

!BEREDSKAPSLYFTET

**Survey on the return
intentions and future plans
of displaced Ukrainians in
Sweden (May 2025)**

Beredskapslyftet Ideell Förening

Overview

The survey was conducted by the Swedish non-governmental organization Beredskapslyftet in May 2025.

A total of 1 388 Ukrainians under Temporary Protection Status in Sweden participated in the survey.

The data collection took place in May 2025. Responses were gathered anonymously online using Beredskapslyftet's database and social media networks (Telegram, Facebook and mailing lists) among the Ukrainian DPs in Sweden.

The main objectives of the survey were to:

- Identify return intentions among displaced Ukrainians in Sweden, including the conditions under which they would consider returning to Ukraine.
- Evaluate integration dynamics, such as the length of stay in Sweden, language proficiency and employment dynamics.
- Examine emotional and psychological ties to Ukraine, including the frequency and nature of thoughts about returning.
- Explore the reasons that discourage return to Ukraine, even after the cessation of hostilities.
- Analyze the motivations behind considering permanent residence in Sweden.
- Provide data-driven insights for policymakers, humanitarian organizations and country institutions to understand the current situation and expectations of displaced Ukrainians.

This is the fourth survey conducted by Beredskapslyftet among displaced Ukrainians in Sweden. The first survey took place in January 2023.

Executive summary

This report presents findings from a survey conducted by the Swedish non-governmental organization Beredskapslyftet in May 2025, focusing on the experiences, integration and return intentions of 1 388 Ukrainian DPs in Sweden.

The majority of respondents are women (77%), with half aged between 40 and 59. Family ties remain significant, with 43% living with a Ukrainian partner in Sweden, 22% unmarried and 9% having partners residing in Ukraine. Most respondents (54%) have at least one child and 79% have close family members who remain in Ukraine.

A key finding is that 57% of respondents do not plan to return to Ukraine, 26% remain undecided and only 8,7% express an intention to return. The decision to stay is primarily driven by *perceptions of safety and stability in Sweden* (20.55%), *better employment opportunities* (14.2%), and a *higher standard of living* (15.7%). These practical factors outweigh the emotional connection to Ukraine that many respondents still feel, as captured by other sections of the report.

Exploring emotional factors further, 8.7% of respondents think about returning daily, another 9.7% weekly, while the majority think about it rarely (50.6%) or never (31%). When imagining a potential return, emotional reactions are predominantly negative: 43.9% report feeling anxiety, 26.6% fear and only 9.8% hope with a small fraction (5.5%) expressing joy. These findings highlight the complexity of return intentions, shaped not only by material and practical considerations but also by significant emotional and psychological dimensions.

Another key finding is the *high level of social and practical integration* of Ukrainian DPs in Sweden. Self-assessments across key domains show moderate to high average scores: Swedish language proficiency (3.17/5), employment and income stability (3.39/5), access to healthcare (3.44/5), social connections (3.43/5), sense of belonging (3.53/5) and participation in community life (3.23/5). Additionally, 92% of respondents feel moderately to highly accepted by local residents. These data confirm that Ukrainian displaced persons in Sweden generally experience a strong level of integration, both socially and economically.

A comparison of perceived safety further illustrates this dynamic. Respondents rate their current sense of safety in Sweden at an average of 8.67 out of 10, compared to 6.76 out of 10 for Ukraine before the full-scale invasion.

This contrast underscores *the impact of the war on perceptions of security* in Ukraine and reinforces the importance of Sweden's stability in respondents' decisions not to return.

These findings demonstrate a multifaceted picture: while many respondents remain deeply connected to Ukraine and think about returning, practical concerns, especially around *safety, income, social stability and integration* play a decisive role. The discrepancy between the high sense of safety in Sweden and the lower pre-war safety perceptions in Ukraine reinforces this preference for staying in Sweden.

At the same time, the data suggests that any potential return would not be driven solely by rational factors but also by strong emotional and psychological ties to Ukraine, including feelings of hope and anxiety.

Together, these findings underscore the complex interplay of practical, social and emotional factors shaping the experiences of Ukrainian displaced persons in Sweden.

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents



77% women



23% men



50% of respondents are people from 40 to 59 years old

Marital status:

43% of respondents reside in Sweden with a partner from Ukraine, 23% are unmarried and 9% have partners who are currently staying in Ukraine.



