

DIGITAL BRIDGES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTEGRATION OF FORCED UKRAINIAN FEMALE MIGRANTS IN ITALY WITHIN THE EU CONTEXT

ЦИФРОВІ МОСТИ ТА ПРАВОВІ РАМКИ: СОЦІАЛЬНІ МЕРЕЖІ Й ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ ВИМУШЕНИХ МІГРАНТОК В ІТАЛІЇ В КОНТЕКСТІ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ

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The study examines the transformative role of social media and digital platforms in the integration of forced Ukrainian female migrants in Italy, situating this phenomenon within the broader framework of international and European law on asylum, refugee protection, and human rights. Against the backdrop of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and the resulting large-scale displacement, the article explores how women – who constitute the majority of Ukrainian forced migrants due to wartime restrictions on male mobility – navigate complex legal, social, economic, and cultural landscapes in the host country. Through a mixed-method approach combining survey data, qualitative interviews, and media analysis, the research identifies key barriers to integration, including language obstacles, limited access to official legal information, structural inequalities, and widespread reliance on informal digital networks such as Facebook, Telegram, and Viber. The findings reveal a significant gap between Italy's obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights, and EU asylum directives, and the lived realities of migrant women. The article argues that bridging this gap requires coordinated policies that enhance multilingual legal resources, improve media literacy, address misinformation, and foster cooperation between state institutions, NGOs, diaspora groups, and media actors. It also highlights the potential of digital platforms not merely as compensatory tools but as strategic instruments of inclusion, empowerment, and participation. By leveraging these platforms to disseminate reliable information, facilitate access to rights, and strengthen civic engagement, Italy and the European Union can not only meet their legal obligations but also build more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable integration processes for displaced Ukrainian women and other refugee populations.

Key words: forced migration, social media, integration, asylum law, international legal standards, Italy, non-refoulement, information access.

У дослідженні розглядається трансформаційна роль соціальних мереж та цифрових платформ в інтеграції вимушених українських мігранток в Італії, розглядаючи це явище в ширших рамках міжнародного та європейського права щодо притулку, захисту біженців та прав людини. На тлі триваючої агресії Росії проти України та спричиненого нею масштабного переміщення, у статті досліджується, як жінки, які становлять більшість українських вимушених мігрантів через обмеження мобільності чоловіків під час війни, орієнтуються у складних правових, соціальних, економічних та культурних умовах країни перебування. За допомогою змішаного методу, що поєднує дані опитувань, якісні інтерв'ю та медіа-аналіз, дослідження визначає ключові бар'єри для інтеграції, включаючи мовні перешкоди, обмежений доступ до офіційної правової інформації, структурну нерівність та широку залежність від неформальних цифрових мереж, таких як Facebook, Telegram та Viber. Результати дослідження показують значний розрив між зобов'язаннями Італії за Женевською конвенцією 1951 року, Європейською конвенцією з прав людини та директивами ЄС щодо надання притулку, та реаліями життя жінок-мігранток. У статті стверджується, що для подолання цього розриву потрібна скоординована політика, спрямована на розширення багатомовних правових ресурсів, покращення медіаграмотності, боротьбу з дезінформацією та сприяння співпраці між державними установами, неурядовими організаціями, групами діаспори та акторами ЗМІ. Він також підкреслює потенціал цифрових платформ не просто як компенсаційних інструментів, а й як стратегічних інструментів залучення, розширення можливостей та участі. Використовуючи ці платформи для поширення достовірної інформації, полегшення доступу до прав і зміцнення громадянської активності, Італія та Європейський Союз можуть не тільки виконати свої юридичні зобов'язання, але й побудувати більш справедливий, інклюзивний та стійкий процеси інтеграції для переміщених українських жінок та інших груп біженців.

Ключові слова: вимушена міграція, соціальні мережі, інтеграція, право надання притулку, міжнародно-правові стандарти, Італія, невідворення, доступ до інформації.

The migration crises of recent decades have become one of the most serious challenges to international law, testing the strength of existing norms and mechanisms designed to protect people fleeing war, persecution, and human rights violations. Situated at the heart of the Mediterranean migration route, Italy has become a key entry point for refugees and asylum seekers. Its legal system does not operate in isolation, but rather within the framework of broader international obligations stemming from the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as European Union legislation under the Common European Asylum System.

