

# MOVING BORDERS

A survey on forcibly displaced Ukrainian artists



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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# Introduction – about This Report

This research report was developed within the framework of the *Moving Borders* project, a Creative Europe cooperation that brings together dance organisations and artists across Europe to support forcibly displaced female Ukrainian dance artists.

The project aims to provide tools for dance and cultural organisations to navigate the arrival of forcibly displaced artists and civilians by facilitating exchange within local social and cultural contexts, and by addressing the challenges and possibilities that emerge when people cross borders - not only physically, but also artistically and socially. Central to this effort is a reflection on how cultural institutions can respond with care, creativity, and structural adaptability.

To explore these dynamics, the research adopted a dual perspective.

On one hand, we investigated the experience of **cultural organisations** who mobilised in response to the war in Ukraine. Through a dedicated survey, we collected insights from 94 organisations across Europe - ranging from large institutions to small grassroots initiatives. The data reveals an initial surge of solidarity and support - such as accommodation, financial aid, and project inclusion - but also points to growing challenges in sustaining these efforts over time. The responses highlight both the commitment of the sector and the fragility of its financial and infrastructural capacity to host and integrate artists in the long term.

On the other hand, we focused on the voices of **displaced Ukrainian dance artists**, gathering 40 responses that illuminate their lived experiences, practices, needs and aspirations more than two years into the war. Their testimonies reveal how displacement has acted both as a rupture and a transformation: shifting artistic practices, generating new ways of working, and opening up urgent questions around identity, healing, collaboration, and the right to cultural agency. At the same time, they point to continued precarity, a desire for meaningful recognition, and the importance of feeling part of a community—not just as guests, but as equal contributors to the European cultural landscape.

This report brings together these two perspectives to offer a multidimensional view of what it means to host, to arrive, and to co-create in a time of crisis and movement. It does not aim to be exhaustive, but rather to offer grounded insights and open up shared reflections for the future.

# 1 CULTURAL ORGANISATION

# Premise

This section presents an overview of the actions and challenges faced by **host organisations** that have supported forcibly displaced Ukrainian artists since the beginning of the war. Based on data collected from a survey of 94 organisations, it offers insights into the geographic distribution of support, the diversity of the organisations involved, and the sustainability of the resources mobilised.

One key takeaway is the pivotal role played by **smaller non-profit and grassroots organisations**, which have shown extraordinary solidarity despite limited resources. Most support has been publicly funded, with national governments and European institutions playing a central role. However, few respondents reported the actual amounts received—pointing to possible financial fragility and a need for greater transparency.

Organisations have taken on a wide range of responsibilities: from meeting basic needs such as housing and financial support, to enabling artistic continuity through residencies, collaborative projects, and integration into local cultural ecosystems. Yet, while mobilisation was strong in the early stages of the conflict, **support appears to be waning**. The initial wave of solidarity has slowed, and current levels of engagement are significantly reduced.

This presentation also explores the **transformative impact** of these experiences on host organisations themselves: shifts in programming, new sensitivities to social justice, and a growing awareness of the cultural sector's role in times of crisis. What emerges is not just a picture of resilience, but a **call for long-term commitment**—to ensure that these actions are not short-lived acts of emergency, but steps toward a more inclusive and sustainable cultural infrastructure.