54% have at least 1 kid



79% of respondents have close family members currently living in Ukraine

Residence permit

- 97% of respondents are residing in Sweden under Temporary Protection status.
- Less than 1% have asylum seeker status.

Duration of stay



58% live in Sweden more than 3 years

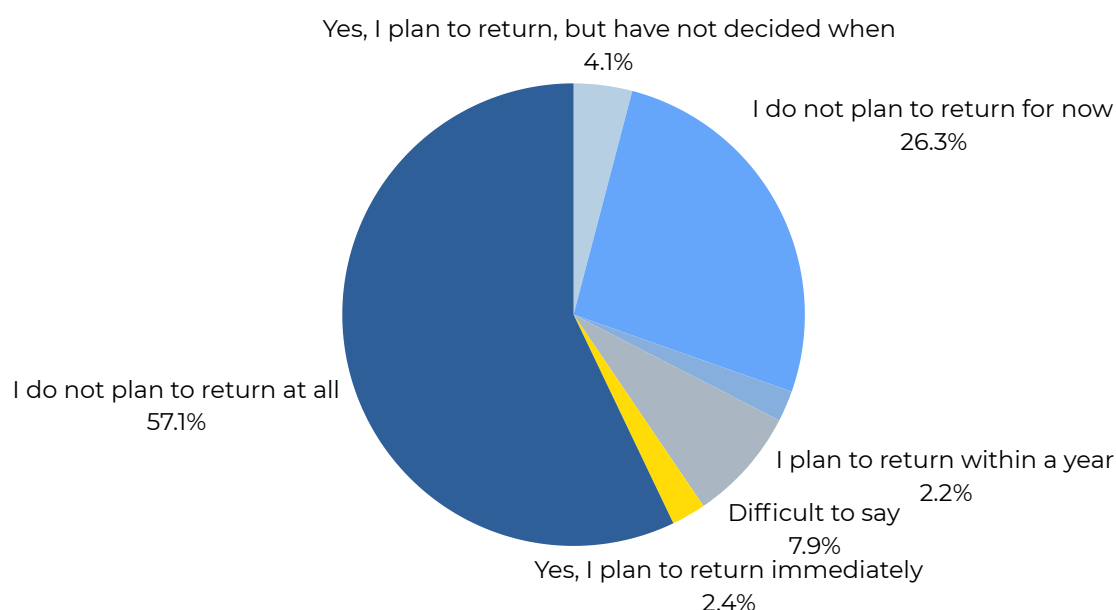
- 34% live in Sweden from 1 to 3 years.
- 7% arrived to Sweden less than a year ago.

Intention to return to Ukraine

The survey aimed to identify the motivations and intentions regarding a potential return to Ukraine after the cessation of hostilities. This methodological choice was based on the assumption that meaningful decisions about return are most likely to be considered in the context of relative safety and political stability.

By focusing on the post-ceasefire period, the survey acknowledges that the ongoing war creates conditions of uncertainty that strongly influence displaced persons' ability to make informed and realistic plans about their future. Therefore, analyzing intentions specifically in the context of a post-war scenario allows for more accurate insights into long-term return dynamics, rather than temporary or forced displacement patterns.

Table 1. Do you plan to return to Ukraine for permanent residence after the ceasefire?



The results reveal that a clear majority (57.1%) of displaced Ukrainians currently do not plan to return to Ukraine at all, even in the post-ceasefire scenario. An additional 26.3% report no plans to return for now, indicating a dominant trend towards long-term or permanent resettlement in the host country.

Only a small minority (2.4%) express intent to return immediately, while 4.1% are willing to return but remain undecided about the timing. A further 7.9% find it difficult to express their intentions at this stage.

