maps 58 such organisations – 25 established before 2022 (in many cases characterised by longstanding institutional structures) and 33 established since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Three cities — Warsaw, Kraków, and Wrocław — concentrate the bulk of organisational activity, but a regionally distributed network, especially for post-2022 initiatives, now extends to Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Lublin, Olsztyn, Poznań, Wałbrzych, and elsewhere. Roughly 120,000 businesses founded by Ukrainian citizens since 2022 form a parallel, less institutionalised but substantial reconstruction actor.

Charting **Ukrainian diaspora engagement in reconstruction, return and reintegration**, the report sets out from the exceptional diaspora response to the 2022 invasion. Within hours, established organisations, supported by partners from Polish civil society, had divided humanitarian responsibilities among themselves, opened reception points, and become the interface between donors, international organisations, development agencies and non-governmental organisations (i.a. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Oxfam, CARE International, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council) and displaced Ukrainians.

During the 2023–2024 period, integration of migrants in Poland, with a strong focus on labour market and language capabilities development, became the priority task for such organisations, addressed by both established and newly founded entities. By 2025–2026, the activity profile of the most recognisable Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland had stabilised at a higher level than before the war, with consolidated work

in case management, education, psychological and gender-based violence (GBV) support, cultural and identity work, humanitarian aid for Ukraine, advocacy, and academic policy dialogue. While the diaspora has measurably professionalised significantly, these advances have not always translated into stronger institutional capacity and depend heavily on a small cadre of (predominantly women) leaders. There is no umbrella initiative representing the voice of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland.

Both experienced organisations and post-2022 civic start-ups lack institutional funding. The largest organisations operate through a patchwork of EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) funds, European Economic Area (EEA) Civil Society support programs, Polish government and project-based grants, supplemented by tax allocation income and reserves from 2022. Volunteer burnout is widespread. While cooperation with the Ukrainian state institutions has advanced since 2022, there is a potential to strengthen coordination through more structured mechanisms of engagement. In particular, Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland, which generally have lower financial and advocacy capacities than those in Canada and the United States, could be further supported through strategic guidance on their role in Ukraine's reconstruction and reintegration efforts. While the operational capacity of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland is real, substantial, and hard-won, it remains structurally underutilised.

The **Ukrainian business community in Poland** represents a significant but underutilised asset for Ukraine's reconstruction. Since 2022, Ukrainian entrepreneurs have established more than 123,000 businesses in Poland, creating extensive cross-border networks, business partnerships, and investment potential, while a substantial share maintain active economic links with Ukraine and could support future reconstruction efforts. However, this potential remains largely untapped due to the absence of dedicated diaspora investment mechanisms, reconstruction-focused platforms, and institutionalised channels connecting Ukrainian businesses with diaspora civil society organisations. Strengthening these structures could help mobilise diaspora capital, expertise, and networks for Ukraine's recovery.

International best practice from Albania, Serbia, and Rwanda demonstrates that a clear legal framework governing diaspora relations by country of origin, a single coordinating body, dedicated digital matching platforms, diaspora-targeted investment vehicles, and dual-track strategies that balance 'engagement abroad' with 'support for return' produce strong results. None of these instruments exist in the Ukrainian-Polish context yet.

Based on the findings of this analysis, the following **key recommendations** are proposed:

1. Consider adopting a comprehensive legislative framework on diaspora engagement and strengthen institutional coordination of diaspora policy across the relevant Ukrainian ministries.

2. Strengthen the systematic engagement of Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland in the development and implementation of Ukrainian public policies recognising their important role as partners in community-building initiatives abroad.

3. Promote targeted measures for strengthening relations with Ukrainian businesses in Poland and facilitate engagement of the existing companies in reconstruction via the Polish-Ukrainian diaspora investment platform – modelled on Connect Albania and the Albanian Diaspora Development Fund.

4. Leverage multi-year institutional core-cost funding to replace the current patchwork of project grants and establish a dedicated digital security and reputation protection track to address existing threats.

5. Promote the meaningful involvement of Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland in the design and implementation of return and reintegration programmes, while recognising return as one of several options for how diaspora organisations can contribute to Ukraine's recovery and development.

For entities working with the Ukrainian community in Poland, this report serves three purposes. Firstly, the report provides a structured mapping of who is operating in this space and how. Secondly, the report offers a comparative analytical framework drawn from international best practice that can be used for advocacy with Ukrainian and Polish authorities. Thirdly, the report identifies practical opportunities for capacity-building, networking and policy engagement where targeted support from donors and governments could have the greatest impact on strengthening the operational capacity of diaspora organisations.

INTRODUCTION

This mapping report has been produced within the framework of the Ukrainian Information Support Network (U-SUPPORT) project, implemented by ICMPD funded by the European Union in the framework of the Migration Partnership Facility, which aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of organisations supporting Ukrainians abroad and inform the design of Ukraine's diaspora engagement strategy. This report builds upon the prior work of the ICMPD CORE-UA project[1], particularly the case study report *Diaspora Engagement: Case Studies and Best Practices for Ukraine,*[2] the joint publication with the University of Warwick *Engaging the Global Ukrainian Community for Ukraine's Recovery: Democracy and Human Rights Dimension,*[3] and broader work on engaging the Ukrainian diaspora in reconstruction and development by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), particularly through the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) seated in Warsaw,[4] and IOM.[5]

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 transformed the Ukrainian community in Poland from a labour migrant population of approximately one million people,[6] alongside a recognised national minority, into one of the largest and most strategically positioned diaspora populations in Europe. The scale, speed, and demographic profile of post-2022 displacement created conditions in which the existing diaspora organisational infrastructure was rapidly rescaled and supplemented by a new generation of post-2022 initiatives. Over four years on, the question is no longer how this organisational capacity was mobilised, but how it can be channelled into the longer reconstruction horizon – and what role Ukraine, Poland, and international partners can play in supporting that transition.

DISPLACEMENT AND UKRAINIAN DIASPORA GROWTH AFTER 2022

Russia's full-scale invasion triggered one of the most severe displacement crises in Europe since the end of the Second World War. The crisis emerged in the aftermath of pre-existing displacement, as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the outbreak of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine that year. Indeed, Ukraine had the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Europe even before 2022, with over 1.4 million registered IDPs as of July 2021.

The full-scale invasion thus transformed this situation into a displacement emergency of an entirely different scale. Within the first two months of the war, nearly 13 million people – more than one quarter of Ukraine's

1 CORE-UA project (Comprehensive Support for the Adaptation and Resilience of Displaced Persons from Ukraine) is implemented by ICMPD, with financial support from the German AMIF programme and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).
2 Mori, G., Puigdomènech Vidal, J., and Siegel, M. (2025). *Diaspora Engagement: Case Studies and Best Practices for Ukraine*. Vienna: ICMPD.
3 Koinova, M., Makukha, R., and Sabadello, M., (2025) *Engaging the Global Ukrainian Community for Ukraine's Recovery: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions. Vienna: ICMPD and University. 9 July.*
4 ODIHR (2024). *Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR.
5 IOM (2025). "New Diaspora Platform Backed by IOM Aims to Boost Ukraine's Reconstruction." IOM News.
6 It is challenging to determine the exact pre-2022 number of Ukrainian citizens in Poland because of the lack of integration between different Polish public registers, dominance of temporary labour migration patterns, and wide usage of the visa-free regime. Estimates range from 1.2 to 1.5 million people: *Duszczyk*, M., *Kaczmarczyk*, P. (2022) *The War in Ukraine and Migration to Poland: Outlook and Challenges*. Intereconomics 57, 164–170.

pre-war population – fled their homes and communities, of whom more than 5.2 million crossed into other countries, while 7.7 million remained within Ukraine as IDPs.[7] As of December 2025, a partially stabilised situation of 'protracted displacement' was in effect: an estimated 3.71 million de facto IDPs and 4.41 million returnees resided in Ukraine, with IDPs concentrated primarily in the Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, and Kyiv oblasts, with 71% of all IDPs displaced for over 2 years.[8]

The scale of external displacement is equally unprecedented. By December 2025, 5.86 million forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine were recorded globally, including approximately 5.3 million who fled to other European countries. The Ukrainian displaced population abroad is predominantly composed of women and children, with comparatively fewer adult men due to mobility restrictions imposed by Ukrainian law.[9] As of 31 March 2026, some 4.33 million Ukrainians and other non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine as a consequence of Russia's war of aggression were under temporary protection in the EU,[10] with most arriving in 2022 (in 2025, the EU Member States issued 155,500 new decisions providing temporary protection). The largest numbers of Ukrainians under temporary protection within the EU reside in Germany (1.27 million), Poland (0.96 million), and Czechia (0.38 million), with the United Kingdom hosting over 250,000 Ukrainians by 2025.[11] Smaller but significant communities settled in Canada and the United States.

Crucially, the proportion of Ukrainian refugees abroad who plan to return home has fallen substantially over time – from 74% in November 2022 to 43% in December 2024, suggesting that, for a growing share of those displaced, what began as temporary refuge is evolving into long-term, possibly permanent settlement abroad.[12] According to the Kyiv-based Centre for Economic Strategy (CES), 20% of externally displaced Ukrainians polled in late 2025 indicated being unsure about whether they intended to stay or return, while 58% reported that, over the prior year, they had not changed their opinion about returning – the group of those who want to stay in the host countries is not only large (34%) but decisive.[13]

The question of whether people displaced by the full-scale invasion should be considered part of the Ukrainian diaspora remains contested. Classical definitions of diaspora typically presuppose a degree of permanence, a collective identity maintained over time, and an orientation toward a homeland that is physically left behind[14] – conditions that may not sit organically with a population that largely defines itself as temporarily abroad and that has arrived within recent years. However, the case of the Ukrainian communities in Poland demonstrates that diaspora is better understood not as a fixed status but as an ongoing process of social imagining and community formation, with even recently displaced persons often participating in diaspora-forming dynamics, regardless of their legal category or stated intention.[15]

7 Mikheieva, O. and Kuznetsova, I. (2023). *Internally displaced and immobile people in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022: Older age and disabilities as factors of vulnerability*. Migration Research Series, N°77. Geneva: IOM.
8 IOM DTM (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix) (2026). *Ukraine Internal Displacement Report — General Population Survey, Round 22*. Geneva: IOM, January.
9 UNHCR (2026). *Ukraine Situation: UNHCR's 2026 Plans and Financial Requirements*. Geneva: UNHCR.
10 Eurostat (2026). *Temporary Protection for Persons Fleeing Ukraine — Monthly Statistics* [Accessed 11 May 2026].
11 LSE Growth Lab (2025). *Ukraine Diaspora Engagement and Returnees' Policy*. London: London School of Economics.
12 Tokariuk, O. (2025). *Ukraine's Fight for Its People: Ukrainian Refugees' Future Plans and Their Ties to Home*. London: Chatham House, February.
13 CES (2025). *Ukrainian Refugees After Three Years Abroad: Fourth Wave of Research*. Kyiv: CES.
14 Brubaker, R. (2005). "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1): 1–19; Safran, W. (1991). "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora* 1 (1): 83–99.
15 Trzeszczyńska, P. and Demel, G. (2025). "Forming a Ukrainian Diaspora in Poland: Between 'Common Culture,' National Naturalism, and Othering." *Nationalities Papers* 53 (1): 31–50.

This mapping report adopts an inclusive approach. It maps organisations that serve and were established by Ukrainians in Poland, regardless of whether their founders or members arrived before or after February 2022, while acknowledging that the boundary between 'refugee' and 'diaspora member' is increasingly blurred in practice.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The production of this mapping report drew upon four central sources of evidence. First, **desk research** drawing upon academic literature was undertaken,[16] key reports and surveys on displaced Ukrainians, Ukrainian communities in Poland, and the role of the Ukrainian diaspora in reconstruction and return,[17] policy documents, and press publications.

Second, **statistical analysis** focused on data from the National Bank of Poland (NBP) annual surveys The Living and Economic Situation of Migrants from Ukraine in Poland; the Office for Foreigners (UDSC); the Central Statistics Office (GUS), including the 2021 National Census; the UNHCR Operational Data Portal; Eurostat temporary protection statistics; and Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) opinion polling.

Third, **11 semi-structured, in-depth interviews** were conducted by the principal author (between April and May 2025) – 2 with diaspora research experts (Ukrainian think-tank analyst and an international academic researcher), 5 with leaders of Ukrainian diaspora organisations established in Poland before 2022, 3 with leaders of organisations established after 2022, and 1 with a Ukrainian business community representative. Furthermore, the author participated in the U-SUPPORT Networking Workshop for Ukrainian Diaspora Organisations in Poland held on 20-21 June 2026 in Warsaw; observation of the participants' discussions and presentations contributed to the development of recommendations.