# OVERVIEW

94 answers

31 completed

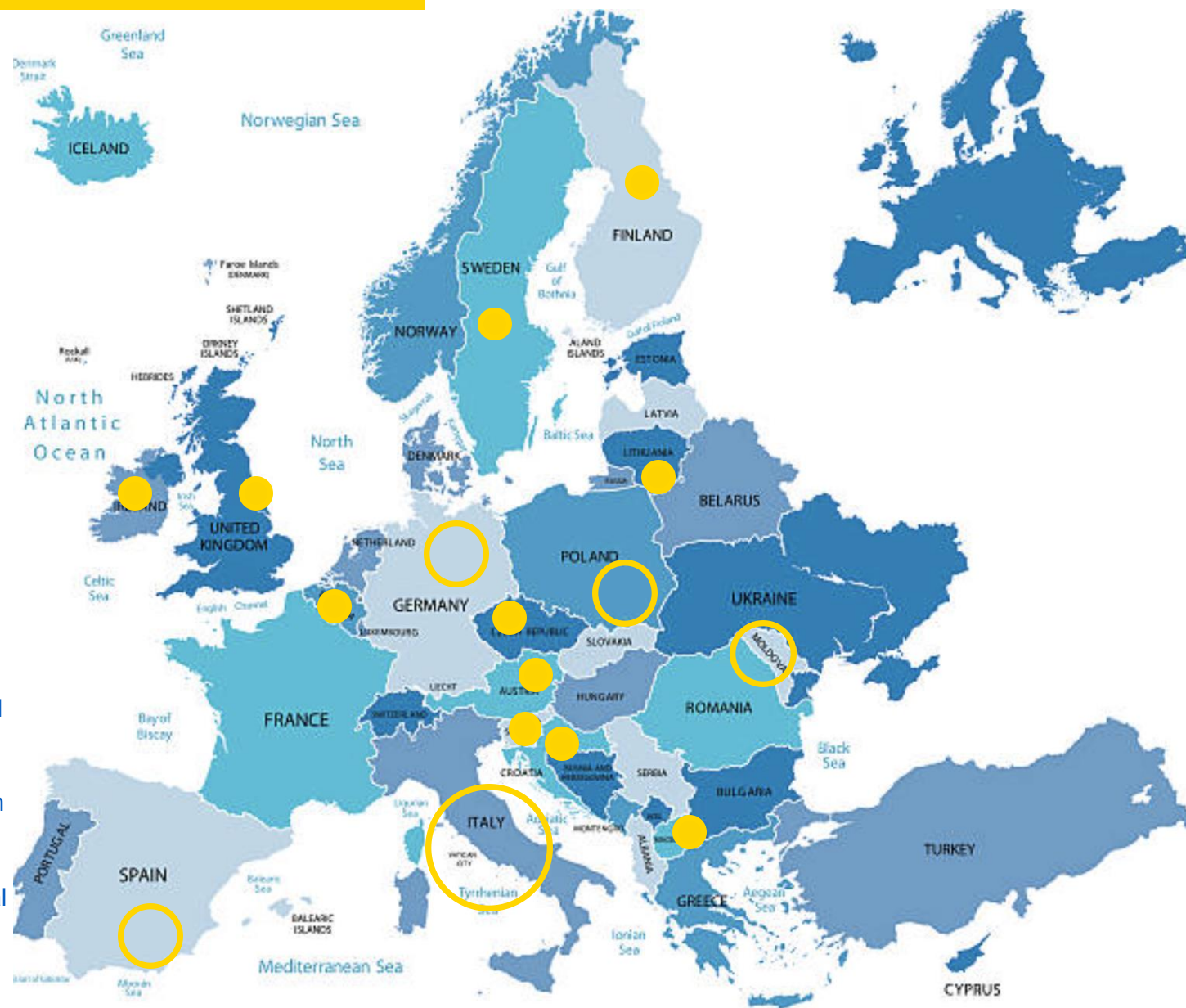
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# Geographic distribution

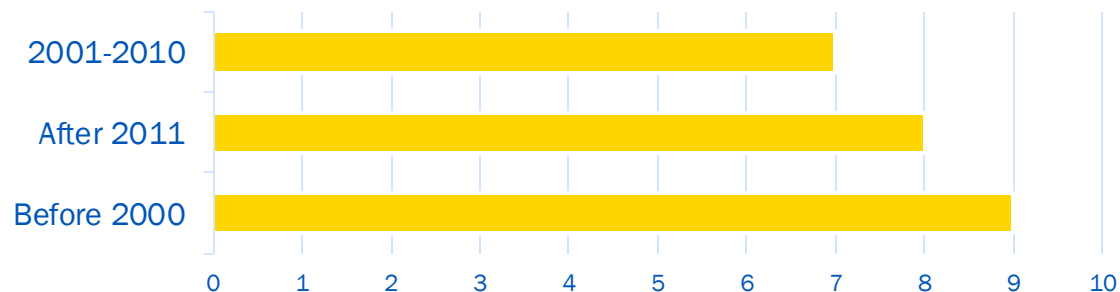
	Count	Percentage
Italy	4	16,7%
Germany	2	8,3%
Spain	2	8,3%
Republic of Moldova	2	8,3%
Poland	2	8,3%
Austria	1	4,2%
Belgium	1	4,2%
Croatia	1	4,2%
Czech Republic	1	4,2%
UK	1	4,2%
Georgia	1	4,2%
Lithuania	1	4,2%
Republic of Ireland	1	4,2%
Romania	1	4,2%
Slovakia	1	4,2%
Finland	1	4,2%
Sweden	1	4,2%
	24	