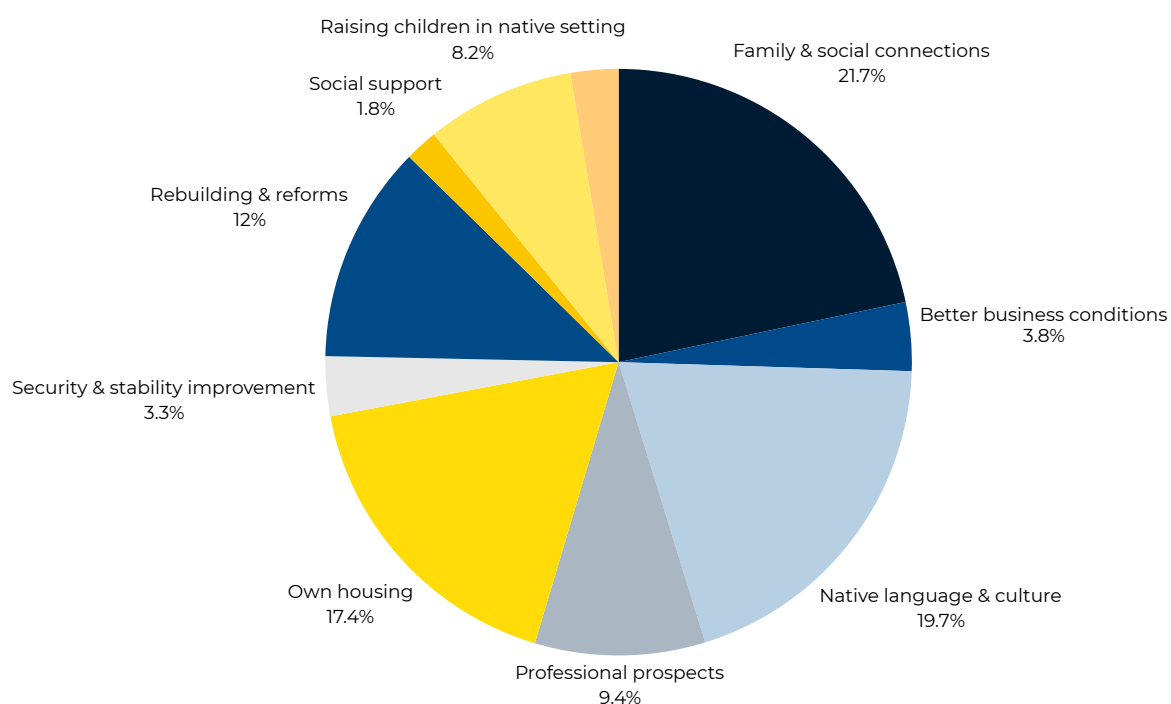
Reasons for considering return to Ukraine

Even though the minority of respondents intends to return to Ukraine after the end of hostilities, it is important to understand the underlying motivations driving this decision.

According to the survey data, 21.71% of respondents cited *family and social connections* as the primary reason for considering a return. The significance of *cultural ties and native language* was also emphasized, with 19.7% of respondents selecting this factor. The availability of *personal housing* (17.4%) and the *desire to contribute to the rebuilding and reforming of the country* (12%) were also highlighted as key drivers.

Professional development prospects (9.4%) and the desire to raise children in their native environment (8.2%) further underscore the complex mix of economic, personal and social motivations involved in the decision to return. Interestingly, factors such as social guarantees and support (1.8%), improved security and stability (3.3%) and better conditions for doing business (3.8%) were cited by relatively fewer respondents, indicating that they are not the main incentives for considering permanent residence in Ukraine at this time.

Table 2. What are the main reasons that motivate you to plan a return to Ukraine for permanent residence after the end of hostilities? (multiple answers possible)



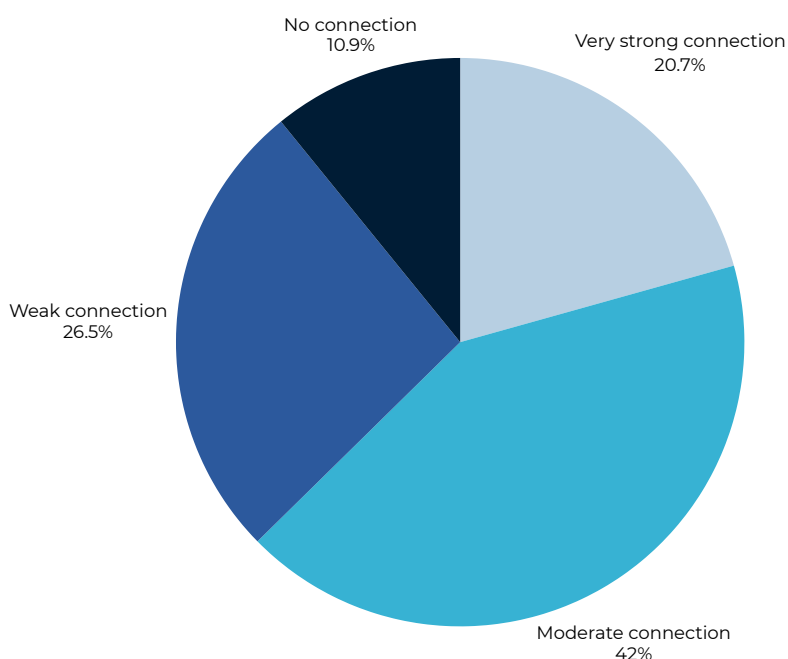
These findings highlight the complex nature of the decision-making process, which reflects a combination of personal, social and cultural motivations along with broader economic and political realities. The data suggests that for many respondents, factors such as family ties, cultural identity and personal assets play an important role in considering a return to Ukraine. Economic and professional considerations, though significant, are somewhat secondary to these core motivations.