Fourth, **a structured mapping** of 58 organisations active in Poland in 2026 was conducted, drawing upon the information obtained during interviews, workshop, from the Polish Court Register (KRS), the NGO.pl database,[18]

16 Notably: Trzeszczyńska, P. and Demel, G. (2025). "Forming a Ukrainian Diaspora in Poland: Between 'Common Culture,' National Naturalism, and Othering." *Nationalities Papers* 53 (1): 31–50; Trzeszczyńska, P., Demel, G., and Błaszczak-Rozenbaum, B. (2024). "Heritage in Diaspora-Forming Processes: Encounters of Local Ukrainians and Migrants from Ukraine in Poland." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 25 (1): 171–190; Fihel, A., Homel, K., Jaroszewicz, M., Lesinska, M., & Bentz, A. (2025). *Diaspora at war: mobilization of the Ukrainian diaspora in the first 2 years of the Russian full-scale invasion*. In Journal of Refugee Studies; Zelinska, O. (2024). *Protest Mobilization by Ukrainians Abroad, 2013–2023*. In: Marton, P., Thomasen, G., Békés, C., Rácz, A. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of Non-State Actors in East-West Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

17 Koinova, M. (2024). *The Diaspora's Mobilisation Post-Invasion Has Provided Crucial Support to Ukraine*. Migration Policy Institute, October; CES (2025). *Ukrainian Refugees After Three Years Abroad: Fourth Wave of Research*. Kyiv: CES; IOM DTM (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix) (2026). *Ukraine Internal Displacement Report — General Population Survey, Round 22*. Geneva: IOM, January; Tokariuk, O. (2025). *Ukraine's Fight for Its People: Ukrainian Refugees' Future Plans and Their Ties to Home*. London: Chatham House, February; OECD (2026). *Ukraine's Strategic Response to the Displacement Crisis: International Practices in Return, Reintegration, and Diaspora Engagement*. Paris: OECD; ICMPD (2024). *The Role of Ukrainian Diaspora in Crisis Response, Future Return and Reconstruction of Ukraine: Case Study from Germany, Czech Republic and Poland*. Vienna: ICMPD; ODIHR (2024). *Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR; DGAP (2024). *Return and Reconstruction*. Policy Brief No. 7. Berlin: DGAP, April; DIIS (2026). *Forced Displacement from Ukraine: The Potential Role of Migration in Ukraine's Future Reconstruction*. Copenhagen: DIIS; Skorokhod, O. (2024). *Scientific Diaspora — A Unique Asset for Post-War Recovery of Ukraine*. White Paper. Kyiv: "Science at Risk" project, NGO "Kunsht"; Lemańczyk, M. ed. (2026). *Społeczności ukraińskie w Polsce. Uwarunkowania funkcjonowania w kluczowych obszarach społecznych, gospodarczych i prawnych*. Policy paper. Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN.

18 Visit the NGO.pl website: https://spis.ngo.pl/

Mapuj Pomoc/ Map the Aid[19] and *Konsorcjum Migracyjne* / Migration Consortium[20] networks, organisations' own web resources, and direct contact with organisations.

The selection criteria for inclusion in the mapping, set out below, placed the focus on entities established by Ukrainians or Polish citizens with Ukrainian roots, and whose only or priority mission is related to integration of Ukrainian immigrants, promotion of Ukrainian culture, advocacy of the Ukrainian cause, assistance to Ukraine (including assistance to the Ukrainian armed forces), and/or cooperation between Poland or the EU and Ukraine, regardless of registration status, provided the organisation was active in 2026.

This report does not cover Polish non-governmental organisations (NGOs), associations, commercial entities, nor unregistered initiatives whose work touches on Polish/EU–Ukraine cooperation, humanitarian and other assistance to Ukraine or the integration of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland – even in cases where Ukrainian immigrants or national minority members are among the founders, board members, or executives – if work with Ukraine or Ukrainians is part of their portfolio but not the main strategic component. Within this dynamic, *Polskie Forum Migracyjne*/ Polish Migration Forum, Homo Faber, *Fundacja Ocalenie*/ Ocalenie Foundation, *Asymetryści* informal group and Nomada Association play crucial roles in the adaptation of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, including the delivery of aid to displaced people. For their part, *Kolegium Europy Wschodniej*/ College of Eastern Europe and *Fundacja OBMIN*/ OBMIN Foundation provide comprehensive support and engagement for Ukrainian artists, writers, and museum professionals. Hundreds of Polish businesses and thousands of individuals have been engaged in assistance to Ukrainian civilians and the Ukrainian military since 2014. Their contribution to the Ukrainian defence effort and making Ukraine prosperous and safe is deserving of a separate study.

19 Visit the *Mapuj Pomoc* website: https://mapujpomoc.pl/czlonkowie-i-partnerzy-sieci/
20 Visit the Migration Consortium website: https://konsorcjum.org.pl/

CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN POLAND

1.1 THREE COMMUNITIES, THREE HISTORIES, THREE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Ukrainians currently residing in Poland can be perceived as three distinct but increasingly overlapping groups, each with a different legal status, social position, and relationship to the Ukrainian state.

The **Ukrainian national minority** is a historically rooted segment of Polish citizens of Ukrainian origin, formally recognised under the 2005 Act on National and Ethnic Minorities. The 2021 National Census recorded 79,000 people who self-identified as ethnically Ukrainian; this group also includes labour immigrants, so the number recorded in 2011 census data – 51,000 people – appears to be more relevant for estimating the size of this minority group.[21] This minority group is traditionally concentrated in the Podkarpacie region and along the eastern border, while many of the descendants of those deported by the Communist Polish authorities in 1945–1947 reside in the Pomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, and Zachodniopomorskie voivodships, as well as in Lower Silesia. The Ukrainian minority is civically active and institutionalised in several notable organisations, with *Związek Ukraińców w Polsce* / Union of Ukrainians in Poland prime among them. Funding for their activities comes from various sources and, unlike many other Ukrainian organisations, they are eligible for the Senate subvention, a dedicated state budget funding track available only for national minorities.

As of April 2026, the Polish Foreigners' Office (UDSC) recorded approximately 1.55 million Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland, the largest Ukrainian population in the EU, comprising approx. 78% of all foreign nationals in Poland.[22] **Pre-2022 migrants**, who mostly arrived in Poland after 2014 and mainly for labour reasons, held approx. 480,000 temporary residence permits, with a further approx. 110,000 holding longer-term residence cards.[23] Those who spend three years in Poland after obtaining long-term residency become eligible for Polish citizenship, if they can confirm a regular source of income and at least B1-level Polish language proficiency.[24] While fewer than 50,000 Ukrainian migrants have been naturalised in Poland over the last decade, projections estimate that around 100,000 Ukrainian migrants could become eligible for Polish citizenship by 2030. The group of labour migrants is overwhelmingly of working age, historically with a slight male majority, with

21 GUS (2023). *Wstępne wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2021 w zakresie struktury narodowo-etnicznej*. Warsaw: GUS.

22 UDSC (2026). *Raport na temat obywateli Ukrainy (wg stanu na dzień 1 kwietnia 2026 r.)*. Warsaw: UDSC April.

23 To count the Ukrainian labour immigrants, the data on issued residence permits (*zezwolenie na pobyt*) is used. However, two key aspects should be taken into account: (1) Part of the residence permit holders is comprised of those who arrived after 2022 but decided to change temporary protection status to more predictable status; (2) There is a large gap between the number of residence permits applications and permits issued because of the lengthy administrative procedures, so it may be that over 100,000 Ukrainians who are legally resident in Poland are not reflected in the UDSC statistics: Babakova, O. (2025). *Polityka migracyjna: odzyskać kontrolę, zmniejszyć wpływy do skarbówki i ZUS*. Gazeta Wyborcza, 10 czerwca.

24 A regular path to long-term residency, the EU long-term resident status, is five years, including at least three years with regular income in Poland. To become a Polish citizen, a Ukrainian citizen must have lived and worked in Poland for at least eight years. With administrative procedures, that path regularly takes 10 to 12 years. For the majority of pre-2022 migrants, that path will take even longer because they mostly arrived as short-term or seasonal migrants, and that period does not count toward EU long-term residency.
There are shorter tracks for Polish citizenship for ethnic Poles and spouses of Polish citizens, two to five years, excluding administrative procedures: Babakova O., Gomon T., Naranovich K., Oliński P. (2024). *Kierunek Polska. Rekomendacje dla polskiej polityki migracyjnej. Ułatwienia w zatrudnianiu cudzoziemców spoza UE*. Warszawa: FOR, 25–27).

employment tending to be concentrated in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, transport, and care work; 73% of residence permits are issued for employment, 12% for family-related reasons, 5% for education, and 10% for other reasons.[25]

Post-2022 displaced persons – the largest contemporary segment – consist of approximately 960,000 Ukrainians registered under PESEL UKR status as persons under temporary protection, approximately 40% of them children, and 69% of adults are women.[26] Approx. 50% of adult refugees hold a university degree.[27] The EU Council Directive 2001/55/EC forms the legal framework for this residence, transposed into Polish law through the Special Law on Assistance to Ukraine of 12 March 2022, with successive EU-level and recent national extensions (most recently, until 4 March 2028, provided that applicants comply with their military obligations in Ukraine).

1.2 INTENTIONS TO STAY, RETURN, AND SUPPORT RECONSTRUCTION

After a substantial decline recorded in 2023, return intentions among Ukrainian citizens in Poland appear to have stabilised since 2024. NBP surveying from 2024 concluded that despite the passage of time, the share of Ukrainian immigrants who prefer to settle in Poland has not increased – long-term plans remain stable rather than tilting decisively toward permanent settlement, and displaced persons in particular tend to keep their future plans undecided.[28] Only 4 in 10 adult Ukrainian migrants in Poland have a high or very high probability of permanent settlement.[29] In late 2025, 50% of displaced Ukrainians in Poland surveyed indicated a desire to definitely or probably return to Ukraine, a high proportion compared with those residing in other EU countries.[30] However, the conditionality of acting upon such intentions remains complicated (end of war vs. comprehensive reforms in Ukraine); that factor, along with stable rather than rising settlement plans in Poland, reflects a state of protracted indeterminacy.[31]

Reconstruction support is most appropriately understood as a continuum rather than a binary 'return vs. stay' choice.[32] In planning Ukraine's reconstruction and return, it is worth segmenting the Ukrainian community in Poland into **three relevant profiles:**

- ***Ukrainians most likely to return*** include highly qualified working-age women, recently arrived persons, displaced persons from western and central regions of Ukraine, those without children in Polish schools, and older returnees who were already affected by the phasing out of temporary protection that started in March 2026.

25 UDSC (2026). *Raport na temat obywateli Ukrainy (wg stanu na dzień 1 kwietnia 2026 r.)*. Warsaw: UDSC April.
26 Ibid.
27 NBP (2024) *The Living and Economic Situation of Migrants from Ukraine in Poland*. Warsaw: NBP.
28 Ibid.
29 Przybył, C., and Prudło, D. (2025). *Integracja imigrantów z Ukrainy na tle planów dotyczących pobytu w Polsce*. Warsaw: PIE.
30 CES (2025). *Ukrainian Refugees After Three Years Abroad: Fourth Wave of Research*. Kyiv: CES.
31 Lemańczyk, M. ed. (2026). *Społeczności ukraińskie w Polsce. Uwarunkowania funkcjonowania w kluczowych obszarach społecznych, gospodarczych i prawnych*. Policy paper. Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN.
32 Koinova, M. (2024). *The Diaspora's Mobilisation Post-Invasion Has Provided Crucial Support to Ukraine*. Migration Policy Institute, October; OECD (2026). *Ukraine's Strategic Response to the Displacement Crisis: International Practices in Return, Reintegration, and Diaspora Engagement*. Paris: OECD.

- ***Ukrainians most likely to stay*** include women aged 25–44 years with children in Polish schools, displaced persons from occupied or destroyed eastern oblasts, long-term pre-war labour migrants, especially young migrants, and those in stable employment with rented housing.

- ***Ukrainians most likely to support reconstruction from abroad*** include university-educated professionals, who achieved a stable (typically middle-class) position in the Polish labour market, business founders (especially those still operating in Ukraine), civil society activists, academic and IT diaspora, and employees of women-led humanitarian and integration NGOs.

For reconstruction support planning, the implications are twofold: the window for mobilising the diaspora toward eventual return is narrowing with each passing year, and the centre of gravity is shifting from "support for return" to "engage from abroad".

CHAPTER 2. OVERVIEW OF UKRAINIAN DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS IN POLAND

2.1 SELF-ORGANISATION AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING BEFORE 2022

The landscape of Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland before 2022 was anchored by a relatively small number of long-standing institutions created by the national minority in the late 1980s and 1990s. *Związek Ukraińców w Polsce*/ Union of Ukrainians in Poland, formally established in 1990 as the successor to earlier minority structures, today brings together approximately 2,000 members across 9 regional departments and more than 70 active groups, and remains the principal institutional embodiment of the Ukrainian community in Poland. Union of Ukrainians in Poland aims to address the cultural needs and advocate for the interests of Polish citizens of Ukrainian origin; the current leadership is open to new members – Ukrainian migrants who were naturalised in Poland.

Płast – Ukraińska Organizacja Skautowa w Polsce / Plast – Ukrainian Scouting Organisation in Poland – was re-established in 1989 and operates nationwide, and has been an important community-building institution for Ukrainian youth before and after 2022. *Związek Ukraińców Podlasia* / Union of Ukrainians of Podlasie was registered in 2006, with a regional focus, particularly on Białystok and the surrounding minority communities.