The geographic spread of respondents across 16 different European countries highlights the extensive and fragmented nature of displacement among Ukrainian dance artists. Italy, Germany, and Spain emerge as the most common destinations, but artists have also settled or passed through countries ranging from Sweden to Georgia. This diversity underscores both the complexity of mobility patterns and the urgent need for coordinated, cross-national support systems that address the lived realities of a dispersed artistic community



# Variety of the organisations

Year established

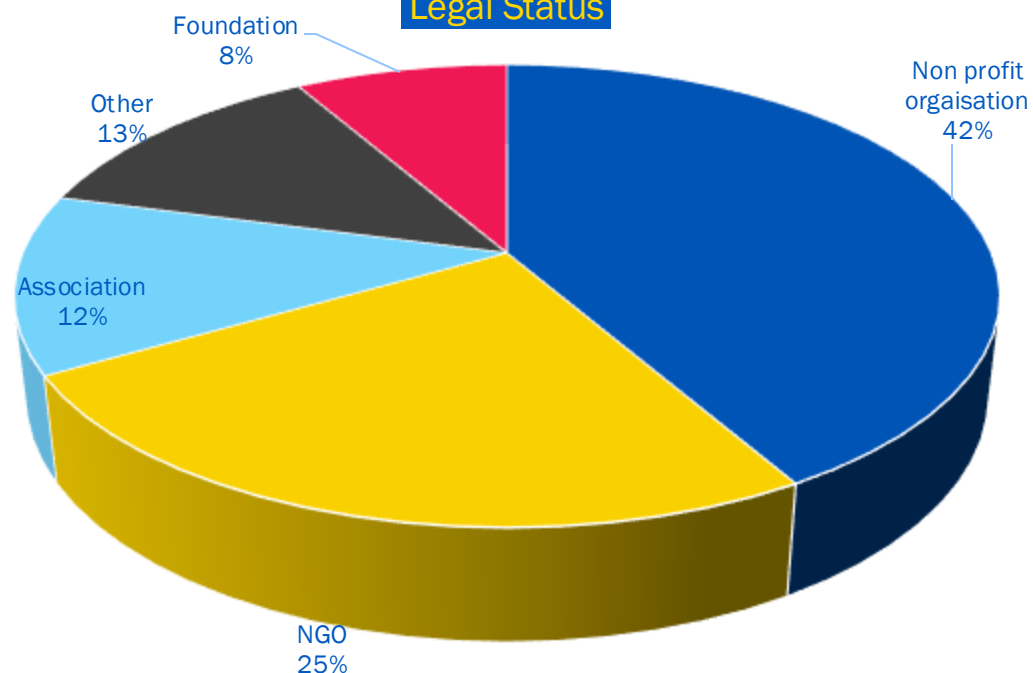


The landscape of organisations supporting forcibly displaced Ukrainian artists is notably diverse.

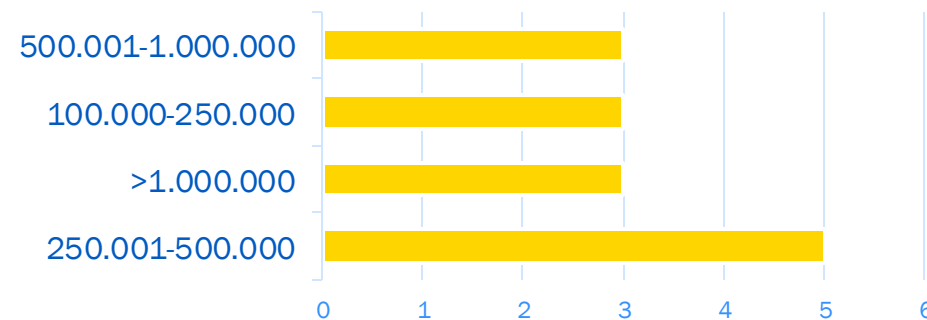
Respondents include a mix of non-profits (42%), NGOs (25%), associations, and foundations, with varying legal statuses and financial capacities.