The current legal architecture of the Italian asylum system reflects the complex interplay of international, European, and national law. On the one hand, Italy is obliged to respect the principle of non-refoulement, enshrined in both the 1951 Convention and Article 3 of the European

Convention on Human Rights, and to guarantee access to asylum procedures, a fair examination of applications, and effective remedies. On the other hand, the implementation of these commitments faces persistent structural and political challenges, including insufficient legal assistance, lengthy procedures, inconsistent reception conditions, and politicized policies that impact access to protection and integration.

The social integration of forced Ukrainian female migrants in Italy is a complex and multifaceted issue. This study examines the gendered migration pattern among Ukrainian forced immigrants, with women comprising the majority of those seeking asylum. This demographic shift is primarily due to wartime restrictions imposed by Ukraine, which prohibited in 2022 men aged 18–60 from leaving the country, permitting only women, children, and elderly men (65+) to migrate. This policy has led to significant social, economic, and psychological consequences, as many women must

assume primary financial responsibility, navigate foreign legal systems, and integrate into new labour markets without the traditional support of male family members.

Digital platforms, in particular social media, play an important role in facilitating access to important information and fostering community support among migrants. In this context, Ukrainian Facebook groups, including “Ukrainians of Rimini and the Province”, “Ukrainians of Florence and Tuscany”, and “Ukrainians in Rome”, are key platforms for information exchange and social networking. This study explores the role of media and information resources in the social integration of Ukrainian migrants in Italy, examining how access to digital platforms, news outlets, and community networks influences their adaptation process. It analyzes the extent to which media facilitates linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic integration, as well as its impact on migrants’ sense of belonging. The research also considers challenges such as misinformation, digital divides, and policy gaps affecting media accessibility. By evaluating both opportunities and barriers, the study highlights the critical function of information resources in shaping integration experiences and informing policies for migrant inclusion.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the media consumption of displaced Ukrainians depends on their level of integration into the new environment and knowledge of the local language. According to the USAIDInternews survey, the media consumption of displaced Ukrainians abroad depends on their integration into the environment and their level of language proficiency. The survey data show that both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and Ukrainian migrants abroad prefer Ukrainian news, particularly from their hometown, to stay informed about local events. Displaced Ukrainians noted that “they consume national news through social networks, online media, and television, but still prefer regional newspapers and radio.” Among all surveyed Ukrainians, including IDPs and refugees, a high level of use of Telegram channels as a source of information (73%) was observed [1].

This paper based on interviews with 100 migrants of different ages and professional backgrounds in different regions, the results highlight generational differences in media consumption and digital interaction. The results of this study highlight the importance of digital networks for the adaptation and social integration of forced Ukrainian migrants in Italy. Understanding the role of these platforms can inform policy recommendations and support initiatives aimed at improving migrants’ access to information and social integration in host communities.

The concept of Integration

Before conducting the analysis, it is essential to define the concept of integration. Integration has been described as “a process of confrontation and exchange of values, standards of living, and patterns of behaviour between the immigrant population and the host society” [2, p. 252]. Another definition characterizes integration as “a situation in which the host community and the refugee community can coexist, sharing the same resources— both economic and social—without experiencing greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community” [3]. Penninx R. and Garcés-Masareñas B. define integration as “the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. The degree of acceptance depends on various conditions, including legal, economic, social, and cultural factors.” [4]. Favell A. suggests that “integration is the process through which migrants become part of a receiving society, gaining access to rights, responsibilities, and opportunities that enable them to participate fully in social, economic, and political life” [5, p. 5].

The Council of the European Union adopted the Common Basic Principles on immigrant integration policy (on 19 November 2004), which articulated a set of fundamental conditions necessary for successful integration [6]. The

Common Basic Principles largely understood integration as process by which immigrants would become similar to the non-migrant population, for example in terms of employment participation or educational achievements [7, p. 10]. For our study, the theory of integration developed by Ager and Strang is useful, who identified ten main areas that shape the understanding of the concept of integration: employment, housing, education, health care, social bridges, social ties, social connections, language and cultural knowledge, security and stability, rights and citizenship [8].

This study identifies key dimensions that define the concept of integration, including employment, education, healthcare, social connections (bridges and ties), language proficiency, cultural knowledge, security, stability, and the protection of rights and freedoms. These factors collectively influence the extent to which migrants achieve meaningful inclusion within host societies.

The context of digital platforms

This framework is particularly relevant in the context of digital platforms, where migrants seek information, build social connections, and navigate their new environment. Social media plays a crucial role in facilitating integration by providing access to employment opportunities, housing resources, language support, and community networks. In this regard, online communities serve as digital extensions of the integration process, enabling both practical assistance and cultural exchange.