The period from the late 2000s to the early 2010s saw the emergence of a new generation of organisations established mostly by recent migrants from Ukraine and oriented primarily toward integration in the host country, while also addressing issues related to culture, education, and Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. This establishment of new entities was spurred by two key structural foundations. Firstly, the growing Ukrainian migrant community; EU accession in 2004 made Poland a more attractive place to work (simplified employment procedures for Ukrainians, *oświadczenie*, introduced in 2007) and to study (numerous scholarships offered by the Polish government were perceived as an investment in the state's soft power). Secondly, there was no requirement to be a citizen or permanent resident to register an NGO, with only the minimal endowment needed.[33]

The growth in organisation registration was also driven by further reasons: (1) Migrant communities had different essential needs than minorities, with legal stay and employment the priority, and different experiences of what it meant to be a Ukrainian; (2) Launch of AMIF funds in Poland, enabling the performance of integration activities, and promoting the establishment of migrant-led organisations; (3) Complex immigration law, under which employment at "your own" NGO was perceived as one of few paths to securing long-term legal stay in Poland.

Key examples of such post-accession initiatives are: the foundation *Nasz Wybir* / Our Choice (now Ukraiński Dom / Ukrainian House) in Warsaw, registered in 2009 and then operating an information line, consultation point, language courses, community newspaper, and cultural programme; and *Fundacja Ukraina* / Ukraina Foundation in Wrocław, established in 2013, specialising in integration, culture, and education.

33 To register an association in Poland, at least 7 citizens or people with permanent residence permits are needed.

The true "diaspora moment" – unprecedented mobilisation and forthcoming institutionalisation due to events in the country of origin[34] – occurred in 2013–2014 with the Revolution of Dignity, followed by the Russian annexation of Crimea and the invasion of the Donbas. *Euromaidan Warszawa* / Euromaidan Warsaw[35] was founded in 2015 by a group of young adults, who informally met in front of the Embassy of Ukraine during the winter of 2013/2014 to express their support for protesters in Kyiv. The foundation focused on two new dimensions: public advocacy for the Ukrainian cause, including support for Ukraine's accession to the EU, and raising funds and purchasing equipment for the Ukrainian armed forces. While Our Choice and Ukraina Foundation secured the position of the main integration hubs in Warsaw and Wrocław, respectively, new NGOs dedicated primarily to integrating the rapidly growing Ukrainian migrant population were founded in Kraków (*Fundacja Zustricz* / Zustricz Foundation, founded 2016; *Instytut Polska-Ukraina (UAinKrakow)* / Poland-Ukraine Institute, founded 2019; *Fundacja Aktywna Integracja* / Active Integration Foundation, founded 2020). The first Ukrainian entities dedicated to business networking, *Zrzeszenie Ukraińskiego Biznesu w Polsce* / Association of Ukrainian Business in Poland (founded 2016) and NotaBene Business Club (founded 2018), were registered to offer networking, legal assistance, and visibility to professionals who expanded their companies in the EU. Uniters, the first NGO whose primary focus was humanitarian aid for the families of Ukrainian military personnel, formalised its activities in 2021.

This pre-2022 generation of organisations was characterised by several features. **First**, **most organisations were small** – typically one to four staff members, often part-time, supplemented by volunteers – and depended heavily upon individual (mostly female) leaders. As pre-2022 respondents acknowledged in regard to the broader organisational landscape, organisations that lost active leaders frequently went dormant. At that time, Ukrainian organisations did not professionalise: most staff, including leaders, simultaneously worked at universities, public cultural institutions, and commercial entities. The project-based financial support was unpredictable (due to limited availability of AMIF funds in 2016–2018, the most important source of funding for organisations working on migrant integration, some initiatives were suspended), while the new diaspora had limited resources to support civic initiatives.

Second, **the activity profiles of pre-2022 organisations clustered into three broad areas**: cultural and identity work (national minority and minority-adjacent organisations), integration and labour-market support (organisations oriented toward recent migrants), and Polish-Ukrainian cooperation (a mix of educational initiatives, business, and policy-dialogue work). The geographic distribution was similarly clustered, with Warsaw, Kraków, and Wrocław as the principal hubs, supplemented by regional centres in Lublin, Białystok, Poznań, Bydgoszcz, Przemyśl, and Gdańsk. In parallel, particular organisations engaged in various types of activities, acquired specialised experience in specific areas (Zustricz Foundation – provision of psychological support; Poland-Ukraine Institute – running community media, UAinKrakow; Our Choice and Ukraina Foundation – legalisation of stay and work in Poland, plus advocacy for the rights of labour migrants).

34 Betts, A., and Jones, W. (2016). *Mobilising the Diaspora: How Refugees Challenge Authoritarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Fihel, A., Homel, K., Jaroszewicz, M., Lesinska, M., & Bentz, A. (2025). *Diaspora at war: mobilization of the Ukrainian diaspora in the first 2 years of the Russian full-scale invasion*. In Journal of Refugee Studies; Kozachenko, I., *"Re-imagining" the homeland? Languages and national belonging in Ukrainian diasporas since the Euromaidan*, in: East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies (EWJUS), 2018, 89-109.

35 The name of the initiative comes from that of the Facebook group. Such naming conventions are quite common among Ukrainian entities registered both before and after 2022; among Ukrainians in Poland, social media often serve as initial points of self-organisation.

Third, **although the organisations did not become members of any umbrella association, their leaders were acquainted with one another** through participation in shared trainings, conferences, and study visits. This helped them stay well oriented on who was doing what and what challenges each was facing. A particular boost to networking and partnerships came from their participation, from 2021 onwards, in the *Fundacja Kalejdoskop Kultur/* Kaleidoscope of Cultures Foundation networking project *'Koalicja Organizacji Mniejszościowych i Migranckich'* ('Coalition of Minority and Migrant Organisations'*).*[36]

These contacts and knowledge proved critical for organising assistance to Ukraine and Ukrainians after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

2.2 DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS IN THE 2022 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 fundamentally changed both the scale and role of the Ukrainian community and diaspora organisations in Poland. Poland soon became the primary destination and transit country for those seeking refuge from the conflict. Reception after the border-crossing, housing, psychological assistance, education for children, care facilities for the elderly, consultations about the legal aspects of residence in Poland, transfer of displaced people to other western countries, and public advocacy for strengthening both military and humanitarian support – these were the challenges Ukrainian communities in Poland began to address from 24 February 2022. The response of Ukrainian diaspora organisations to Russia's full-scale invasion was an immediate, near-overnight rescaling of activity that built directly upon the pre-existing networks. Five million people crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border in 2022 to escape the war, and more than one million applied for temporary protection in Poland. While support from Polish civil society was unprecedented, there was a need to lead and manage that response.

Immediately following the invasion, four local Ukrainian organisations met in Kraków to divide humanitarian responsibilities among themselves, opening a joint reception point at a local theatre on 25 February and issuing a single, coordinated fundraising poster listing all four organisations' bank accounts. Zustricz Foundation, which used to offer migrants psychological assistance, addressed that priority. By April 2022, it had 50 volunteer psychologists; by September 2022, it had opened psychological help centres employing 24 psychologists. As a result, the organisation grew and included more than 2,000 volunteers.

Further coordination of reception and humanitarian activities in Kraków was carried out by a coalition of nearly 60 organisations; its core comprised the entities that participated in the 'Otwarty Kraków' project in 2016–2021.

In Warsaw, diaspora organisations divided the responsibilities the same way – each organisation opened reception centres according to its previous "specialisation." The Ukrainian House in Warsaw drew upon its pre-existing infrastructure – an information line, a consultation point operated since 2016, and a hotline expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the initial weeks of the humanitarian response, the Ukrainian House registered approximately 5,000 volunteers and received offers of accommodation for displaced persons from more than 16,000 individuals.

36 Visit the 'Coalition of Minority and Migrant Organisations' website: https://komm.org.pl/

Dom Ukraiński w Przemyślu/Ukrainian House in Przemyśl, a foundation affiliated with Union of Ukrainians in Poland, became the central logistical hub for the cross-border response. In the days following the full-scale invasion, it coordinated nearly 800 volunteers operating across three reception points: the train station in Przemyśl, Medyka, and Korczowa. Since February 2022, the Ukrainian House and its volunteer network have provided assistance to more than 1.6 million people fleeing the war, underlining their significant role in humanitarian response in Poland. The reaction to the full-scale invasion had **three distinctive features** that are crucial to understanding the current capacity of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland.

First, **it was built upon pre-existing relationships rather than improvised from scratch.** The high speed of development was possible only because of horizontal cooperation and long-established personal and professional networks linking diaspora organisations in Warsaw, Przemyśl, Wrocław, and Kraków.

Second, Ukrainian organisations were in constant contact with Polish civil society actors, who had the resources and the will to help but modest expertise on the Ukrainian community and its needs. Diaspora organisations became the interface between displaced Ukrainians and the international humanitarian system, including UNHCR, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, IOM, Oxfam, CARE International, Polish Humanitarian Action, the embassies of Japan, the Netherlands, and several other agencies and diplomatic missions. As the response continued, diaspora organisations moved beyond the role of implementing partners, since the knowledge and established networks of Ukrainian diaspora organisations ensured that international assistance was adapted to the Polish context and responded more effectively to the needs of displaced Ukrainians.

Third, engagement with the Ukrainian authorities also changed over the course of the humanitarian response. The Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw and Consulates in Lublin and Kraków maintained regular contact with Ukrainian diaspora organisations and activists, and ministers and other officials visited several diaspora-run reception centres and resource hubs.

The 2022 mobilisation marked a step change in organisational capability. Initiatives that previously operated as partially volunteer efforts, without a long-term development strategy, quickly entered a phase of **professionalisation**. As organisations expanded their activities and partnerships, many evolved from community-based volunteer initiatives into professional institutions supporting migrants, where the leaders also transitioned from civic activism to professional organisational leadership. Concretely, organisations developed internal policies on anti-corruption, child protection, and safeguarding in line with international donor requirements. Furthermore, they also strengthened their capacity to conduct needs assessments, institutional mapping, and approaches to engaging with United Nations agencies. As a result, the organisations became active participants in formal Polish consultative structures, including local governance public councils, migration consortiums, ministerial working groups on Ukrainian children's integration, etc.

Alongside the post-2022 surge in multitasking and synergy, some of the most capable pre-existing diaspora organisations pursued a distinct strategy of deeper specialisation — in several cases splitting into two entities under the same leadership, with one retaining the original advocacy and army-support mission on a volunteer, privately-donor-funded basis, and the other purpose-built for international humanitarian fundraising and cooperation with public authorities and international organisations, and consequently able to sustain a small paid staff.

A second dimension of the pre-2022 advantage was the **accumulated experience from the 2014 mobilisation**. Leaders of established organisations consistently highlighted that prior experience in managing volunteers, understanding administrative and reporting requirements and maintaining partnerships in Ukraine proved valuable in 2022. First-hand information on the needs of displaced persons helped organisations established themselves as trustworthy actors, facilitating fundraising and encouraged the public to contribute to humanitarian assistance efforts.

This experience illustrates one of the most consequential findings of this report: the speed and scale of the 2022 humanitarian mobilisation were only possible due to the institutional and reputational capital already accumulated by Ukrainian diaspora entities. Organisations that lacked this experience faced a steeper learning curve, even in cases where their leaders were highly capable. Interviewees observed that the scale of the challenges addressed, the experience gained by the Ukrainian community, and the support provided by new donors had lifted all Ukrainian organisations. However, by 2023, as donor support began to slowly reduce and activists experienced burnout, those organisations that had previous experience and resources even before 2022 managed to sustain their momentum, while many others reduced their activities significantly.

2.3 POST-2022 DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

Alongside the rapid expansion of pre-2022 organisations, the post-invasion period saw the registration of over 30 new Ukrainian diaspora organisations (between 2022 and 2025). They share some features with the pre-2022 entities, including a strong focus on integration and predominantly female leadership.[37] However, their profile is distinctive in several ways, considered under **six categories of organisational** attributes as outlined below.

1. **Geographic distribution.** The post-2022 organisations are more dispersed than their pre-2022 counterparts. While Warsaw, Kraków, and Wrocław remain the principal hubs (home to the NGOs Stand with Ukraine, *Fundacja Ukraińskiego Katolickiego Uniwersytetu w Polsce* / Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation in Poland, *Krymski Dom* / Crimean House, Sondertime, *Jedność* / Unity, *Ukrainka w Polsce* / Ukrainian Woman in Poland), several organisations have been established in other locations, including even small cities: Olsztyn (*Dwa Skrzydła UA / Two Wings UA*), Mrągowo (*Fundacja Charytatywna "Głos Kobiet Ukrainy"* / Charity Foundation "Female Voices of Ukraine"), Wałbrzych (*Fundacja Ukraina Wałbrzych* / Ukraina Foundation Walbrzych), Bydgoszcz (*Fundacja HelpNowHUB* / HelpNowHub Foundation), Luboń (Art Cluster). This regional spread reflects the dispersion of post-2022 displaced persons across Poland and the emergence of bottom-up local responses.

2. **Areas of activity.** The post-2022 organisations cluster around three thematic areas, reflective of the specific needs of the post-invasion population: women-led integration support (Unity, Two Wings UA, Ukrainian Woman in Poland, Charity Foundation "Female Voices of Ukraine", *Centrum Integracji Kobiet Nejmovirna* / Women Integration Centre Incredible); advocacy and policy-related work specifically connected to the war (Stand with Ukraine, OPORA in Poland), with Crimean House as a unique initiative amplifying the voice of the Crimean Tatar community; and academic-research-cultural engagement (Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation in Poland, *Ukraińska Diaspora Naukowa w Polsce* / Ukrainian Scientific Diaspora in Poland,

37 Ukrainian House in Poland, Fundacja Ukraina, Zustricz Foundation, and European Network of Migrant Women (2025). *Women-Led Organizations Report 2025.* Warsaw: Ukrainian House.