While the majority operate on limited budgets, their engagement demonstrates a strong grassroots commitment to cultural solidarity. Interestingly, support has come from both long-established institutions and newer actors founded after 2011, confirming that the capacity to host and care for displaced artists transcends organisational age or size.

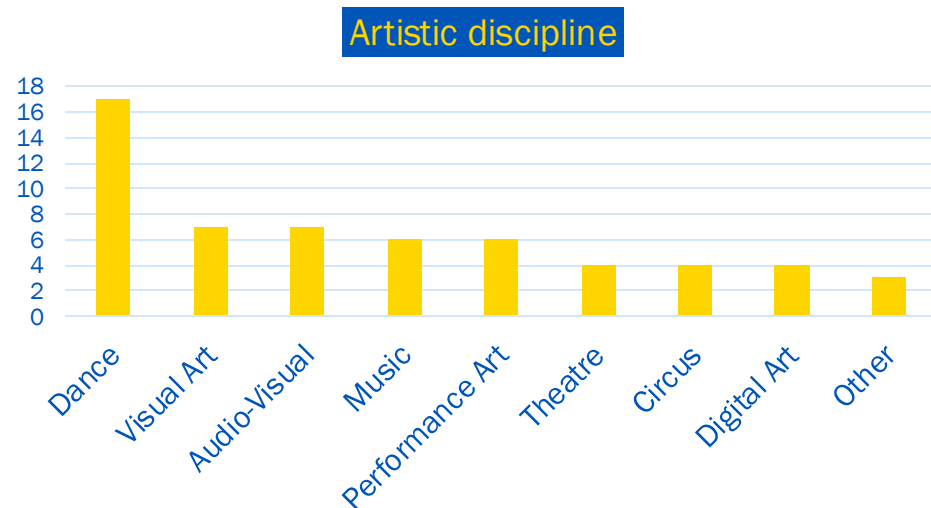
Legal Status



Financial Capacity

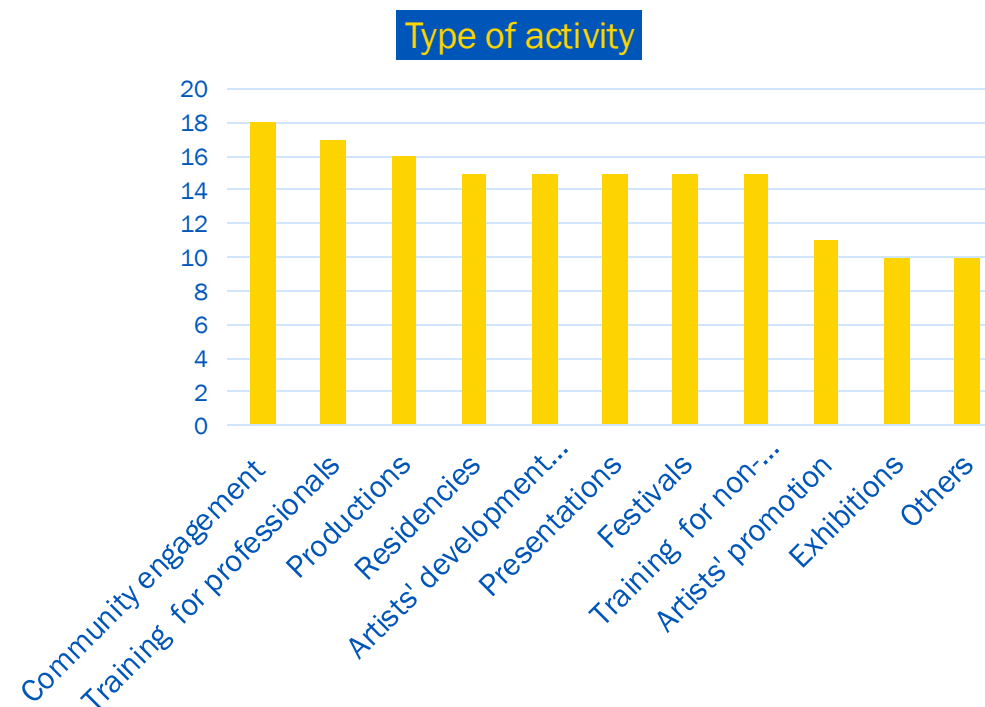


# Disciplines & Activities



The vast majority of respondents are dance artists, which reflects both the disciplinary background of the participating individuals and the specific focus of the hosting organisations reached by the Moving Borders project. Beyond dance, artists also come from fields such as visual and audiovisual arts, music, performance, and theatre, confirming the presence of multidisciplinary trajectories.

As for the activities carried out, community engagement initiatives and professional training top the list, followed closely by productions and residencies. This reveals a dual dimension: the need to maintain and develop one's practice, and the parallel aspiration to connect with local communities and audiences. Artistic continuity and social integration emerge as interlinked drivers of the post-displacement journey.