Strong emotional connection to Ukraine

While the vast majority of respondents (57,1%) have expressed limited motivation to return to Ukraine after the end of hostilities, the data reveal that a strong emotional bond with their home country remains.

Over 60% of respondents report either a very strong or moderate emotional connection to Ukraine, suggesting that decisions to stay in Sweden are driven more by pragmatic considerations rather than a weakening of identity or cultural attachment to Ukraine. These findings emphasize that emotional belonging and cultural ties continue to play an important role in the lives of Ukrainians in Sweden, even when practical or security-related reasons influence their choice to remain outside Ukraine.

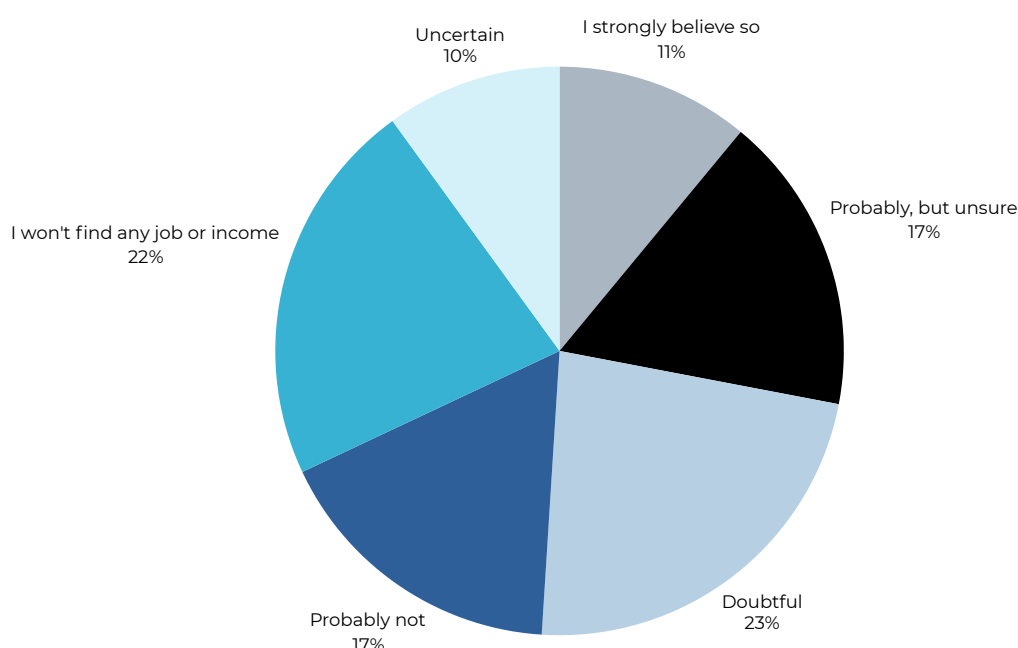
Table 3. How emotionally connected are you to Ukraine?



Perceptions of employment and income prospects upon return

This section examined respondents' expectations regarding their ability to find employment or another source of income if they were to return to Ukraine. These insights are essential for understanding how perceived economic opportunities and risks influence decisions about permanent return.

Table 4. Do you believe that if you return to Ukraine, you will be able to find a job or another source of income?



The results indicate that respondents' confidence in their ability to secure employment or income in Ukraine varies considerably. Around 11% of respondents express strong confidence in their ability to find a suitable job or income source upon return. However, a larger proportion (approximately 35%) believe they might be able to find employment, although they have reservations about its suitability. Meanwhile, nearly 39% of respondents indicate that they would face significant challenges or have major doubts about securing work or income.