One such example is the Facebook group ‘Ucraina in italiano’ (Ukraine in Italian), which was created to provide a platform for individuals interested in learning about Ukrainian culture, history, and traditions. It serves as a space for information exchange between Ukrainians and Italians, fostering mutual understanding and cultural interaction. Members share news, events, cultural initiatives, and other materials relevant to Ukraine and the Ukrainian community in Italy. The group is open to anyone seeking to explore Ukrainian culture and gain deeper insights into the country.

Several dedicated Facebook groups exist for the Ukrainian community in various regions of Italy, including *Ukrainians in Rimini and Province*, *Ukrainians of Florence and Tuscany*, *I Can Safely!*, *Ukrainians in Florence, Prato, Pistoia, Siena – Come On!*, and *Ukrainians in Rome*, among others. Globally, Facebook and Instagram remain the most widely used social media platforms, with an increasing number of users accessing them via mobile devices.

The new #OffroAiuto (#IOfferHelp) platform, launched by Italy’s Civil Protection Department, allows private citizens, companies, and third sector organisations to offer goods (such as clothes, non-perishable food, electronic products, school supplies), services (such as teaching, cultural mediation, legal and/or psychological support, transport), and accommodation to those fleeing Ukraine.

The platform makes it easy for civil society to respond promptly and effectively to the needs of new arrivals from Ukraine. Those wanting to propose support must create a profile on the platform, clarify the type of support offer they wish to make, then complete the relevant form with their details. Offers of goods, services, and accommodation received through the platform will be evaluated by emergency coordination services, civil protection voluntary organisations, and third and social private sector associations involved in the reception and support of refugees coming from Ukraine [9].

In Italy, Ukrainian immigrants have access to online resources in Ukrainian. One of these publications is the Ukrainian Newspaper in Italy [10], founded in 2006 by the publishing house Foreigners in Italy. This information and analytical publication provide news, legal advice and other useful information for the Ukrainian community in Italy. In addition, there are various Internet resources and social networks where Ukrainians in Italy can exchange information and maintain contact with their compatriots.

Ukrainian migrants have the opportunity to receive news in the Ukrainian language. Rai News 24 [11] is an Italian state-run news channel that has been broadcasting daily news in Ukrainian since March 2022 at 3:00 PM local time. These resources help Ukrainian migrants in Italy stay informed, stay connected to their native culture, and integrate into local society.

'JumaMap' the platform [12] includes an interactive map that helps users easily find the services and organizations closest to them. This is especially useful for newcomers who are not yet familiar with the local infrastructure. In addition, JumaMap regularly updates information about available services and support, ensuring that the data is relevant to users. Using this platform, Ukrainian migrants can quickly adapt to their new environment, receive the necessary assistance and integrate into Italian society.

The Mentorship for Ukrainians (M4U) program, initiated by the Center for Corporate Social Responsibility Development and the Career Hub platform with the support of SAP, is aimed at providing mentoring support to Ukrainians who were forced to leave the country due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The goal of the program is to help with employment, professional networking, and social integration in the host countries [13].

Unfortunately, based on the available information, the M4U program does not currently cover Italy. The current stages of the program are focused on countries such as Germany, Poland, the USA, Canada, Serbia, Austria, the Netherlands, and Croatia.

The challenges inside the Ukrainian immigrant community

The integration of forced Ukrainian migrants in Italian society depends to some extent on the sentiments of the Ukrainian migrant community itself. In particular, Ukrainian migrant workers arrived in Italy long before the full-scale invasion, mainly in search of work in domestic and care work. Their integration into Italian society has often been accompanied by significant difficulties, including demanding working conditions, job insecurity, and limited legal protection.

As a result of these challenges, certain segments of the established Ukrainian migrant community show a degree of reluctance or even resistance to supporting newly arrived displaced migrants. This phenomenon can be observed in online spaces, particularly in Facebook groups, where instead of providing guidance and assistance, some long-term migrants express their resentment through negative comments. Frequent remarks include statements such as "You will never find a job here" or "We worked for 20 years, and now you come to expect help...", "There is not enough work here, and you are still coming!", "We came in a hurry, and now you are complaining!", "We worked hard, and you want everything at once!", "You will never integrate, because the rules are different here!", "You would sit at home and not bother!", "You came without a language, without experience, and then you complain!", "No one was waiting for you here!", etc.