# Sustainability – sources of funding

The data reveals a reliance on public funding as the main financial backbone for initiatives supporting forcibly displaced Ukrainian artists. National governments emerge as the most common contributors, confirming the role of state institutions in facilitating emergency cultural responses. However, the low number of respondents who declared the exact amount received—and the modest size of those contributions (less than €20,000)—points to a general lack of transparency or clarity around financial sustainability.

Foundations play a significant complementary role, with nearly half of the artists benefiting from philanthropic support, reinforcing the value of civil society in responding flexibly to emerging needs. A smaller yet important share of respondents mention EU and local/regional funding, underlining the relevance of multi-level public support.

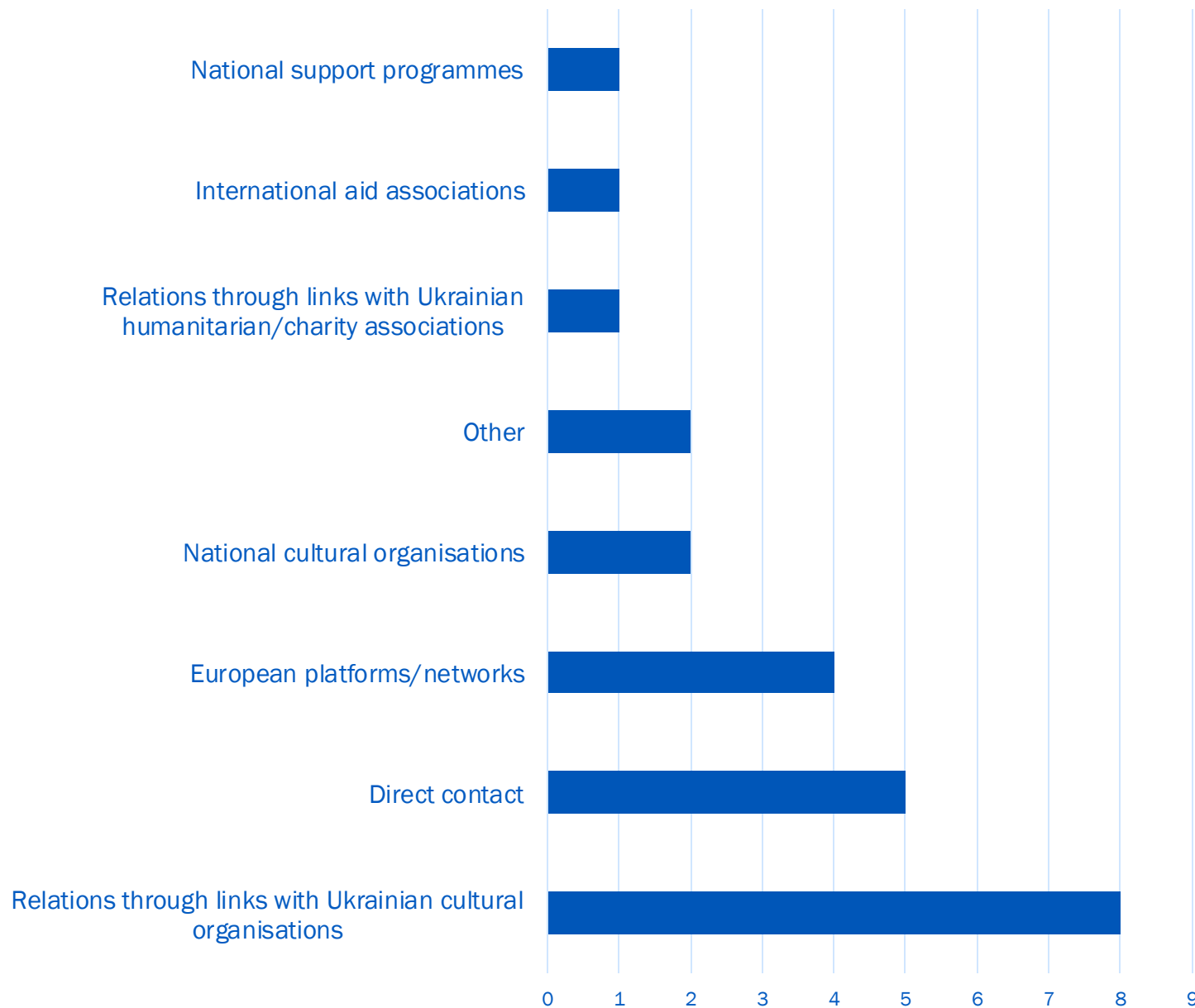
These findings highlight both the dependence on short-term, fragmented funding streams and the urgent need to secure more stable, long-term investment to allow artistic practices to thrive beyond emergency support.