These findings underscore that while a segment of respondents remain optimistic about economic opportunities at home, a substantial number perceive considerable economic uncertainty. Consequently, employment and income prospects emerge as critical factors influencing the decision-making process for return.

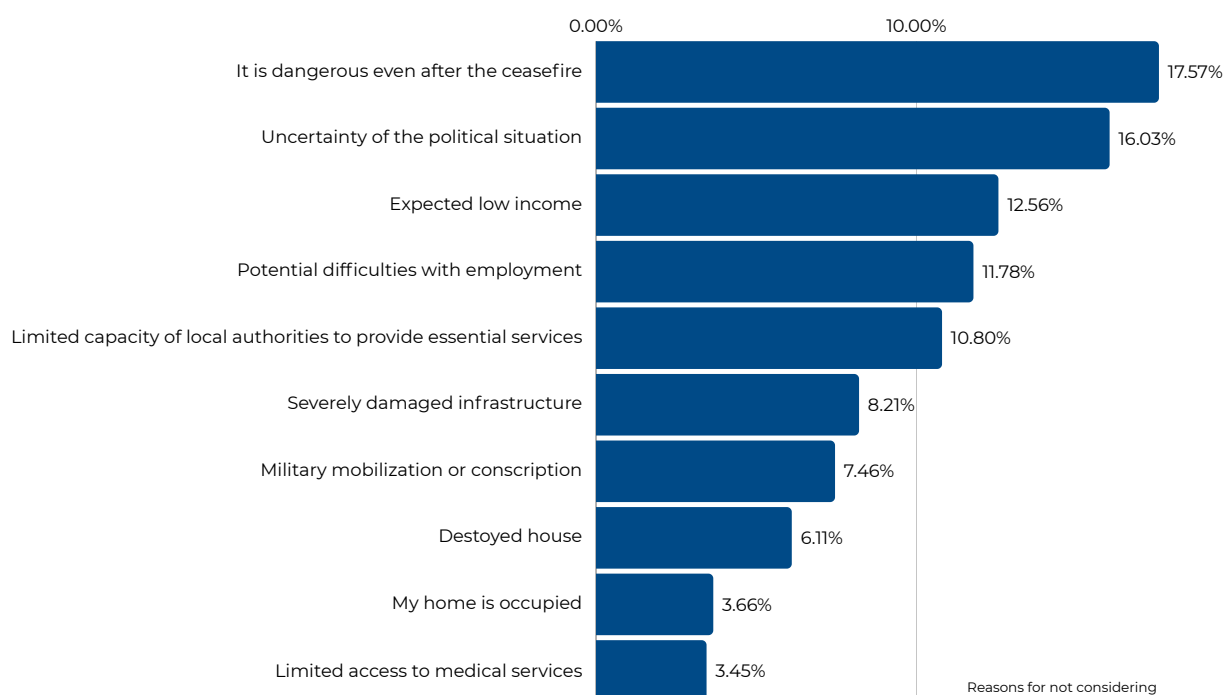
Reasons for not considering return to Ukraine

To further understand the high proportion of respondents who do not plan to return to Ukraine (57.1%) or are hesitant to do so (26.3%), the survey examined the specific factors that discourage return even after the cessation of hostilities.

Respondents were asked to identify the main reasons that influence their decision not to consider returning to Ukraine after the end of the war.

The data reveals that security concerns and political instability are the primary reasons preventing individuals from considering a return, with 17.57% citing *ongoing danger even after a ceasefire* and 16.03% *uncertain about the political situation*. Economic factors, such as *expected low income* (12.56%) and *employment difficulties* (11.78%) also play a significant role. Additionally, the limited capacity of local authorities (10.80%) and damaged infrastructure (8.21%) further discourage return. Housing issues and access to medical services are less frequently cited. Overall, the decision not to return is driven by a combination of security, economic and infrastructural challenges.

Table 5. What are the main reasons influencing your decision not to consider returning to Ukraine after the end of hostilities? (multiple choice)



Reasons for staying permanently in Sweden

The survey also examined the key motivations that influence the decision to consider permanent residence in Sweden.