The use of precise terminology is crucial, particularly in contexts where stereotypes and preconceived notions shape public discourse. In Italy, the widespread association of Ukrainian migrants with the role of 'badante' (it is an Italian word which means 'caretaker') reflects a reductive and often inaccurate perception of their integration into society. While technical language may seem to diminish the emotional impact of a text, employing accurate terminology is essential not only for ensuring clarity and credibility but also for shaping a more nuanced and truthful narrative.

Misuse of language can reinforce stereotypes, whereas precise terminology helps differentiate between misleading or inaccurate reporting and high-quality, ethical journalism. This is particularly important in discussions concerning vulnerable populations, where terminology directly influences public perception, policy decisions, and social integration efforts [14, p. 54].

In January 2024, Linkiesta.it published an interview with Iryna Luts, president of the association "Ucraina più Milano". She spoke about efforts aimed at changing stereotypes about Ukrainian women in Italy, who are often perceived exclusively as service workers. The association actively works to promote Ukrainian culture and history, helping compatriots integrate into Italian society and increase financial literacy.

"When we created the organization, we set ourselves the goal of developing in three directions. The first is to convey our culture and history to Italians. The second direction is to help our people integrate into Italian society, because sometimes it is very difficult to convey information when you do not speak Italian, you need to understand their culture, how they live. And the third direction is financial education for our people. So, we are engaged in the education of financial literacy, because everyone must take responsibility for providing for themselves and their families financially. "To do this, we organize meetings with Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Italy to exchange experiences," says Iryna [15].

Vanessa Christoph argues that perhaps a combination of viewing migrants as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, and more positive portrayals of migrants in the media, will lead to a more positive representation of migrants in society [16].

Thus, social media and information resources play a crucial role in the social integration of Ukrainian migrants in Italy, bridging gaps in employment, housing, legal status and health information. However, relying on informal and community-driven networks creates risks of misinformation and fragmented knowledge.

Access and use of media and information resources

This study incorporates a survey designed to assess the primary sources of information utilized by Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy. The survey included a multiple-choice question allowing respondents to select all the sources they regularly rely on for news and updates. The response options encompassed a broad range of media platforms, including digital, broadcast, and traditional sources, such as social media (Facebook, Telegram, Instagram), television, online news, printed media, local communities and groups (Viber, WhatsApp, online forums), and radio. Additionally, an open-ended category was included to capture alternative sources not listed.

The survey's *first question* asked respondents to identify the information sources they most frequently utilize. Participants could select multiple news sources. Social media dominates, with 75% relying on it, peaking at 90% among 18–24-year-olds but declining with age (30% for 55+). Facebook and Telegram are key for job searches and migration updates. TV is preferred by older groups (80% for 55+), while only 20% of younger women use it. Online news portals (58%) are most popular among 25–44-year-olds. Local digital communities (50%) support practical needs. Print media (22%) and radio (15%) are used mostly by older migrants, highlighting a generational shift toward digital news consumption.

The survey's *second question* examined how frequently Ukrainian immigrants in Italy engage with Ukrainian and Italian media. The results indicate that 35% of respondents prioritize Ukrainian media daily to stay connected with their homeland, while 18% primarily consume Italian media, possibly due to integration challenges or language barriers. An equal balance of both sources is maintained by 22% of respondents. Meanwhile, 15% turn to Ukrainian media only for major events, 5% do not follow Ukrainian media at all, and another 5% avoid Italian media.

The survey's *third question* examined the platforms Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy use for community news and updates. Social media dominates, with 72% relying on Facebook groups and 58% using Telegram channels. Viber groups (46%) are more popular among older women, while