# UKRAINIAN DANCE ARTISTS

Actions undertaken by host organisations

# How to reach the artists

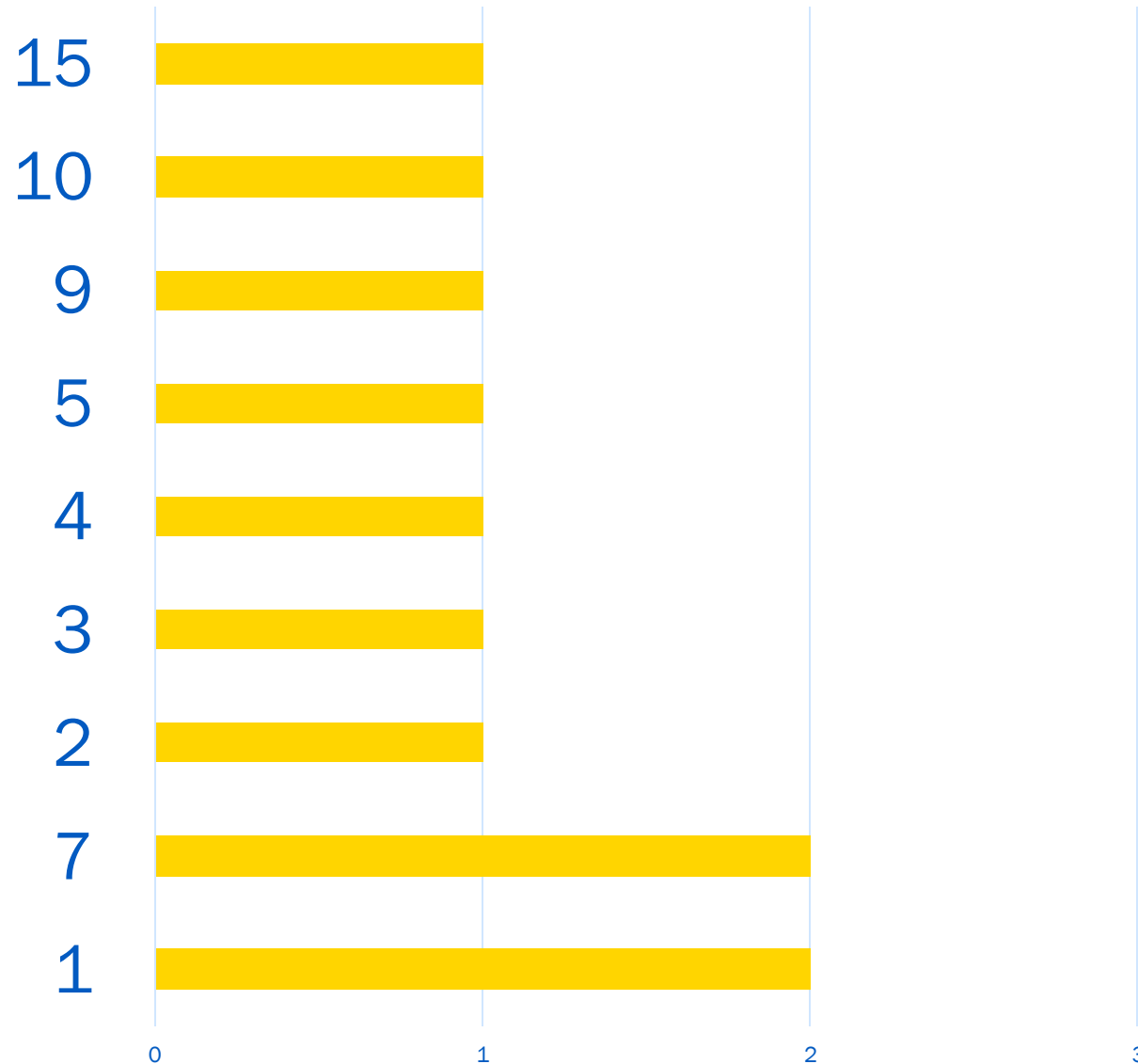


The most effective channel for reaching forcibly displaced Ukrainian artists has been through **existing links with Ukrainian cultural organisations**, followed by **direct contact** and **European cultural networks**. This underlines the crucial role played by pre-existing professional and community ties in ensuring continuity, trust, and access to opportunities.

Conversely, formal mechanisms such as national or international aid associations, humanitarian groups, and national support programmes appear significantly less impactful. These results highlight a gap between institutional outreach mechanisms and the actual networks that artists rely on.

Strengthening **peer-based and community-driven channels**—especially through collaboration with Ukrainian organisations—can therefore be considered the most strategic way to support artists in exile, build meaningful relationships, and foster inclusive cultural practices.

# Artists hosted



The number of artists hosted by each organisation varies widely, ranging from just one to as many as fifteen. This variation reflects the **heterogeneity of organisational capacities and resources**, as well as the different operational models and mandates.

Notably, most organisations have hosted **between 1 and 7 artists**, suggesting that **small-scale, more personalised forms of support** have been predominant. This aligns with qualitative evidence from the survey, which highlights the importance of human connection, trust, and tailored support in navigating the challenges of displacement. These findings point to the **value of decentralised, flexible hosting approaches**, especially when supported by clear frameworks and sustained funding mechanisms.

# Actions undertaken since the beginning of the war



Since the outbreak of the war, cultural organisations have mobilised in various ways to support Ukrainian artists and institutions. The most common actions included **solidarity statements**, **hosting Ukrainian artists**, and **collaborations within regional or national initiatives**—underscoring the sector’s commitment not only to symbolic gestures but also to **concrete, structural responses**.

Although **financial support**—especially for artists within the EU—was significant, direct aid to artists and organisations inside Ukraine was less frequent, indicating possible barriers in reaching in-country counterparts. Similarly, more logistical or emergency responses such as **first aid or crowdfunding** were reported to a lesser extent.

The diversity of actions reflects a sector that, despite its limited resources, has shown agility and empathy, balancing advocacy with tangible support measures to meet immediate and long-term needs.