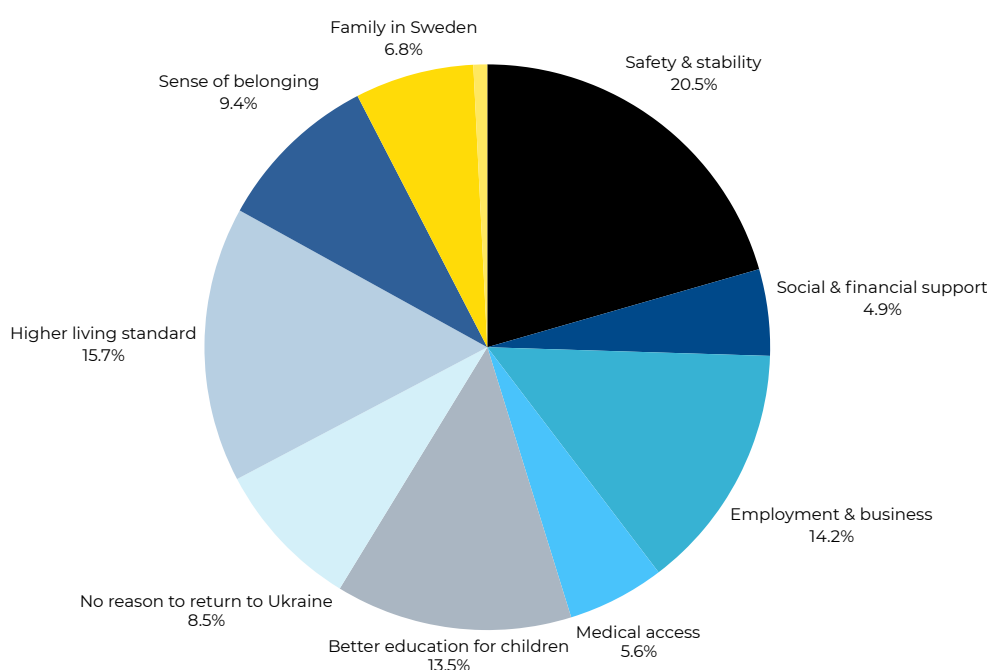
The findings indicate that the *feeling of safety and stability* is the most important factor for respondents (20.5%), followed by a *higher standard of living* (15.7%) and *employment or business opportunities* (14.2%).

Additionally, better educational prospects for children and a sense of belonging to Swedish society play a notable role in shaping these decisions.

In contrast, factors such as social and financial support, access to medical services and family connections in Sweden are cited less frequently.

This suggests that respondents' decisions to consider permanent residence in Sweden are driven primarily by the search for personal security and economic stability, rather than purely social considerations.

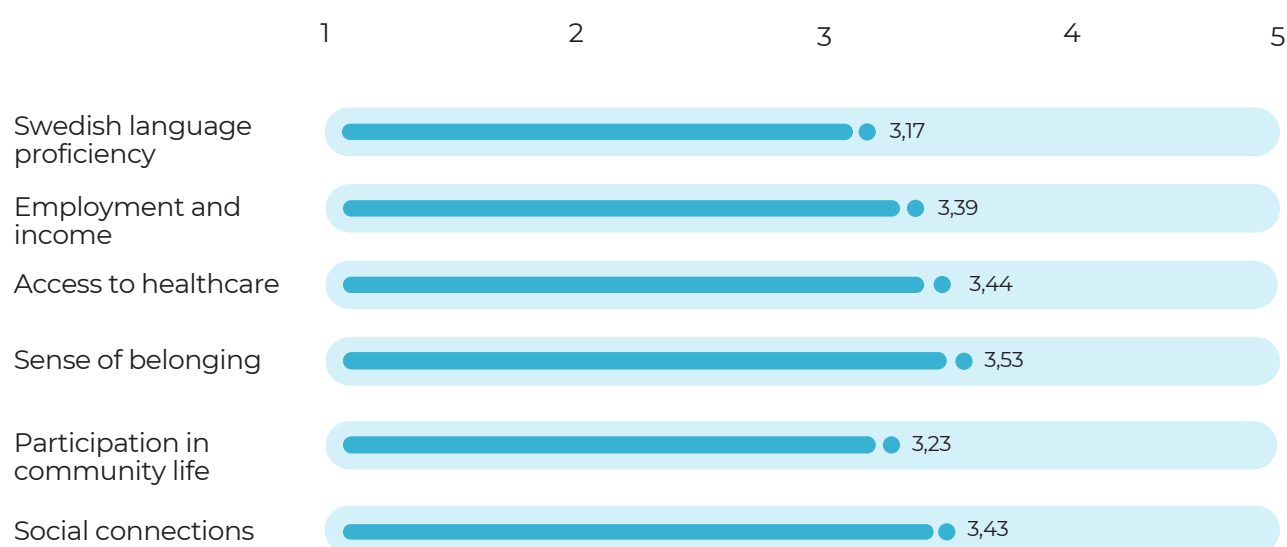
Table 6. What are the main reasons influencing your decision to consider staying in Sweden permanently?