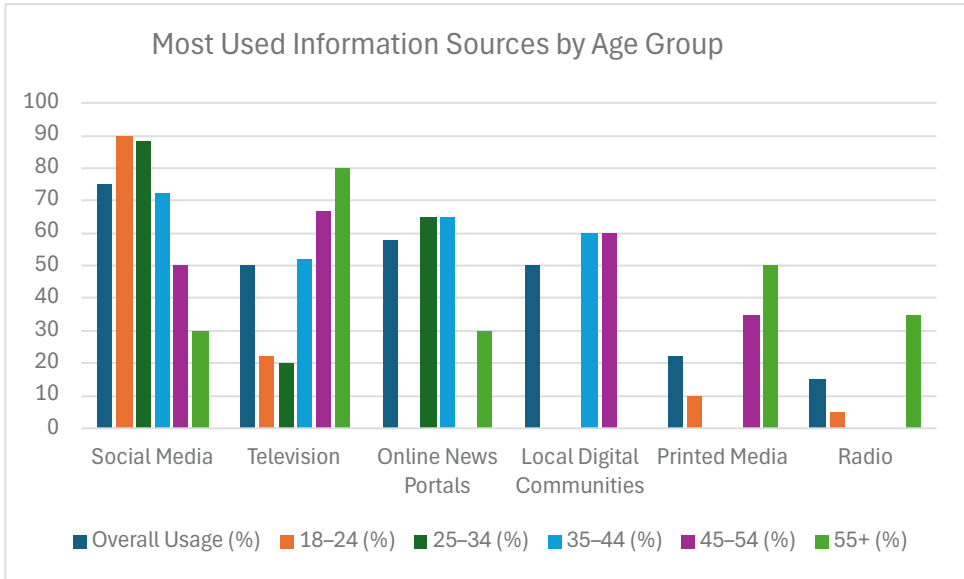


Fig. 1. Most Used Information Sources by Age Group

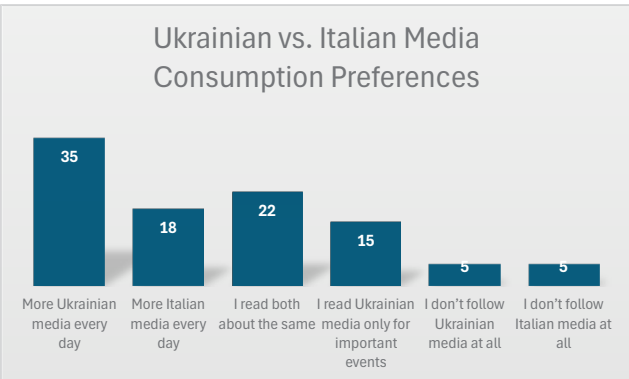


Fig. 2. Ukrainian vs. Italian Media Consumption Preferences

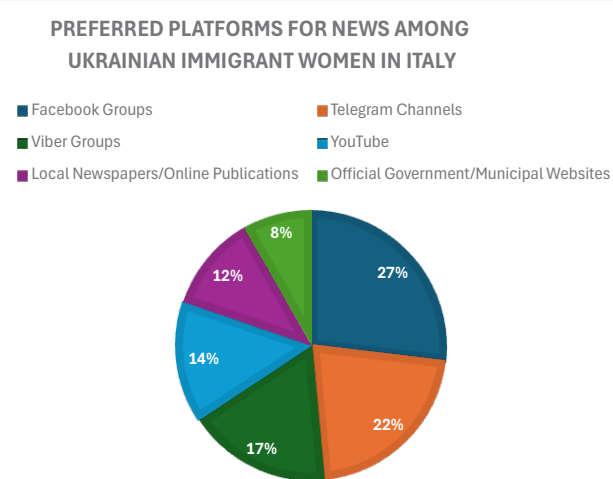


Fig. 3. Preferred Platforms for News Among Ukrainian Immigrant Women in Italy

YouTube (39%) serves as a key source for legal and integration support. Italian media, including local newspapers (31%), remains secondary to diaspora-oriented platforms. Low engagement with official government websites (22%) suggests

barriers such as language difficulties, trust concerns, or usability issues, reinforcing the preference for native-language sources.

The survey's *fourth question* assessed the reliance of Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy on official government and NGO websites for migration-related information. Only 18% frequently use these sources. Another 34% consult them occasionally, often for residency or social service inquiries. A significant 28% rarely use official websites, while 20% never use them, relying instead on social media, personal networks, or informal channels for migration-related updates.

The survey's *fifth question* explored difficulties faced by Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy when seeking reliable information about various aspects of life. The most commonly reported challenge was understanding legal issues, including immigration laws and visa processes (61%). Employment-related information was also a major concern (52%), followed by housing difficulties (47%), particularly regarding rental agreements and landlord exploitation. Healthcare access posed challenges for 38%, while 29% struggled to find educational opportunities. Only 18% found information easily, indicating established support networks, while 6% cited other difficulties, such as accessing childcare, financial aid, or tax information.

The *sixth question* of the survey addressed the obstacles that Ukrainian immigrant women face when communicating with the Italian media. The language barrier (63%) emerged as the most serious problem limiting access to local news. The lack of reliable sources (42%) further complicates interaction with the media. In addition, 35% believe that the Italian media lack relevant topics, while 27% have problems with complex news presentation, including journalistic style and cultural references. Only 20% reported no difficulties, indicating effective language proficiency or adaptation. These findings highlight the need for more accessible and inclusive media coverage of migrants.