Sondertime). Specialised initiatives include health support (HelpNowHUB Foundation for HIV prevention) and youth policy networks (*Alians Młodzieży Ukraińskiej 24/08* / Ukrainian Youth Alliance 24/08). It is worth noting that many of the new initiatives have been established by people with NGO backgrounds in Ukraine.

3. **Organisational capacity.** Post-2022 organisations are typically smaller than established pre-2022 ones. Several of these organisations are explicitly described in interviews as "one-woman initiatives" – operations that depend almost entirely on the founder's personal capacity, network, and energy.[38] As described by an interviewee, the organisation currently has a highly engaged leader supported by around 20 persons in the community, who contribute either either on a short-term or voluntary basis, and the network is dispersed across various cities in Poland (Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław), as well as Ukraine and other countries.

   Post-2022 organisations, lacking the accumulated institutional base of pre-2022 entities, live largely from project to project — and post-2022 Leader 1 identifies partnerships as one of the few instruments available to remain continuously operational. Their organisation, she explains, spends significant time and capacity on grant applications and short-term project management, which is resource-intensive and limits long-term planning; to compensate, they increasingly implement projects in close cooperation with partners, sharing resources and ensuring continuity of activities.

   Post-2022 Leader 3 offers a particularly clear articulation of the structural realities of running a "one-woman initiative". Her organisation, founded in late 2023 out of a personal volunteer group on Telegram, has grown into a portfolio combining a regular Polish conversational club, mentoring for women entrepreneurs, an annual integration festival that draws 300 participants, business conferences with cross-country reach, and a children's reading and development club — yet the entire organisation, she notes, rests on her: she manages the social media, the contacts, and everything else herself, and simply cannot physically dedicate enough time to all of it. Volunteers turn up in numbers for events, but people also need to make a living, and to build a team one has to be able to offer more than enthusiasm and hope. Substantial EU or Polish public funding, she adds, would in any case be difficult to absorb at this stage, given the bureaucracy involved. She contrasts this with the large pre-2022 organisations, in which each person has a specific role — personnel, accounting, participant recruitment — rather than one person doing everything.

   This is a structurally important observation: the very largest funding instruments available to integrate Ukrainian migrants in Poland (AMIF being the principal example) are administratively beyond the reach of small post-2022 organisations, who instead operate in a niche of small project grants, voluntary contributions, and tax-deductible giving.

4. **Funding sources.** While single initiatives are effective in crowdfunding, 1.5% of income tax allocation,[39] and in contacts with business donors, both pre and post-2022 organisations rely heavily upon a patch-work of EU funds (AMIF, Erasmus+), local government grants, and Polish NGO regranting (through Polish foundations that distribute grants from the Government of Norway, grants from European Economic Area states, and similar pooled funds). In certain cases, the organisation was registered by a group of volunteers precisely because there was a possibility of applying for a grant, often with more experienced Polish part-

38 See more on that matter: Ukrainian House in Poland, Fundacja Ukraina, Zustricz Foundation, and European Network of Migrant Women (2025). *Women-Led Organizations Report 2025*. Warsaw: Ukrainian House.

39 In Poland, individuals can allocate 1.5% of their annual income tax to an NGO or association if the entity is registered as a Public Benefit Organization (OPP).

ners, after the project report had been finalised, the organisation seeing no clear perspectives for further action.

5. **Involvement of Ukrainian youth.** A particularly important (and under-mapped) feature of the post-2022 organisational landscape is the engagement of Ukrainian youth aged 15–25 years, who have been active in many of the new initiatives, both as founders (Ukrainian Youth Alliance 24/08 is the most visible example) and as volunteers in pre-existing organisations. Today, civically and socially engaged Ukrainian youth in Poland participate in a wide range of initiatives, including advocacy for Ukraine, support for the Ukrainian military and Ukrainian communities in Poland, cultural and identity-building activities, student self-government, NGO programmes, and informal peer initiatives. Their engagement is mainly sparked by a combination of motivations, such as contributing to Ukraine's resilience, supporting fellow Ukrainians, preserving and expressing Ukrainian identity, developing skills and competences, and building a sense of belonging in the Polish society.[40] **This substantial civic energy, however, encounters three structural barriers**: limited opportunities for young people to influence decision-making; organisations' dependence on short-term, project-based funding that cannot sustain youth programmes in the long term; and participation within Polish institutional contexts that often remains consultative or symbolic rather than shaping decisions.[41] In other words, the constraint is not the absence of motivated and engaged youth but a lack of durable structures capable of supporting and sustaining engagement into meaningful participation and longer-term impact. Such a structural gap demonstrates a broader limitation when it comes to funding and institutional development, also mentioned throughout this report, which also affects even well-established Ukrainian diaspora organisations.

6. **Networking infrastructure**. Migration Consortium, a coalition of Polish and Ukrainian-led organisations working on migration and refugee issues, welcomes mostly well-established NGOs, while the *Mapuj Pomoc/* Map the Aid network, coordinated by the *Fundacja To Proste/* That's Simple Foundation, has emerged as the most operationally significant post-2022 platform. Almost half of the post-2022 initiatives mapped in this report are registered within the Map the Aid network. The platform boosts new organisation visibility and enables quick exchange of the most urgent information, but not enough to establish deep interpersonal contacts (as in the pre-2022 Ukrainian cluster). Among both pre- and post-2022 respondents, many indicated not knowing each other's initiatives particularly well.

It should also be noted that the Ukrainian scientific and academic diaspora constitutes a distinct cluster. A specifically important subset of the post-2022 organisational landscape comprises the scientific, research, and university-related foundations. These organisations operate within a broader transnational ecosystem, as documented in the Science at Risk project white paper.[42] More than 6,000 employees of the Ukrainian scientific sphere, around 7-8% of the country's research workforce, but even 10% of Ukrainian researchers with ORCID IDs,[43] left the country following the February 2022 invasion. They are a unique source of intellectual and human capital whose involvement in reconstruction has historically gone under-recognised by the state but is now becoming central to recovery planning. While Poland offers a wide range of fellowships and training

40 Popyk, A., Mykhailova, A. (2026). *EMPOWER: Zaangażowanie obywatelskie I społeczne młodzieży ukraińskiej w Polsce. Raport z badania*. Warszawa: SWPS.
41 Ibid.
42 Skorokhod, O. (2024). *Scientific Diaspora — A Unique Asset for Post-War Recovery of Ukraine*. White Paper. Kyiv: "Science at Risk" project, NGO "Kunsht".
43 Ganguli, I., Waldinger, F. (2023) War and Science in Ukraine. NBER Working Paper No. 31449. July 2023. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 3-4.

for members of Ukrainian academia, there is no concrete mechanism to transfer their knowledge and skills for reconstruction and reintegration.

2.4 UKRAINIAN BUSINESSES IN POLAND AFTER 2022

Alongside the formally registered diaspora organisations, the post-2022 period has seen the rapid emergence of Ukrainian businesses in Poland. Some of the companies were relocated; Chairperson of the abovementioned NotaBene Business Club, indicated in a 2026 UA.NEWS interview that, before 2022, he knew almost 90% of all entrepreneurs of Ukrainian origin active in Warsaw. Since Russia's full-scale invasion, entrepreneurs have been relocating to Poland en masse with their businesses, teams, and capital, with the NotaBene Business Club estimating in 2026 that it knew only 5–10% of Ukrainian-origin active entrepreneurs in Warsaw.[44]

A large proportion of these new businesses have been established by people without a recent history of commercial activities in Ukraine. The process was facilitated by (1) Legislation change (in March 2022, all Ukrainian citizens obtained the right to register individual entrepreneurship, previously assured only to permanent residence holders); (2) Immigration of business owners, many of whom previously perceived Poland as solely a backup option; and (3) The rapid growth of the Ukrainian customer base in country.

The 2022 PIE survey[45] provides empirical evidence on the motivations of Ukrainian entrepreneurs who founded businesses in Poland after the full-scale invasion. First, 75% reported that they founded their business to secure income for themselves and their family in Poland; two-thirds cited cultural proximity and easier language communication as enabling factors. Second, 33% explicitly founded a business in Poland as a war protection strategy – that is, to maintain operational continuity for a Ukrainian-origin enterprise by relocating part of its activities west of the border. This group is particularly significant for reconstruction: they represent businesses with active Ukrainian operations and an implicit expectation of eventually returning, and constitute the natural pool from which post-war cross-border investment and reconstruction-relevant business cooperation will flow. Third, 38% of surveyed Ukrainian businesses were partners of a Polish enterprise, providing concrete evidence of the cross-border business infrastructure that will underpin post-war economic recovery. It should be stressed that 66% of Ukrainian businesses intended to continue operating in Poland regardless of the situation in Ukraine.

According to the most recent data from PIE,[46] Ukrainian citizens registered a total of 123,600 business entities in Poland between 2022 and 2025, comprising 109,100 sole proprietorships and 14,500 companies with Ukrainian capital. Sectoral concentration is clear: construction (23%), information and communication (18%), and other services (13%) together account for more than half of Ukrainian-founded businesses, with IT and trade gaining shares between 2022 and 2025 – indicating a gradual sectoral upgrading from the initially dominant construction and personal-services profile. It is worth noting that the new businesses were mostly opened by pre-2022 labour immigrants, with every 10 new Ukrainian firms generating approximately 4 new Polish firms through the multiplier effect.

44 *Українські підприємці у Польщі: співзасновник бізнес-клубу NotaBene у Варшаві про нову хвилю міграції*, published on: ua.news, 6 квітня 2026 https://ua.news/ua/money/ukrayinski-pidpriiemtsi-u-polshchi-spivzasnovnik-biznes-klubu-notabene-u-varshavi-vitalii-khimchuk-pro-novu-khviliu-migratsiyi [Accessed May 14, 2026]

45 Dębkowska, K., Kłosiewicz-Górecka, U., Szymańska, A., Wejt-Knyżewska, A., Zybertowicz, K. (2022), *Ukraińskie firmy w Polsce po wybuchu wojny w 2022 r.*, Warszawa:PIE, 20-24.

46 Szymańska, A., Wejt-Knyżewska, A., Zybertowicz, K. (2026), *Ukraińskie firmy w Polsce w latach 2022-2025*, Point Paper, nr 1. Warszawa: PIE.

Communication with the business community is a good example of the Ukrainian authorities' proactivity. There is an operational cooperation between the Polish Ministry of Development and Technology and Diia.Business – Ukraine's official platform for entrepreneurs, which has supported the continuity of Ukrainian companies' operations during the full-scale war. This existing bilateral mechanism is the natural foundation for the Polish-Ukrainian diaspora investment platform recommended in this report.

Despite this substantial entrepreneurial base, **diaspora investment initiatives** in the strict sense – pooled investment vehicles channelling diaspora capital into Ukrainian reconstruction projects – remain largely absent from the Polish landscape. There is no Polish-based equivalent of Connect Albania or the Albanian Diaspora Development Fund (see Chapter 4). Ukrainian-Polish business activity remains primarily commercial and bilateral rather than reconstruction-focused. Cooperation is intense, and the Polish-Ukrainian Economic Chamber, or the Polish-Ukrainian Business Days, organised twice a year in Kyiv and Warsaw by Association of Ukrainian Business in Poland, are noteworthy examples of such initiatives; although the foundation of cross-border supply chains, trade links, and human capital networks built between 2022 and 2026 represents practical infrastructure that could be mobilised for reconstruction, if appropriate institutional frameworks were in place.

A related pattern concerns the modest degree of structural cooperation between Ukrainian-led civil society organisations and Ukrainian-led businesses in Poland. As one of the respondents put it, people in business and civil society had heard of each other, but collaboration tends to be one-off and informal rather than continuous, taking the form of one entity inviting another to jointly host a conference or similar event, without stable follow-through. The existing examples of cooperation are more logistical than financial: there is not yet an established tradition here, whereas entrepreneurs often say that in Ukraine they donate to *Povernysia Zhyvym!* Come Back Alive or Serhiy Prytula charities — which is, of course, commendable, but leaves open the question of what to do for the Ukrainian community on the Polish side.

From the business side, the picture is similar — cooperation is limited — but the context is different. As an interviewed business leader observes, requests from the NGO side often amount to a call to finance something, and many companies, especially in the early stages, are still working hard just to stay afloat and break even, so actively funding non-profits is simply not always feasible. There is also a question of purpose: businesses tend to need to understand *why* they should engage, and if they could see a clear additional benefit for themselves, they would likely take part in projects more actively. In the absence of that visible benefit, and given the companies' own challenges — recruitment, coordinating work schedules that differ between Ukraine and Poland — the incentives to engage remain weak.

These testimonies reinforce a recurring finding of the report: one of the notable structural challenges within the diaspora landscape is the limited availability of institutionalised channels connecting Polish-based Ukrainian business capacity with Ukrainian civil society capacity.