Integration level into the Swedish society

This section presents data on how respondents evaluate their level of integration in Sweden across several key areas. It includes self-assessments of proficiency in the Swedish language, access to healthcare, employment and income stability, social connections, sense of belonging and participation in community life.

Table 7: Assess your level of integration in Sweden in the following areas



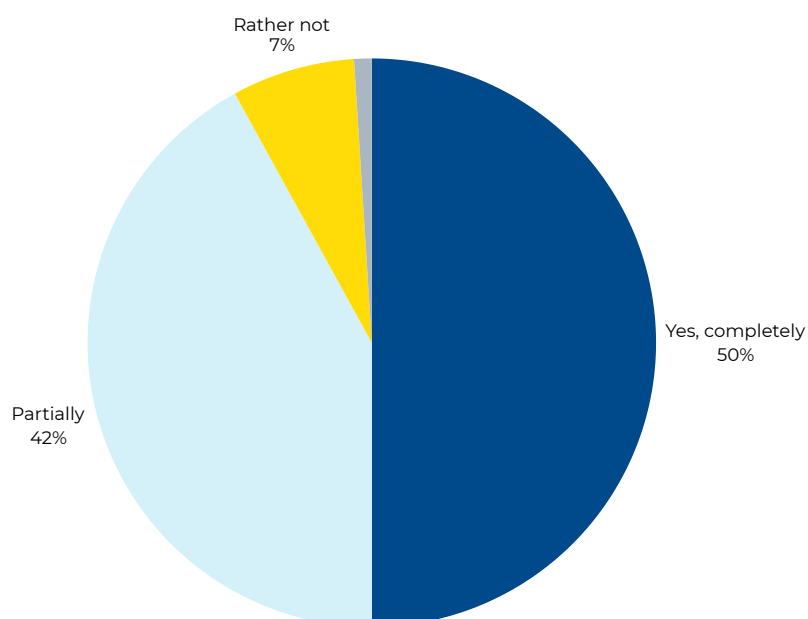
These visualizations illustrate the average self-assessment scores across key areas of integration, based on a 1–5 scale (where 1 indicates very low integration and 5 indicates very high integration).

Key findings from these average scores include:

- Swedish language proficiency (3.17 / 5): moderate language skills, with room for improvement.
- Employment and income (3.39 / 5): respondents generally feel secure in their jobs and income.
- Access to healthcare (3.44 / 5): good perceived access to medical services.
- Social connections (3.43 / 5): moderate to strong social ties within Sweden.
- Sense of belonging (3.53 / 5): highest average, reflecting a strong sense of inclusion and belonging in Swedish society.
- Participation in community life (3.23 / 5): moderate engagement in social and political activities.

Building on the analysis of average self-assessment scores across key areas of integration, the following chart explores how respondents perceive their acceptance by local residents in Sweden. Assessing perceived acceptance helps contextualize respondents' sense of belonging, social connections and participation in community life.

Table 8: Do you feel accepted by the local residents?



The data indicates that 92% of respondents (a combination of “yes, completely” and “partially”) report a moderate to high level of acceptance by local residents in Sweden.

This positive perception aligns with the earlier average scores in the report, particularly the relatively high sense of belonging (3.53/5) and the moderate to strong social connections (3.43/5).

These findings suggest that, overall, Ukrainian DPs in Sweden experience a good level of social integration and inclusion.

General feeling of safety

One of the key reasons respondents cite for not considering a return to Ukraine is the sense of safety and stability they experience in Sweden. This reason was mentioned by 20.5% of respondents in the survey.

The high average safety score of 8.67 out of 10 for Sweden supports this finding, indicating that many respondents perceive Sweden as a secure and stable environment. This perception of safety is a crucial factor influencing decisions about permanent residence and aligns with earlier survey data on the main reasons for not considering return to Ukraine.

Table 9: How safe do you feel in Sweden?