The survey's *seventh question* assessed whether Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy find sufficient information in Ukrainian regarding legal rights, employment, and social services. Only 21% consider the available resources sufficient, while 48% report needing additional sources, highlighting fragmented or incomplete information. 26% find the resources inadequate, indicating a significant gap in accessible materials. 5% do not seek information in Ukrainian, relying instead

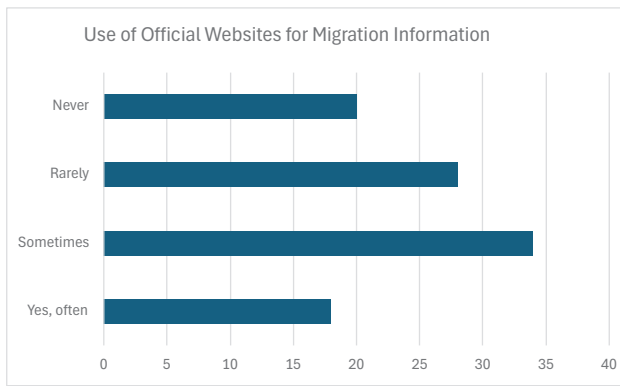


Fig. 4. Use of official websites for migration information

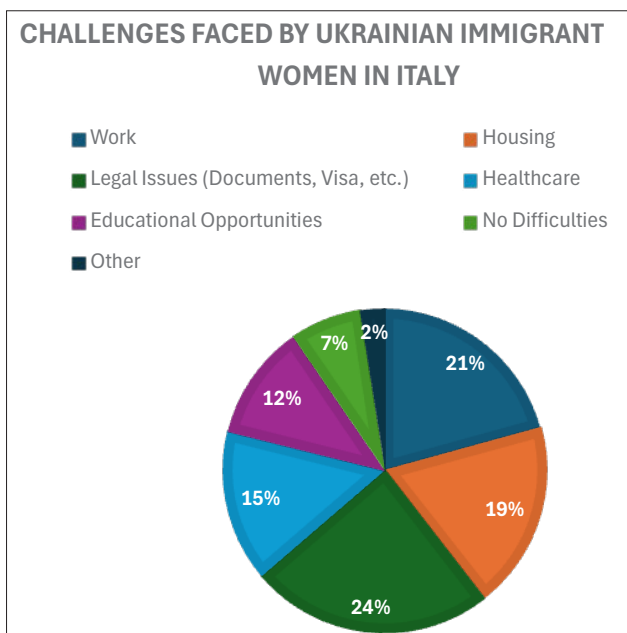


Fig. 5. Challenges faced by Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy

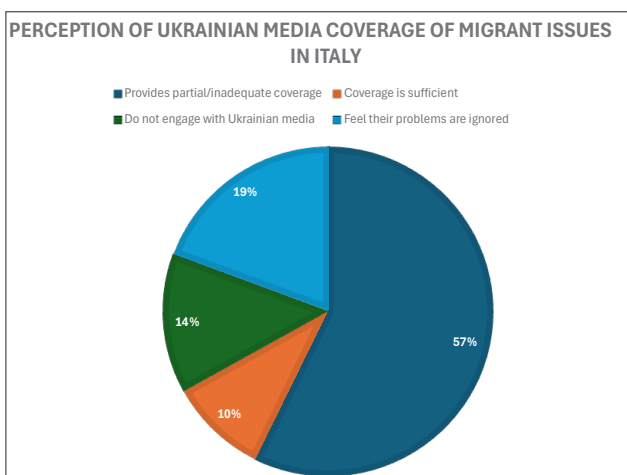


Fig. 6. Perception of Ukrainian Media Coverage of Migrant Issues in Italy

on Italian sources or personal networks. With 74% feeling information is lacking or incomplete, there is a clear need for centralized, comprehensive, and regularly updated Ukrainian-language resources to support migrant integration.

The survey's *eighth question* examined whether Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy had encountered misinformation or biased reporting about Ukrainian migrants in Italian or Ukrainian media. 72% reported biased or misleading coverage, with Italian media cited as the most problematic, likely due to stereotypes, political framing, or sensationalism. 30% identified misinformation in both media ecosystems, indicating a lack of fully balanced reporting. 12% attributed bias primarily to Ukrainian media, while 16% reported no experience with misinformation. These findings underscore the need for more accurate, contextual reporting to counter stereotypes and provide migrants with reliable information.