STRENGTHS AND GAPS OF CURRENT ORGANISATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Strengths	Gaps and structural challenges
1 **Scale and institutional density** More than 50 organisations including legacy national-minority structures and post-2022 entities operating in complementary niches across Poland.	**!** **Geographic concentration in Warsaw** Smaller cities and rural areas still thinly served. Underserved groups: people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ Ukrainians, the elderly, teenage refugees. Donors and policy attention concentrate in Warsaw.
2 **Geographic reach** Reaches beyond the traditional hubs (Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław) to at least 15 cities — Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Lublin, Olsztyn, Poznań, Wałbrzych, and others.	**!** **Lack of own reconstruction agenda** Organisations wait for the Ukrainian authorities to seek out their expertise instead of proposing their own agenda. Connections to Ukrainian local governments and hromadas remain ad hoc. Lack of strategic vision on NGO–business cooperation.
3 **Humanitarian, logistical and integration capacity** No other European diaspora combines this scale, geographic adjacency, and family connection to Ukraine with operational humanitarian and integration competence at scale.	**!** **No formal umbrella body** Coordination is informal — partly by design, to avoid hierarchical "power games". Polish, Ukrainian, and international counterparts have no single national interlocutor.
4 **Professionalisation since 2022** Substantial gains in policy development, donor management, financial controls, advocacy, and case management — a step-change in organisational capability.	**!** **Absence of structured mentorship** Senior-organisation mentorship of newer post-2022 entities is uneven and personal rather than institutional. Limits of capacity in older organisations and no structured infrastructure.
5 **Emerging coordination mechanism** Formal channels taking shape via OSCE/ODIHR, ICMPD, IOM Global Alliance, the Ministry of Social Policy, and Polish-Ukrainian intergovernmental mechanisms.	**!** **Competition over symbolic space** Resource competition is contained (different specialisms, funding lines), but symbolic competition more frequent.

Source: Own elaboration based on mapping of Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland, 2026, and 11 in-depth interviews (April–May 2026).

2.5 DIASPORA ORGANISATION NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Drawing together insights from interview evidence and desk research**, six types of challenges** emerge as priorities among Ukrainian diaspora organisations, comprising prime targets for future capacity-building efforts.

1. **Lack of sustainable funding** is the most frequently indicated challenge. The largest available funding pool (AMIF) is dedicated to migrant integration and is project-based rather than institutional. According to interviewees, some organisations rely on financial reserves from previous years, mainly covering administrative costs.

   The Polish 1.5% income tax allocation is a useful but limited instrument, dependent upon individual donor goodwill rather than systemic support. Reduced funding from international donors since 2023-2024 has exacerbated the situation, further impacted by major cutbacks of USAID in 2025. As a consequence of unstable funding, the most experienced staff often migrate to higher-paid positions in international organisations or simply to the Polish public administration, which secures stable employment – a pattern repeatedly described in the interviews and one of the most concrete capacity drains.

2. **Burnout among volunteer-led organisations**. Reflecting on their own withdrawal from a leadership role, one of the interviewed pre-2022 leaders described how the organisation's activity expanded significantly in 2022 and then contracted, accompanied by considerable burnout: where there had once been dozens of volunteers, only four remained by the time of the interview. Across the majority of the interviews conducted for this report, leaders of both pre-2022 and post-2022 organisations described exhaustion, unpaid overload, and difficulty sustaining core teams after the intense mobilisation of 2022–2023; several noted that the very people who had held their organisations together in the emergency phase were now the ones most at risk of leaving. To the author's knowledge, no dedicated retreat, sabbatical, or structured recovery programme for Ukrainian diaspora NGO leaders currently exists in Poland or at EU level, and none of the interviewees were aware of such an instrument being available to them. The absence of such an instrument in the diaspora-organisation space is itself part of the finding.

3. **Lack of meaningful networking among Ukrainian initiatives affects most post-2022 organisations and weakens established actors' ability to find new partnerships.** Each of the pre-2022 leaders interviewed indicated they mostly cooperate with "old" partners and build deeper relations only through the pre-2022 initiatives in their areas of activity. Cooperation is more fruitful among entities that participate together in various Polish public consultative bodies (e.g. working groups at the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Education), but this option is predominantly only accessible to pre-2022 and Warsaw-based initiatives. Attempts to organise large networking events (e.g. Be Brave Like Ukraine Forum or *Wsi Swoi Forum*/ All of Us Forum) were supposed to play that role, but were hampered by insufficient funding.

   OSCE/ODIHR work on engaging the Ukrainian diaspora in reconstruction and development, including the December 2023 launch event in Warsaw and subsequent training in 2024 and 2025, has provided one of the few structured spaces for inter-organisational and cross-stakeholder dialogue, including networking for civil society organisations from Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Lithuania, and Czechia, and explicit attention to intersectional challenges faced by ethnic minorities, displaced persons, LGBTQ+ persons, and persons with disabilities.[47]

47 ODIHR (2024). *Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR.

4. **Relationships with Polish institutional counterparts** vary across locations, representing a fourth area where additional capacity-building and cooperation would be beneficial. Cooperation among Polish municipal and regional authorities working particularly well in some target locations (Kraków, Lublin), while remaining less developed in others. Cooperation with Polish NGOs through Migration Consortium and similar coalitions is generally strong, although opportunities for stronger collaboration remain, and the post-2022 diaspora is not yet consistently represented in mainstream Polish policy discussions beyond migration policy. Without coherent mechanisms, advocacy efforts tend to become fragmented and dependent upon local resources, resulting in differences in engagement in various regions.

5. **Lack of long-term planning capacity** means most diaspora organisations operate on project cycles of 6–18 months, which makes it nearly impossible to invest in strategy, board development, infrastructure, succession planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, or systematic engagement with Ukrainian counterparts. The interviews conducted indicated that leaders themselves have a strong understanding of how they would leverage longer planning horizons for greater impact.

6. **Disinformation campaigns** against the most recognisable diaspora organisations and their leaders have become a substantial (and largely unaddressed) threat. Taken together, the various incidents of social media fakes, forged letters sent to public officials, and use of leaders' quotations out of context by a range of actors appear to aim at damaging the reputations of specific individuals and fuelling anti-Ukrainian sentiment in Poland, presenting the Ukrainian diaspora as hostile and the state of Ukraine as unworthy of Polish support. The shift experienced in 2026 that saw diaspora organisations and their leaders attacked not solely online but physically is highly concerning.

Within this context, it is pertinent to note the emergence of Ukrainian "uncivil society" organisations in Poland — recently formed groups, registered as associations or acting informally, that mobilise participants (often paid) for anti-Ukrainian-government rallies whose imagery is subsequently amplified by Russian media.[48] Because Polish association law rests on democratic principles and does not permit registration to be refused on substantive grounds when an entity declares conventional civil society objectives in its statute, such organisations can enter and operate within the diaspora landscape with relative ease.

48 Martyniuk, O., (2026) *У Вроцлаві пропонують 150 доларів за участь у мітингу: організатори говорять про дискредитацію,* inPoland 24.04 https://inpoland.net.pl/novosti/u-vroclavi-proponuyut-150-dolariv-za-uchast-u-mitingu-organizatori-govoryat-pro-diskreditaciyu/ [Accessed 13 May 2026]

CHAPTER 3. UKRAINIAN DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN RECONSTRUCTION, RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The potentially significant role the global Ukrainian diaspora may play in the reconstruction of Ukraine was already mentioned during the 2022 Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano. However, in the first years after the Russian full-scale invasion, policy discussions on diaspora engagement primarily focused on potential return, investment, remittances, or expertise in good governance and business development (Libanova et al. 2024). As experience and expertise on diaspora engagement further developed, and international organisation efforts increased, the national approach towards recognition of diaspora communities and their contribution to Ukraine's recovery has also increased.

The term 'Global Ukrainian Community' is used in public communication but is not policy-framed. The term 'diaspora' does not yet exist in Ukrainian law, which addresses 'Ukrainians abroad' (citizens of Ukraine) and 'foreign Ukrainians' (non-citizens of Ukrainian origin); a nuanced understanding of diaspora as communities driven by civic engagement rather than ethnic origin[49] is reflected in the latest public policies. Adoption of the law on dual and multiple citizenship in June 2025 represented a significant milestone, addressing a long-standing goal of diaspora advocacy and developed with feedback from organisations, including the Ukrainian World Congress.[50]

The establishment of the Ministry of National Unity in 2024 demonstrated Ukraine's commitment to strengthening engagement with its diaspora. Following a broader Cabinet reshuffle in July 2025, during which the Ministry was dissolved, responsibility for diaspora affairs was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine. The next step in the Ukrainian diaspora's engagement in reconstruction was taken at the 2025 Ukraine Recovery Conference in Rome, with the launch of an IOM-supported initiative, the **Global Alliance for Diaspora Engagement in Ukraine's Reconstruction.**[51] The Alliance is intended to channel global solidarity into coordinated, long-term contributions to Ukraine's institutions, economy, and communities.

The Alliance provides an international framework for what diaspora organisations have been doing informally since 2022. The extent to which the platform will fulfil its stated aims is likely to largely depend upon how effectively it engages with existing organisations, especially those that emerged after 2022.

49 Kozachenko, I. (2025). *Diasporic Mobilisation and Repositioning: The Ukrainian World Congress' Responses to Critical Junctures and Events*, in: Central and Eastern European Migration Review 14(2): 71–73.

50 Koinova, M., Makukha, R., and Sabadello, M., (2025) *Engaging the Global Ukrainian Community for Ukraine's Recovery: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions. Vienna: ICMPD and University. 9 July.*

51 IOM (2025). "New Diaspora Platform Backed by IOM Aims to Boost Ukraine's Reconstruction." IOM News; Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine, Diaspora Alliance for Recovery of Ukraine.

3.1 MAJOR DIASPORA COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AFTER 2022

Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland have implemented a wide range of activities related to the future of the Ukrainian state and society. These can be clustered into **seven domains of reconstruction and return**.

1. **Integration of migrants and displaced persons into the host society.** Information lines, consultation points, case management, housing matching, employment support, Polish-language courses, and legal advice form the core service offering of pre-2022 organisations such as Ukrainian House (Warsaw), Zustricz Foundation (Kraków), Ukraina Foundation (Wrocław), Ukrainian House in Przemyśl (Przemyśl) and *Kujawsko-Pomorski Dom Ukraiński* / Kujawsko-Pomorski Ukrainian House (Bydgoszcz). By 2026, this work has become substantially more systematic, with dedicated departments for housing, employment, legal advice, social services, and (in some organisations) gender-based violence response. Post-2022 organisations typically focus on one or two integration activities – most commonly, language courses, legal advice, and capacity-building for women with children.

2. **Education.** Saturday schools provide weekly Ukrainian-language and cultural education for displaced and migrant children alongside their Polish education. The Polish-Ukrainian "VShkolUA", established by the Ukrainian House in Warsaw with the local Catholic Intelligentsia Club, offers a combined Polish-Ukrainian curriculum within a Polish Montessori framework. The *Materynka* centre in Warsaw and Katowice was, according to multiple interviewees, the first general education Ukrainian school in Poland. Working with the Polish Ministry of Education, several organisations also implement the EU-funded 'Friendly School' programme, providing intercultural assistants, teacher training, and psychological support in Polish schools. As emphasised by interviewees, there is still no bilateral Polish-Ukrainian intergovernmental agreement governing Ukrainian-language schools in Poland – and creating such an agreement is an ongoing advocacy goal.

3. **Promotion of Ukrainian culture.** Cultural programming spans concerts, exhibitions, literary events, traditional music groups, theatre, language courses, and identity-strengthening initiatives. While the Union of Ukrainians in Poland pursued a more conservative agenda, migrant organisations run reading clubs, present the latest Ukrainian fiction and essays, and invite people to meetings with famous Ukrainian artists and authors. Specific projects include Vyshyvanka Day celebrations (Zustricz Foundation, since 2016), the 'Otwarty Kraków' cultural events, art residencies at Ukrainian House in Przemyślu, and the annual Independence Day celebration. In Poznań, *Stowarzyszenie Społeczno-Kulturalne Polska-Ukraina* / Socio-Cultural Association Poland-Ukraine has organised the Ukrainian Spring festival since 2007. Cooperation among Ukrainian diaspora organisations and Polish cultural institutions continues to expand, with notable examples of cooperation including Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation partnerships with the Wrocław University Library, the Ossolineum, Jagiellonian University, and the Polish National Library.

4. **Public diplomacy.** Protests, public meetings, contributions to the memorialisation of victims of Russian aggression, and visible solidarity actions form a significant strand of activity – particularly by Euromaidan Warsaw, Stand with Ukraine, Crimean House, and several women-led organisations. Events around the anniversary of the invasion and Ukrainian Independence Day have become regular features of the public calendar in Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, and other cities. Beyond public visibility, diaspora advocacy increasingly encompasses a dimension of democracy and human rights. Polish-based organisations have engaged in documenting war crimes (OPORA in Poland), advocating for the rights of vulnerable groups among

displaced persons — including people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ Ukrainians, and Roma refugees who face compounded discrimination — and contributing to grassroots women's activism.[52] These efforts position the Ukrainian diaspora not only as a humanitarian and cultural actor but as a contributor to democratic governance and rights-based policy development in the context of Ukraine's EU accession trajectory.