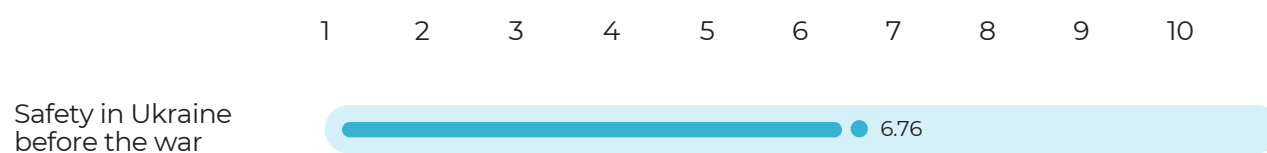


Furthermore, when comparing perceptions of safety in Sweden and in Ukraine prior to the full-scale invasion, a significant contrast emerges.

While respondents rated their sense of safety in Ukraine before the war at an average of 6.76 out of 10, this is notably lower than their current perception of safety in Sweden (8.67 / 10).

This difference underscores the *profound impact of the war on perceptions of security* in their home country and highlights how the ongoing war has further strengthened the image of Sweden as a safe and stable place to live.

Table 10: How safe did you feel in Ukraine before the full-scale invasion?



Emotional and cultural dimensions of return

In addition to analyzing rational and practical factors such as safety, employment opportunities and access to medical care, this survey also considers emotional dimensions that may influence respondents' decisions about returning to Ukraine. These include feelings of emotional connection to their homeland, the frequency of thoughts about returning and the emotions experienced when contemplating this decision.

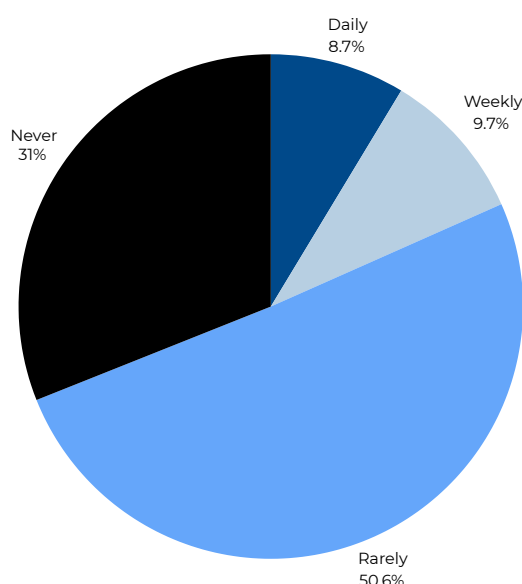
From a methodological standpoint, this approach recognizes that return decisions are shaped not only by material circumstances but also by personal, cultural and emotional considerations. By including these affective aspects, the analysis aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of return intentions, beyond purely rational explanations.

As noted in an earlier section, many respondents continue to report a strong emotional attachment to Ukraine, even if they do not plan to return. Recognizing this dimension alongside practical concerns is essential to accurately capture the complexity of factors that influence respondents' decisions.

Frequency of considering return to Ukraine

Building on the previous exploration of emotional attachments and motivations, this section focuses on how often respondents think about returning to Ukraine. Understanding the frequency of these thoughts helps to further illuminate the role of emotional ties and personal reflections in shaping intentions about returning.

Table 11. How often do you think about returning to Ukraine?



The findings reveal that for most respondents, thoughts of returning to Ukraine are infrequent or absent altogether. Specifically, 50,6% think about returning only rarely and 31% do not consider returning at all. In contrast, a smaller proportion, 9.7% weekly and 8.7% daily, indicates a stronger and more persistent consideration of return.

This suggests that although emotional attachments to Ukraine remain strong for many, actual thoughts of returning are more sporadic or hesitant, reflecting the complexity of emotional and practical considerations.

Emotional reactions when imagining return to Ukraine

When asked to imagine returning to Ukraine, respondents shared a range of emotional reactions that highlight the complex feelings tied to this decision. The data reveal that the most common emotional response is anxiety (43.9%), followed by fear (26.6%). Meanwhile, positive emotions such as hope (9.8%) and joy (5.5%) are less frequently cited, alongside feelings of sadness (9.8%) and other mixed emotions (4.6%).

These patterns suggest that while some respondents maintain positive associations with the idea of returning, concerns and uncertainties remain dominant. This aligns with previous sections of the report showing that practical concerns (safety, employment) are also closely linked with emotional dimensions in the decision-making process.

Table 12: What do you most often feel when you imagine returning to Ukraine?