The survey's *ninth question* examined participation in civic events, social groups, and cultural initiatives promoted via media platforms. 57% have attended events at least occasionally, indicating moderate engagement. 27% follow initiatives online but do not participate, possibly due to time constraints or logistical barriers. 16% show no interest, prioritizing personal or professional matters. Meanwhile, 19% actively participate, strengthening diaspora networks. These findings suggest that while many engage in some capacity, increasing accessibility, offering flexible participation options, and expanding outreach efforts could encourage greater involvement within the Ukrainian community in Italy.

The survey's *tenth question* examined the extent to which Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy participate in political or civic activism via media platforms. 57% engage in activism at least occasionally, with 22% actively involved, highlighting a core group advocating for Ukraine and migrant rights. 28% follow activism but do not participate, possibly due to time constraints or uncertainty about involvement. 15% show no interest, indicating that activism is not a priority for all. Expanding accessible engagement opportunities, such as online petitions and community discussions, could encourage greater participation among passive supporters.

The survey's *eleventh question* assessed whether Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy feel adequately represented by Ukrainian media. 71% believe coverage is partial or inadequate, highlighting a gap in representation. Only 12% find it sufficient, while 17% do not engage with Ukrainian media at all, possibly due to language preferences or reliance on alternative sources. Additionally, 24% feel their challenges are ignored, emphasizing the need for better reporting on migration-related issues. These findings suggest a demand for more comprehensive, inclusive coverage, with stronger engagement between Ukrainian media, migrant communities, and advocacy groups.

The *twelfth question* in the survey collected demographic data to provide a contextual understanding of the survey responses. The variables examined included age, education, duration of stay in Italy, employment status, and Italian language proficiency. These factors help explain trends in media consumption, integration challenges, and civic engagement among Ukrainian immigrant women in Italy.

The survey of Ukrainian migrant women in Italy revealed several key trends in media consumption patterns, access to information, participation in public life and integration-related issues. The integration of Ukrainian migrant women in Italy can be significantly improved through targeted initiatives addressing key challenges such as language barriers, employment access, civic participation, reliable information, digital support, and media literacy.

Social media platforms, particularly Facebook groups (72%) and Telegram channels (58%), are important tools for information sharing and community support among Ukrainian migrants. These platforms help migrants find jobs, housing,

legal advice and social services, filling the gap in official government resources. Furthermore, Viber groups (46%) are particularly useful for middleaged and older women, highlighting the role of peer-to-peer communication.

Language remains a major barrier to integration: 63% of respondents struggle to consume Italian-language media. Furthermore, 42% reported difficulties in finding reliable Italian sources, while 35% believe that Italian media do not cover topics that concern them. These results indicate a reliance on Ukrainian-language media and informal community networks, which may lead to gaps in knowledge about Italian society, labour rights, and social policies. That is why a crucial aspect of integration is language acquisition, as proficiency in Italian is essential for social and professional inclusion. Expanding free Italian language courses, including flexible online learning options, would facilitate access for working women and caregivers who may struggle to attend in-person classes.

While only 18% frequently use official government and NGO websites for migration-related information, 62% use them occasionally or rarely, indicating that these sources are perceived as unavailable or difficult to access. Instead, many migrants rely on social media and diaspora networks, which can provide faster but sometimes less reliable information.

Among the most critical areas where respondents found it difficult to obtain accurate information were: legal status and documents (61%), employment opportunities (52%), housing (47%), and access to healthcare (38%).

These findings highlight the urgent need for structured, multilingual, and migrant-friendly information platforms that address these key issues.

While 22% of respondents engage in active political or civic engagement through the media (e.g., signing petitions, attending rallies), 35% participate occasionally, and 28% follow these events without participating. This suggests that social media plays a crucial role in mobilizing the diaspora for advocacy efforts, particularly on issues related to Ukraine and migrant rights in Italy.

Similarly, 57% of respondents participate in social or cultural events promoted through the media, while a significant portion of 27% follow them only online. This suggests that while digital platforms are effective in engaging the community, more offline initiatives could be developed to encourage direct participation and deeper integration.

While 47% of respondents believe that Ukrainian media in Italy cover some issues related to migration, they acknowledge gaps and 24% believe that the problems of Ukrainian migrants are largely ignored. This suggests that existing Ukrainian media do not fully cover the realities of migration, integration challenges and bureaucratic difficulties in Italy. A more nuanced and researchbased approach to reporting on Ukrainian migration could better inform the diaspora and combat disinformation. Longer residence in Italy correlates with greater integration into Italian media, but migrants in Italy for less than 3 years (45%) still have problems accessing key resources. Those with lower proficiency in Italian (37% A1–A2, 10% none) rely almost exclusively on Ukrainianlanguage sources, reinforcing information silos.