5. **Fundraising and charity initiatives in favour of Ukraine-based entities.** The diaspora in Poland has channelled substantial resources to Ukraine through three pathways: *1. Direct support for the Ukrainian military* – particularly through the Association of Ukrainians in Szczecin (cooperation established in 2014) and specific organisations such as *Odwaga nie zna granic* / Bravery Has No Boundaries. 2. *Humanitarian assistance to civilians* – medical equipment, ambulances, generators, fire trucks (delivered through Polish-Ukrainian municipal partnerships), and specialised supplies. The funds raised under the '*Ciepło z Polski dla Ukrainy*' ('Warmth from Poland for Ukraine') fundraiser to buy energy generators for Ukrainians affected by Russian missile attacks in winter 2025/2026, exceeded PLN 11 million (ca. 2.5 mln EUR), and is the most recent notable example of such efforts. **Partnerships with Ukrainian NGOs** – Artpole, ISAR Ednannia, OPORA, HelpHub.UA, and educational facilities – are channels for supporting war-affected communities.

6. **Synergy with the Ukrainian Government.** Interview respondents indicate that contact with Ukrainian diplomacy has improved significantly since 2022, and that organisations feel more visible and heard. However, relationships are mostly limited to communication and promotion, and Warsaw-based entities benefit the most. The Ministry of Education, according to the respondents, has engaged most consistently – establishing a register of Saturday schools, an accredited programme allowing Ukrainian education abroad to be credited in the Ukrainian system, and recognising teaching experience abroad for pension purposes. Several organisations report participating in ministerial working groups, albeit these groups have operated irregularly.

   Interviewees also acknowledged recent efforts by Ukrainian state institutions to strengthen trust-building and engagement with the Ukrainian diaspora. At the same time, they underlined that institutional changes sometimes affected relations with state agencies. At the same time, events such as the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC), the Polish-Ukraine Forum, OSCE/ODIHR consultations, and the IOM Global Alliance on Diaspora have created important opportunities for dialogue.

7. **Role of the diaspora in return and community-based reintegration.** This is the area where the diaspora's potential contribution is most distinctive but currently least developed. Several interviewees emphasised that returnees face significant reintegration challenges (psychological, practical, and identity-related) that diaspora organisations are well-positioned to address through information support, case management, recognition of qualifications, business mentoring, and pre-return preparation. Some initial cooperation has begun: Ukrainian House Warsaw works with a Ukrainian organisation supporting IDPs and operates a return programme oriented toward specific vulnerable groups (cancer patients, the elderly, others in difficult situations). Return is not only a logistical and economic process but a psychological and identity-related process – a contribution which diaspora organisations in Poland are uniquely positioned to make. One of the interviewed post-2022 diaspora leaders, now studying migration management at a leading Polish university, after internships at major Polish humanitarian foundations, articulated a convergent argument:

52 Ukrainian House in Poland, Fundacja Ukraina, Zustricz Foundation, and European Network of Migrant Women (2025). *Women-Led Organizations Report 2025*. Warsaw: Ukrainian House; Koinova, M., Makukha, R., and Sabadello, M. (2025) *Engaging the Global Ukrainian Community for Ukraine's Recovery: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions. Vienna: ICMPD and University. 9 July.*

"Our experience here could greatly help the reconstruction of Ukraine, not only in rebuilding the country but also in restoring psychological stability among Ukrainians. We have gone through migration and war, and we understand how these processes unfold in Europe."

At the same time, several leaders expressed the view that a state-led return policy is unlikely to succeed on its own — its effectiveness, in their view, would depend on parallel progress in governance and social-justice standards within Ukraine. According to one of the pre-2022 leaders' observations, there is a substantial group of displaced Ukrainians who are ready to return, but their return depends not on proper persuasion — they will move when the circumstances in the country feel acceptable to them. Effective institutions, interesting and well-paid jobs, meaningful projects, and a sense of safety for children motivate better than well-tailored social media campaigns.

3.2 OBSTACLES TO STRONGER DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN RECONSTRUCTION

The interview evidence around Ukrainian diaspora engagement converges on five specific challenges for reconstruction, return, and reintegration.

1. **Further development and communication of Ukraine's approach to diaspora engagement to would strengthen cooperation.** A number of interviewees identified the establishment of a long-term vision on diaspora engagement and further policy development could strengthen cooperation and general relations between the state agencies of Ukraine and its citizens abroad. Some of the policy discussions have tended to focus primarily on diaspora's contribution through advocacy, investment, remittances, and expertise, reflecting a broader need for discussion about the role of Ukrainians living abroad, the changing meaning of Ukrainian identity throughout the displacement, and ways in which diaspora can remain connected to Ukraine.

2. **Further inclusion of diaspora perspectives and expertise into mainstream Ukrainian public policies.** Policies in areas such as pensions, healthcare, and document issuance directly affect millions of Ukrainian citizens abroad, but there are opportunities to further strengthen systematic consultations with the diaspora during the development of these policies. A notable positive example is the case of the Ministry of Education, which has consulted diaspora organisations on the Saturday schools register and the school curriculum for Ukrainian children abroad.

3. **Diaspora organisations sometimes feel less visible in Kyiv than they would like**, partly because the Ukrainian community's political weight in its country of residence is still developing. As one of the interviewed experts observed, in contexts such as Canada — where naturalisation is relatively quick and Ukrainian-Canadians serve in elected office — the diaspora carries substantial political weight that shapes its visibility in Kyiv. The situation in Poland is different: the number of Ukrainians with political rights remains modest (around 100,000–120,000, including the recognised national minority), the community is composed largely of recent arrivals still consolidating their long-term status, and public expressions of political preference can be read in a variety of ways in the current Polish public debate. Taken together, these factors mean that effective advocacy by the diaspora requires particular care and time to develop.

4. **Organisational leadership remains at operational capacity.** As multiple interviewees noted, Ukrainian diaspora organisations remain committed to cooperation and partnership with Ukrainian entities, however, their ability to initiate additional activities is limited due to limited institutional capacities.

5. **Ukrainian businesses and diaspora organisations in Poland know each other, but their cooperation has not yet developed into sustainable partnerships.** While the various organisations exchange expertise during conferences and co-organise ad hoc cultural or community-building events, there is limited understanding of each side's goals and priorities**. It would be beneficial to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between the private secto**r (business) and nonprofit organisations to engage the business community and establish a stronger foundation for long-term collaboration, that will affect both Ukrainians' integration in Poland and reconstruction engagement.

CHAPTER 4. INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES: ALBANIA, SERBIA, AND RWANDA

Albania and Serbia were identified in the previous ICMPD report as the most relevant country cases for exploring diaspora participation in post-war reconstruction and reintegration in the case of Ukraine.[53] The case of Rwanda has been added to the analysis undertaken, as one of the most well documented examples of post-conflict diaspora engagement in the broader literature (IOM, World Bank, European Union Global Diaspora Facility, Migration Policy Institute). Rwanda has also been included because, unlike the European cases, it represents a post-conflict reconstruction trajectory in the strict sense, providing additional lessons especially relevant to reconciliation and return processes.

The table below summarises key factors of the three cases according to a common analytical framework: context, diaspora numbers and demographics, what the diaspora did, why it worked, and the lessons for Ukraine.

INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES ON DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN RECONSTRUCTION AND REINTEGRATION

	Albania	Serbia	Rwanda
Context	Modern migration was shaped by the collapse of communism (1990), the 1997 pyramid scheme economic collapse, and the 1999 Kosovo War.	Modern emigration is rooted in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s and the post-2000 transition, followed in the 2010s by significant westward brain drain of skilled professionals.	The diaspora was fundamentally shaped by the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi (~800,000–1 million killed) and the mass displacement that followed.
Diaspora numbers and demographics	~1,5 million people, equivalent to 1/3 of the resident population. Divided between an "old diaspora" across Western Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East, and a "new diaspora" concentrated in Italy (~500,000), Greece (~600,000), and Germany (>200,000).	Estimates range from ~3.5 million (including descendants) to 1–2 million first- and second-generation emigrants. Concentrated in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the USA, Canada, and Australia, with a strong, skilled, professional, and IT presence.	Layered diaspora: a *pre-genocide* component (Tutsi exiles displaced from the late 1950s, particularly to Uganda, from which the current ruling party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, emerged), and a *post-genocide* component of survivors, returnees, and economic migrants. Over 3 million Rwandans have returned since 1994.

53 Mori, G., Puigdomènech Vidal, J., and Siegel, M. (2025). *Diaspora Engagement: Case Studies and Best Practices for Ukraine*. Vienna: ICMPD.

	Albania	Serbia	Rwanda
Engagement architecture	Comprehensive legal and institutional architecture: Law on Diaspora (2018), Diaspora Coordination Council, Parliamentary Subcommittee, State Committee chaired by the Prime Minister, National Diaspora Agency (2017), Albanian Diaspora Development Fund (2018). Cornerstone programme: **Connect Albania** (2017–), an IOM-implemented platform engaging Albanians abroad as foreign-investment intermediaries, with over 300,000 members. Other initiatives include Code for Albania (with Stanford CodeX), regular Diaspora Summits, and a programme channelling Italian-Albanian expertise into Albanian agricultural SMEs. Voting from abroad provided by 2018 Electoral Code amendment.	Shifted from a primarily cultural relationship with older communities to an explicit **brain-gain and economic-return** strategy. Flagship platform: **Serbia Creates** (formerly *LinkUp Serbia,* 2016-2022) – channel between Serbs abroad and the country's economy, encouraging skilled professional return and investment. Distinctive feature: active involvement of cities and regions, not only central government, making return programmes responsive to local labour-market needs. Ministry for Diaspora and Religion later restructured; sectoral cooperation with diaspora professional associations (IT, healthcare, academia).	Combines *return programmes*, *human capital transfer*, and *national trust investment*. The IOM-led Return of Qualified Rwandan Nationals (1996) and MIDA Great Lakes programmes supported the return to health, education, and public administration. In 2010, an IOM programme funded by Japan assisted 11,000+ returnees and host community members. In 2012, Rwanda established the **Agaciro Development Fund** – a national trust fund targeting diaspora and other investors. Engagement institutionalised through the Diaspora General Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and structured collaborations with AFFORD-UK and the Rwanda Development Board.[54]
Why it worked	(i) **Legal and institutional foundation** – multiple complementary laws and bodies providing continuity across electoral cycles; (ii) **Digital platforms** – Connect Albania made engagement transactional, not just symbolic; (iii) **Targeted skills mobilisation** – matching diaspora professionals with specific domestic needs, not generic appeals to return.	Partial but real success grounded in: (i) **Clear targeting of skilled professionals**, rather than the entire diaspora; (ii) **Decentralisation** via municipalities as direct partners; (iii) **Positioning the country as a destination** through tax incentives, IT sector growth, and lifestyle marketing; (iv) **Treating return as one option on a continuum** that includes cyclical and remote engagement.	(i) **Political will at the highest level** (President's personal involvement); (ii) **Explicit identity narrative** ("Agaciro" = "dignity); (iii) **Institutional channels** for return (IOM partnership, transitioning to government ownership in 2014); (iv) **Trust fund mechanism** offering both symbolic and substantive financial participation; (v) **Reconciliation framing** of diaspora engagement as part of national healing, not solely economic recovery.

54 Rwanda's engagement has been intertwined with restrictions on political pluralism abroad and surveillance of dissident diaspora – a warning that engagement frameworks must not become tools of political control.

	Albania	Serbia	Rwanda
Insights for Ukraine	ICMPD identifies the case of Albania as the most relevant comparator for the Ukraine case. Key lessons: (i) Codify diaspora engagement in **dedicated primary legislation**; (ii) Establish a single, politically weighted coordinating body; (iii) Build a **diaspora investment vehicle** with transparent governance; (iv) Invest in **digital infrastructure**. Albania's experience also flags risks: institutional instability across electoral cycles, weak diaspora data, difficulties maintaining communication channels – pitfalls Ukraine should design against.	ICMPD highlights the instructive value of the case of Serbia for the Ukraine case, as Serbia faces similar demographic challenges to post-war Ukraine – population decline driven by emigration of working-age skilled people. Key lessons: (i) **Prioritise human capital engagement** over generic outreach; (ii) **Involve local authorities** in design and delivery so that returnees match real local needs; (iii) **Create concrete professional re-entry pathways** (recognition of qualifications, tax incentives, housing); (iv) **Treat return as one option on a continuum**, including long-distance contributions.	ICMPD indicates that the case of Rwanda can provide guidance for the Ukraine case regarding the role of diaspora engagement in **reconciliation as well as economics** – relevant where Ukraine must integrate returnees alongside those who stayed (and those who fought) in country, those displaced internally, and those abroad. (i) **Return programmes at scale** require institutional partnerships (IOM, government) and explicit transition to government ownership over time. (ii) **Symbolic and cultural framing matters** – Rwanda's deliberate Agaciro narrative shaped diaspora willingness to participate.

The comparative analysis presented above highlights four key messages that are particularly relevant to the Ukrainian context and the Ukrainian diaspora infrastructure in Poland.

First, codifying the relationship between the State and the diaspora is most effective when the resulting institutional framework is designed to endure across political cycles. Comparative experience, particularly from Albania, suggests that comprehensive primary legislation and a designated lead institution are among the most transferable elements of an effective diaspora governance model. At the same time, experience across the Western Balkans demonstrates that diaspora institutions can be vulnerable to shifts in political priorities. Codification is therefore most sustainable when complemented by mechanisms that ensure institutional continuity, including a comprehensive diaspora law, a lead institution supported by a stable multi-year budget, and a permanent consultation mechanism whose mandate is anchored in institutional arrangements rather than dependent on the engagement of individual officeholders.

Second, international experience suggests that diaspora investment mechanisms tend to be most effective when introduced through pilot initiatives and scaled up on the basis of demonstrated results. Connect Albania, launched in December 2020, provides a widely recognised example: a digital platform that engages diaspora members as certified "Development Agents" to facilitate foreign direct investment, supported by a incentives linked to jobs creation. Serbia's *Link Up! Serbia* programme follows a similar approach through its Diaspora Business Hub, connecting diaspora capital with domestic small and medium-sized enterprises

(SMEs). Both initiatives were initially implemented on a modest scale and expanded gradually as evidence of their effectiveness emerged. Given that more than 126,000 new Ukrainian-owned businesses have been registered in Poland since 2022, the Ukrainian business community in Poland represents a strong foundation for piloting a comparable initiative.

Third, framing diaspora engagement in terms of "brain circulation" rather than "brain return" tends to broaden the range of viable contributions that diaspora communities can make. Serbia's Returning Point programme together with wider policy discussions across the Western Balkans, has shifted the narrative from **"brain drain"** to **"brain circulation"**, recognising that joint research, academic exchanges, mentoring and short-term mobility schemes can generate significant value alongside physical return. Rwanda's initiatives engaging health professionals and technical and vocational experts follow similar principles, matching diaspora expertise to clearly identified sectoral needs. The Ukrainian scientific diaspora in Poland offers considerable potential for strengthening this approach through closer and more structured cooperation with academic and research institutions in Ukraine, thereby fostering greater "brain circulation."

Fourth, diaspora engagement strategies are most effective when they combine economic opportunities with a compelling identity-based narrative, provided that instruments are designed with transparency and openness in mind. Rwanda's Agaciro framing — conveying the values of "self-worth" and "dignity" — has been widely recognized for strengthening the country's ability to mobilise diaspora commitment and investment, while preserving voluntary and inclusive approach as well as openness to diverse views. In the Ukrainian context, stronger networking among diaspora leaders in Poland could foster the exchange of ideas and bring together professionals from business, academia and civil society to help shape new narratives that support Ukraine's recovery and long-term development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented below draw together the different strands of evidence assembled in this report: the structured mapping of 58 Ukrainian diaspora organisations active in Poland in 2026, eleven in-depth interviews with organisational leaders, diaspora-policy experts, and a business community representative, author's participatory observation during the U-SUPPORT Networking workshop for the Ukrainian diaspora organisations held in Warsaw in June 2026, the desk review of Polish, Ukrainian, and international research and statistics, and the comparative analysis of diaspora engagement practice in Albania, Serbia, and Rwanda.

The recommendations are organised into five clusters according to the stakeholders best placed to lead their implementation and should be considered as mutually reinforcing: 1) to institutional donors and international organisations, 2) to the Government of Ukraine, 3) to the EU and host countries, 4) to Ukrainian diaspora organisations and initiatives, and 5) to all engaged stakeholders jointly. While each recommendation identifies a lead stakeholder, most require close cooperation among two or more of these stakeholder groups. Moreover, though the recommendations are clustered, they are interlinked, therefore, progress on any one recommendation track in isolation is likely to produce only partial results. For example, institutional funding without stronger engagement from the Government of Ukraine may strengthen the organisational capacity of diaspora organisations while limiting their contribution to reconstruction planning. Conversely, consultation mechanisms without sustainable core funding may restrict participation to a relatively small number of organisations with sufficient operational capacity. **Where appropriate, an indicative implementation timeframe is provided.** As a general rule, the consultation, coordination and funding measures proposed under Clusters 1, 3, 4 and 5 could be implemented within 12–24 months, while legislative reforms, investment platforms and return-related measures are likely to require a longer-term timeframe, with 2029 as a realistic target. Impact should be measured by observable outputs — the number of organisations receiving multi-year core funding, the formal adoption of consultation procedures, the launch and capitalisation of pilot instruments — rather than by declarations of intent. Where full implementation is not immediately feasible, the recommendations identify practical interim steps to maintain progress while avoiding institutional changes that may not yet be achievable.

CLUSTER 1: TO INSTITUTIONAL DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland are operating at (and increasingly, beyond) the limits of their volunteer-driven, project-funded capacity. Supporting the further development of institutional capacity would enable diaspora organisations to expand and sustain their engagement. In this context, institutional donors in Poland, the European Union and Ukraine are well positioned to build on existing project-based partnerships through complementary forms of support.

1.1: **Polish, EU, and Ukrainian institutional donors should consider creating a multi-year (3–5 year) core funding facility** for established Ukrainian diaspora organisations, replacing the current patchwork of project grants. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine should further expand its 'Support for Ukrainians Abroad' programme to strengthen community-building initiatives and strengthening ties of Ukrainians with Ukraine

to maintain reconstruction support. Progress could be measured by the number of organisations transitioning from project-based to institutional core funding and by staff-retention rates among supported organisations.

1.2: **Building on the OSCE/ODIHR and ICMPD training programmes delivered between 2024 and 2026, donors and training providers should continue to provide structured capacity-building and networking support** in seven areas: 1) institutional fundraising; 2) legislative advocacy; 3) safeguarding policies (including anti-corruption, child protection, and GBV response); 4) strategic communications in adversarial information environments; 5) partnerships with business; 6) partnerships with Ukrainian civil society and local government counterparts; and 7) digital security and reputation protection. Implementation should be monitored to ensure participation of organisations from outside the Warsaw–Kraków–Wrocław triangle, with particular attention given to regional organisations, especially those established after 2022, so that they benefit on an equal basis.

1.3: **Further support to diaspora-led coordination:** institutional donors and international organisations should support the development and strengthening of national-level coordination among Ukrainian diaspora organisations where such initiatives are led by the diaspora itself and build on existing networks and collaborations. Donors should identify and support existing networks and initiatives, while preserving the independence, diversity, and ownership of the members. Existing initiatives s such as the Konsorcjum Migracyjne/the Migration Consortium and Mapuj Pomoc/Map the Aid network could provide useful examples of structured and inclusive coordination. Hereby, progress can be measured not by creation of a new institution, but by strengthening existing networks and increased collaboration, including joint advocacy efforts and activities.

CLUSTER 2: TO THE GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE

Strengthening the relationship between the Ukrainian state and its diaspora presents one of the greatest opportunities to enhance the diaspora's contribution to Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. Building on the progress already achieved, continued development of the legislative framework for diaspora engagement, together with the systematic involvement of diaspora organisations in the co-creation of relevant public policies, would help unlock this potential.

2.1: **The Verkhovna Rada and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine should consider adopting comprehensive primary legislation on the Ukrainian diaspora** to codify the legal definition of the diaspora, establish a dedicated institutional coordination framework, create dedicated funding mechanisms, and define the respective rights and responsibilities of the State and its citizens living abroad. A realistic timeframe for adoption would be before 2028. The adoption of the dual-citizenship law in June 2025 demonstrates that comprehensive legislative reform in this area is feasible.

2.2: **The Cabinet of Ministers should clearly define and communicate the respective responsibilities for diaspora policy across the government institutions currently sharing them** including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Social Policy, Family and Unity; Education, Youth and Sports; Economy and Environment, Finance and Internal Affairs. This should include the publication of a "who-does-what" division of competencies and designating a single coordination point to facilitate engagement with diaspora organisations. While full consolidation of diaspora policy within a single ministry is not feasible under the current institutional arrangement, greater transparency in delineation of responsibilities could be achieved in the short term. This would help address some of the most frequently identified challenges highlighted during the interviews –

uncertainty among diaspora organisations regarding the appropriate institutional counterparts and weakening of established cooperation following changes in personnel.

2.3: **The designated coordination point should establish a structured diaspora consultation mechanism on Ukrainian public policies**, with established consultation rights for diaspora organisations. In particular, policies related to pensions, healthcare, document issuance, culture and education should be informed by feedback from diaspora organisations. The existing cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and Ukrainian diaspora organisations in Poland provides a useful example of how such structured engagement can be effectively implemented.

2.4: **Ukrainian government institutions, local authorities, and civil society organisations should strengthen systematic partnerships with Ukrainian diaspora organisations.** The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine's established practice of consulting diaspora organisations could serve as a model for broader institutional engagement across other Ukrainian government institutions. In addition, partnership arrangements between Poland-based diaspora organisations and Ukrainian hromadas should be encouraged, while institutialised cooperation channels – forums, joint grant competitions, etc. – should be developed to facilitate the transfer of diaspora expertise to Ukrainian academia, think tanks, and public administration bodies.

2.5: **The Government of Ukraine in cooperation with research funding institutions may consider establishing a Ukrainian Diaspora Foundation initially focused on engaging the Ukrainian scientific diaspora.** This recommendation recognises the scientific diaspora as a highly skilled and innovation-driven community for which well-documented and transferable models of engagement and return already exist, and where established networks in Poland provide a strong foundation for cooperation. The expertise of this community is closely aligned with priority areas for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, including security and defence, energy, environmental recovery, healthcare, and psychological rehabilitation. The Foundation could support programmes that facilitate the engagement and return of Ukrainian scientists as well as reconstruction-relevant scientific projects. It could also build on the expertise and networks of the Ukrainian scientific diaspora in Poland, drawing inspiration from the Polish Science Foundation's reintegration grants programme (2005–2017) as a proven example of support for scientific reintegration.

2.6: **The Government of Ukraine and its international partners should build on the existing operational capacity and expertise of Ukrainian diaspora organisations when developing the Unity Hub network in Poland.** A decentralised network operated by or co-created with the existing organisations would help maximise the network's reach and effectiveness while building on the trust, local knowledge and community relationships these organisations have developed over years.

CLUSTER 3: TO THE EU AND HOST COUNTRIES

The recommendations in this cluster focus on the role of the European Union and host countries, particularly Poland, in creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment for effective diaspora engagement and support for Ukraine's recovery. Decisions taken by host-country authorities and the EU shape the broader policy regulatory environment in which all other recommendations in this report should be implemented. They determine key framework conditions, including legal status, labour-market access, integration policies, and public support.

3.1: **Polish public authorities at the national, voivodeship, and municipal levels should further strengthen the institutional consultation framework**, by systematically engaging Ukrainian diaspora organisations and building on their expertise in the development and review of relevant policies and legislative changes, while ensuring the meaningful participation of organisations established after 2022. The work of ministerial working group should be guided by agreed action plans with clearly defined deliverables.

3.2: **The European Commission should consider strengthening EU-level support for the engagement of Ukrainian diaspora in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.** The European Reconstruction Plan for Ukraine and the EU Global Diaspora Facility should explicitly indicate diaspora organisations in EU Member States as eligible for reconstruction-relevant funding lines, with a dedicated track for diaspora-initiated reconstruction and reintegration initiatives.

3.3: **State agencies and business networks may consider establishing a pilot Polish-Ukrainian diaspora investment platform** drawing inspiration from initiatives such as Connect Albania and the Albanian Diaspora Development Fund. The pre-pilot could initially focus on selected hromadas or priority economic sectors, providing an opportunity to test the model before wider implementation. The platform should facilitate connections between diaspora entrepreneurs with reconstruction tenders, public-private partnerships, and pooled investment opportunities, while ensuring transparent governance and explicit due diligence standards. Consistent with the recommendations of business representatives interviewed for this study, the initiative should follow a pilot-first approach: testing the model over an initial period of 12–24 months with modest resources, conducting a thorough evaluation of the results, and only then deciding whether to scale up, adapt or discontinue the initiative.

CLUSTER 4: TO UKRAINIAN DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS AND INITIATIVES

While external support can help create an enabling environment, several strategic shifts ultimately depend on the actions of diaspora organisations themselves. The recommendations in this cluster require relatively limited additional resources; rather, they call for a deliberate prioritisation of organisational efforts, strategic planning and collaboration to strengthen the long-term impact and sustainability of diaspora engagement.

4.1: **Diaspora organisations should strengthen ties with Ukrainian businesses operating in Poland** by investing in regular dialogue, the exchange of experience, the identification of shared opportunities, and the development of structured partnership mechanisms through which business expertise and resources can support diaspora-led initiatives. The interviews conducted for this study indicate that cooperation between diaspora organisations and businesses remains largely ad hoc and project-specific. Strengthening communication, networking and partnership-building efforts could help transform these interactions into more structured, sustainable and mutually beneficial forms of collaboration.

4.2: **Established pre-2022 organisations should consider developing a structured peer-mentoring programmes to support newly established organisations.** Such initiatives could facilitate the transfer of institutional knowledge, practical experience and professional networks, helping new organisations and their leaders better understand the Polish institutional, policy and donor environment. By fostering cooperation and knowledge exchange within the diaspora community, structured mentoring arrangements could significantly accelerate the organisational development of post-2022 initiatives, strengthen their institutional capacity and promote a more cohesive and resilient diaspora landscape.