Employment status influences information needs—those in temporary or irregular jobs (22%) rely more on informal job postings via Viber, Telegram, and Facebook. Employment remains a critical factor for stability and independence. Establishing social media-based job portals that connect Ukrainian migrants with verified employment opportunities while providing guidance on work permits and labour rights would enhance job accessibility and protect migrant workers from exploitation. Beyond employment, fostering civic participation is essential for social cohesion. Encouraging Ukrainian women to engage in local initiatives and community events would promote greater social inclusion beyond digital interactions, strengthening their sense of belonging in Italian society.

These results suggest that language learning programs, employment assistance, and more robust legal advice can significantly improve access to reliable information and reduce reliance on informal networks, which can sometimes provide misleading or incomplete information. Language barriers significantly impact media consumption: women with lower Italian proficiency rely more on Ukrainian-language social media, Viber/Telegram groups, and community networks.

Long-term residents are more likely to integrate into Italian media, but those who have lived in the country for less than three years still experience difficulties accessing reliable information. Irregular employment and lack of formal employment status correlate with difficulties accessing reliable information, particularly about legal rights and social services. Highly educated respondents may feel underserved by Ukrainian media in Italy, as they may seek in-depth analytical content rather than general community news.

These findings emphasize the need for more structured, accessible, and multilingual resources for Ukrainian women in Italy, particularly in legal, employment, and social service areas. Strengthening media outreach in both Ukrainian and Italian, expanding integration programs, and offering clearer pathways to professional recognition would significantly improve the information landscape for this community.

Conclusion. The findings of this study reveal that the social integration of forced Ukrainian migrant women in Italy is shaped by a complex interaction between digital communication practices, socio-economic realities, and the broader legal framework governing migration and asylum. While social media platforms such as Facebook and Telegram serve as essential tools for accessing information, building community networks, and facilitating civic participation, they also expose migrants to misinformation and fragmented knowledge, underscoring the need for institutional support and legal clarity. Language barriers, limited access to official resources, and insufficient legal guidance continue to impede integration, particularly in areas related to employment, housing, and social services.

From a legal perspective, these challenges highlight a gap between Italy's formal obligations under international and European law – including the 1951 Geneva Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights, and EU asylum directives – and the lived realities of migrants navigating the asylum system. The underutilization of official platforms and reliance on informal networks indicate systemic barriers that prevent many from exercising their rights effectively. Addressing these barriers requires not only policy innovation but also a more proactive implementation of existing legal standards, particularly regarding access to information, non-discrimination, and the right to effective remedies.

Bridging the divide between legal commitments and social outcomes will require an integrated approach. Expanding multilingual legal resources, strengthening Italian language instruction, and creating centralized, migrant-friendly information platforms would reduce dependence on informal channels and enhance legal literacy. Likewise, fostering cooperation between diaspora groups, NGOs, and state institutions could improve access to verified information and protect migrants from exploitation and misinformation. Finally, promoting media literacy and ensuring more accurate, inclusive reporting in both Italian and Ukrainian media would help dismantle stereotypes and support more equitable integration processes.

By aligning legal frameworks with targeted social policies, Italy and the European Union can transform digital platforms from compensatory tools into strategic instruments of protection and inclusion. Such an approach would ensure that forced Ukrainian migrants – and refugees more broadly – are not only granted legal status but are also empowered to exercise their rights fully, participate meaningfully in their new communities, and build stable, independent lives in accordance with international legal principles.

Access to reliable and up-to-date information remains a challenge for many Ukrainian migrant women. Expanding Ukrainian-language resources through official, centralized, and regularly updated platforms that provide comprehensive information on legal rights, employment opportunities, and social services would improve access to critical services.

Additionally, digital support networks play a crucial role in migrant integration. Strengthening collaboration between NGOs, local authorities, and Ukrainian diaspora groups would help establish trusted and accessible online platforms that offer practical guidance and foster a supportive community.

Finally, addressing misinformation and disinformation is essential for informed decision-making. Offering media literacy workshops and digital guides would equip migrants with the necessary skills to critically assess Italian and Ukrainian media sources, helping them navigate information more effectively.

By implementing these measures, Italy can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Ukrainian migrant women, ensuring they have the resources, information, and opportunities needed to build stable and independent lives in their new communities.

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Дата першого надходження рукопису до видання: 08.10.2025
 Дата прийнятого до друку рукопису після рецензування: 13.11.2025
 Дата публікації: 28.11.2025