4.3: **Diaspora organisations should take a proactive approach to strengthening partnerships with Polish municipalities, businesses, civil society organisations, and leadership networks.** The examples of effective local cooperation identified in this study demonstrate that organisations which actively initiated and cultivated such relationships were often able to establish stronger and more sustainable partnerships. Replicating this proactive approach across other regions could further strengthen the visibility, reach and long-term contribution of Ukrainian diaspora organisations within Polish society.

4.4: **Diaspora organisations should develop and clearly articulate their own vision and priorities for contributing to Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.** Rather than relying solely on initiatives led by the Government of Ukraine or international partners, organisations should proactively define and communicate the expertise, experience and networks they can offer — including sector-specific knowledge, long-term partnerships with Ukrainian communities, and transferable experience gained in Poland. These contributions should be actively promoted through engagement with Ukrainian national and local authorities, civil society organisations and international stakeholders, including at forums such as the Ukraine Recovery Conference. The findings of this mapping study and the interviews suggest that the absence of a clearly articulated diaspora-led reconstruction agenda remains an important gap, limiting opportunities for more strategic and coordinated engagement in Ukraine's recovery.

CLUSTER 5: TO ALL ENGAGED ACTORS

The recommendations in this cluster call for a gradual transition from a predominantly humanitarian response towards a longer-term development and reconstruction paradigm. While humanitarian assistance remains essential for many displaced Ukrainians, the framework that shaped support between 2022 and 2024 no longer fully reflects either the evolving role of Ukrainian diaspora organisations or the changing needs of Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. The recommendations are therefore addressed jointly to donors, the Governments of Ukraine and Poland, and diaspora organisations themselves, recognising that this transition requires coordinated action, complementary policies and shared commitment across all stakeholder groups.

5.1: **All actors should reframe Ukraine's recovery as a process of restoration, renewal, and modernisation,** encompassing not only physical reconstruction, but also EU accession, continued decentralisation, governance reform, and human capital development. Adopting this broader perspective also expands the range of diaspora actors who can make meaningful contributions, recognising the important role of educators, healthcare professionals, local government specialists, and civil-society organisations alongside those working in areas such as security, construction and logistics.

5.2: **Diaspora organisations should work in partnership with the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine, other relevant Ukrainian state agencies and Ukrainian civil society organisations supporting IDPs to co-design return preparation programmes.** These programmes should address psychological, identity-related, legal, professional, and practical dimensions of sustainable return and reintegration. Preparatory work should begin as soon as possible to enable the piloting of such programmes well in advance of any large-scale return movement. The evidence gathered through this study indicates that inadequate preparation for the changes experienced by both returnees and Ukraine can significantly increase the challenges of reintegration.

5.3: **Sectoral ministries in Ukraine, their Polish counterparts, and specialised diaspora organisations may consider piloting sector-specific cooperation initiatives to support Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction** in three areas, identified by this study as having the strongest existing foundations:

1. Education – facilitating the exchange of experience on Polish-Ukrainian curricula, teacher exchanges, and the recognition of qualifications;
2. Healthcare – strengthening cooperation on psychological support for returnees, as well as training on GBV response;
3. Local government – supporting the transfer of Polish and EU experience in decentralisation to Ukrainian territorial communities, building on existing partnerships between Polish and Ukrainian municipalities.

Each pilot should designate a lead institution on both the Polish and the Ukrainian sides and include a monitoring and evaluation framework with a formal review following the completion of the initial implementation cycle.

ANNEX. MAPPING OF UKRAINIAN DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS IN POLAND

#	Name of the organisation	Legal form	Year of est.	Location	Main areas of activity
Pre-2022 established organisations					
1	Płast – Ukraińska Organizacja Skautowa w Polsce *Płast – Ukrainian Scout Organisation in Poland*	Association	**1989**	Nationwide	Youth, Education, Assistance to Ukrainian Military
2	Związek Ukraińców w Polsce *Union of Ukrainians in Poland*	Association	**1990**	Nationwide	Culture, Education, Poland-Ukraine cooperation, Humanitarian aid, Assistance to Ukrainian military
3	Fundacja Kultury Duchowej Pogranicza *Foundation for the Spiritual Culture of the Borderland*	Foundation	**2004**	Lublin	Culture, Youth, International cooperation
4	Związek Ukraińców Podlasia *Union of Ukrainians of Podlasie*	Association	**2006**	Białystok	Culture, Media
5	Stowarzyszenie Społeczno-Kulturalne Polska-Ukraina *Poland-Ukraine Social and Cultural Association*	Association	**2007**	Poznań	Culture, International cooperation, Integration
6	Ukraiński Dom (formerly Nasz wybir) *Ukrainian House (formerly Our Choice)*	Foundation	**2009**	Warsaw	Integration, Media, Humanitarian aid, Research, Advocacy, Education, Culture
7	Crossroads – Zatoka Gdańska *Crossroads – Gulf of Gdańsk*	Foundation	**2010**	Gdańsk	Integration, Culture
8	Polsko-Ukraińska Fundacja imienia Ignacego Jana Paderewskiego *Polish-Ukrainian Ignacy Jan Paderewski Foundation*	Foundation	**2012**	Warsaw	Culture, Youth

#	Name of the organisation	Legal form	Year of est.	Location	Main areas of activity
9	Fundacja Ukraina (runs CUKR Information Center) *Ukraina Foundation (runs CUKR Information Centre)*	Foundation	**2013**	Wrocław	Integration, Culture, Education
10	Fundacja Widowisk Masowych *Mass Spectacles Foundation*	Foundation	**2014**	Kraków	Culture, Integration, Humanitarian aid
11	Euromaidan Warszawa *Euromaidan Warsaw*	Foundation	**2015**	Warsaw	Assistance to Ukrainian military, Advocacy, Culture
12	Prosvita *Prosvita (Enlightenment)*	Foundation	**2015**	Wałcz	Culture
13	Dom Ukraiński w Przemyślu *Ukrainian House in Przemyśl*	Foundation	**2016**	Przemyśl	Humanitarian aid, Community-building, Integration, Culture, Education
14	Inicjatywna Grupa Ukraińscy Bielsko *Initiative Group Ukrainians of Bielsko*	Unregistered initiative	**2016**	Bielko-Biała	Integration, culture
15	Nashapolsha web-portal (affiliated to Fundacja Chcemy Godnie Żyć) *Nashapolsha web portal (affiliated with We Want to Live with Dignity Foundation)*	Affiliated project	**2016**	Gdańsk	Media
16	Zrzeszenie Ukrainskiego Biznesu w Polsce *Association of Ukrainian Business in Poland*	Foundation	**2016**	Nationwide	Business, Poland-Ukraine cooperation, Community-building
17	Zustricz *Zustricz (Encounter)*	Foundation	**2016**	Cracow	Integration, Education, Culture, Mental Health
18	Ukraińskie Centrum Edukacji (Materynka) *Ukrainian Education Centre (Materynka)*	Foundation	**2017**	Warsaw, Katowice	Education, Youth

#	Name of the organisation	Legal form	Year of est.	Location	Main areas of activity
19	Fundacja Ukraińska Wspólnota *Ukrainian Community Foundation*	Foundation	**2018**	Warsaw	Humanitarian assistance, Integration
20	NotaBene Business Club	Informal network	**2018**	Warsaw	Business, Community-building
21	inPoland	LLC	**2018**	Wrocław	Media
22	Instytut Polska-Ukraina (media brand UAinKrakow) *Poland-Ukraine Institute (media brand UAinKrakow)*	Foundation	**2019**	Kraków	Media, Integration, Humanitarian aid, Culture
23	Kujawsko-Pomorski Dom Ukraiński *Kuyavian-Pomeranian Ukrainian House*	Association	**2019**	Bydgoszcz	Integration, Education
24	Fundacja Aktywna Integracja (NIC artistic coffeeshop) *Active Integration Foundation (NIC artistic coffee shop)*	Foundation	**2020**	Kraków	Integration, Culture
25	Uniters	Foundation	**2021**	Nationwide	Humanitarian aid, Youth, Poland-Ukraine cooperation
Post-2022 initiatives					
1	Art Cluster	Foundation	**2022**	Luboń	Culture
2	Dwa Skrzydła UA *Two Wings UA*	Foundation	**2022**	Olsztyn	Integration, Advocacy, Women
3	Fundacja Charytatywna "Głos Kobiet Ukrainy" *'Voice of Ukrainian Women' Charitable Foundation*	Foundation	**2022**	Marcinkowo (Mrągowo)	Integration, Women, Assistance to people with disabilities
4	Fundacja Ukraińskiego Katolickiego Uniwersytetu w Polsce *Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation in Poland*	Foundation	**2022**	Warsaw, Wrocław	Culture, Education, Research, International cooperation

#	Name of the organisation	Legal form	Year of est.	Location	Main areas of activity
5	Jedność *Unity*	Foundation	**2022**	Kraków, Kielce, Wrocław	Women, Youth, Mental health, Education
6	OPORA IN POLAND	Foundation	**2022**	Warsaw	Humanitarian aid, War crime documenting, Research
7	Siła Kobiety *Woman's Strength*	Foundation	**2022**	Wrocław	Assistance to Ukrainian Military, Humanitarian Assistance, Integration
8	Stand with Ukraine	Foundation	**2022**	Warsaw	Poland-Ukraine cooperation, International cooperation, Advocacy, Humanitarian aid
9	UA Hub Warsaw (Ukraine Above All foundation)	Foundation	**2022**	Warsaw	Business networking, Education
10	Ukraiński Hub Edukacyjny w Polsce (UA Edu Hub, operated by Pro Futuro foundation) *Ukrainian Educational Hub in Poland (UA Edu Hub, operated by Pro Futuro Foundation)*	Affiliated initiative	**2022**	Warsaw	Education, Youth
11	Centrum Integracji Kobiet Nejmovirna *Nejmovirna (Unbelievable) Women's Integration Centre*	Foundation	**2023**	Poznań	Integration, Education
12	Fundacja Dyplomacji Kulturalnej *Cultural Diplomacy Foundation*	Foundation	**2023**	Kraków, Wrocław	Culture, Integration
13	Fundacja HelpNowHUB *HelpNowHUB Foundation*	Foundation	**2023**	Bydgoszcz	Health (HIV prevention)
14	Fundacja Początek (media brand Nowiny Wschodnie) *Beginning Foundation (Eastern News media publisher)*	Foundation	**2023**	Jelenia Góra	Media, Women, Education

#	Name of the organisation	Legal form	Year of est.	Location	Main areas of activity
15	Fundacja Right to Protection *Right to Protection Foundation*	Foundation	**2023**	Warsaw	Humanitarian assistance, Integration
16	Fundacja Ukraina Walbrzych *Ukraina Wałbrzych Foundation*	Foundation	**2023**	Wałbrzych	Integration
17	Martynka	Foundation	**2023**	Nationwide	Women, Humanitarian assistance
18	Nadzieja Jest *There Is Hope*	Foundation	**2023**	Kraków	Integration
19	Polsko-Ukraiński Klub Seniora (PUKS) *Polish-Ukrainian Seniors' Club (PUKS)*	Unregistered (affiliated initiative)	**2023**	Rzeszów	Seniors, Integration
20	Ukrainian Consultation Center *Ukrainian Consultation Centre*	IO project	**2023**	Gdańsk	Integration, Return and Reintegration
21	Ukrainka w Polsce *Ukrainian Woman in Poland*	Foundation	**2023**	Wrocław, Warsaw	Integration, Women
22	Ukraińska Diaspora Naukowa w Polsce *Ukrainian Scientific Diaspora in Poland*	Foundation	**2023**	Warsaw, Kraków	Research, International cooperation, Culture
23	Fundacja Integracji, Edukacji i Kultury Ok&Sana *Ok&Sana Foundation for Integration, Education and Culture*	Foundation	**2024**	Poznań	Education, Women, Culture, Mental Health
24	Fundacja Na Rzecz Osób Z Doświadczeniem Migracyjnym i Osób Wykluczonych „Migranci Pomorza" *Foundation for People with Migration Experience and Excluded Persons 'Migrants of Pomerania'*	Foundation	**2024**	Gdańsk	Integration
25	Krymski Dom *Crimean House*	Foundation	**2024**	Warsaw	Advocacy, Culture

#	Name of the organisation	Legal form	Year of est.	Location	Main areas of activity
26	Odwaga nie zna granic *Courage Knows No Borders*	Association	**2024**	Warsaw	Assistance to Ukrainian military
27	Sondertime	Foundation	**2024**	Kraków	Culture, Education, Advocacy, Children
28	AB Show	Foundation	**2025**	Kraków	Integration, Education
29	Alians Młodzieży Ukraińskiej "24 sierpnia" (24/08) *Alliance of Ukrainian Youth '24 August' (24/08)*	Foundation	**2025**	Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław	Youth, Research, International cooperation
30	Centrum Kultury i Rozwoju Horyzont (affiliated with Fundacja Psychologów i Psychoterapeutów Dobrostan) *Horizon Culture and Development Centre (affiliated with 'Wellbeing' Foundation of Psychologists and Psychotherapists)*	Affiliated initiative	**2025**	Wrocław	Mental health, Professional networking
31	Christian Business Club	Informal network	**2025**	Kraków	Business, Community-building
32	Fundacja Integracja Poprzez Sztukę *Integration Through Art Foundation*	Foundation	**2025**	Warsaw	Culture, Education, Integration
33	Terytorium Kobiet *Women's Territory*	Foundation	**2025**	Warsaw	Women, Integration

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