# Actions taken to meet the needs of the Ukrainian artists hosted



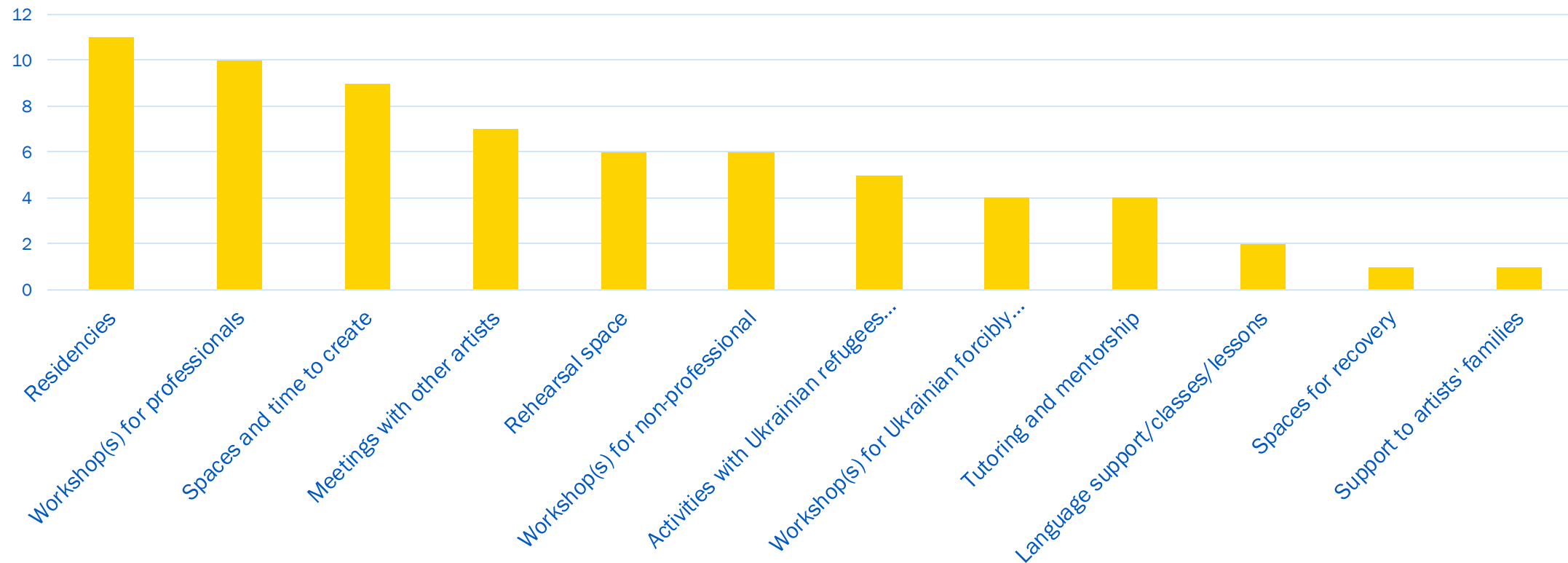
The needs of Ukrainian artists vary, but accommodation, financial support, and work opportunities are among the most critical areas of support.

The most frequent actions undertaken by host organisations focused on **basic needs and professional continuity**: accommodation, access to spaces for artistic work, and cultural job opportunities emerge as the top three forms of support. These are essential not only for survival but also for enabling artists to maintain their creative identity and productivity.

Alongside these, many organisations also provided **financial support**, facilitated **connections with national and international artists**, and assisted in navigating **bureaucratic and administrative systems**—recognising that integration requires both practical tools and relational bridges.

Less commonly addressed, but nonetheless crucial, were actions such as **active listening**, **research grants**, and **language support**. These lower-response areas highlight important gaps and the need to adopt a more holistic view of artists' well-being, encompassing emotional resilience, intellectual development, and cultural inclusion.

# Activities implemented



The most commonly implemented activities by host organisations were **residencies**, **workshops for professionals**, and the provision of **dedicated creative spaces**. These actions directly supported the professional continuity of forcibly displaced dance artists, allowing them to remain engaged with their artistic practices despite the upheaval.

In addition, **networking opportunities**—such as meetings with other artists—and **workshops for broader communities** (non-professionals, refugees, and immigrants) show a dual focus on individual support and collective inclusion.

Less frequent but equally significant actions—such as **mentorship**, **language classes**, and **recovery spaces**—reflect the need to expand beyond immediate professional tools and address the more **holistic aspects of integration**, including emotional well-being and communication capacities.

# DISPLACED UKRAINIAN ARTISTS HOSTED BY THE ORGANISATIONS...

Who they are...

Focus



# A snapshot

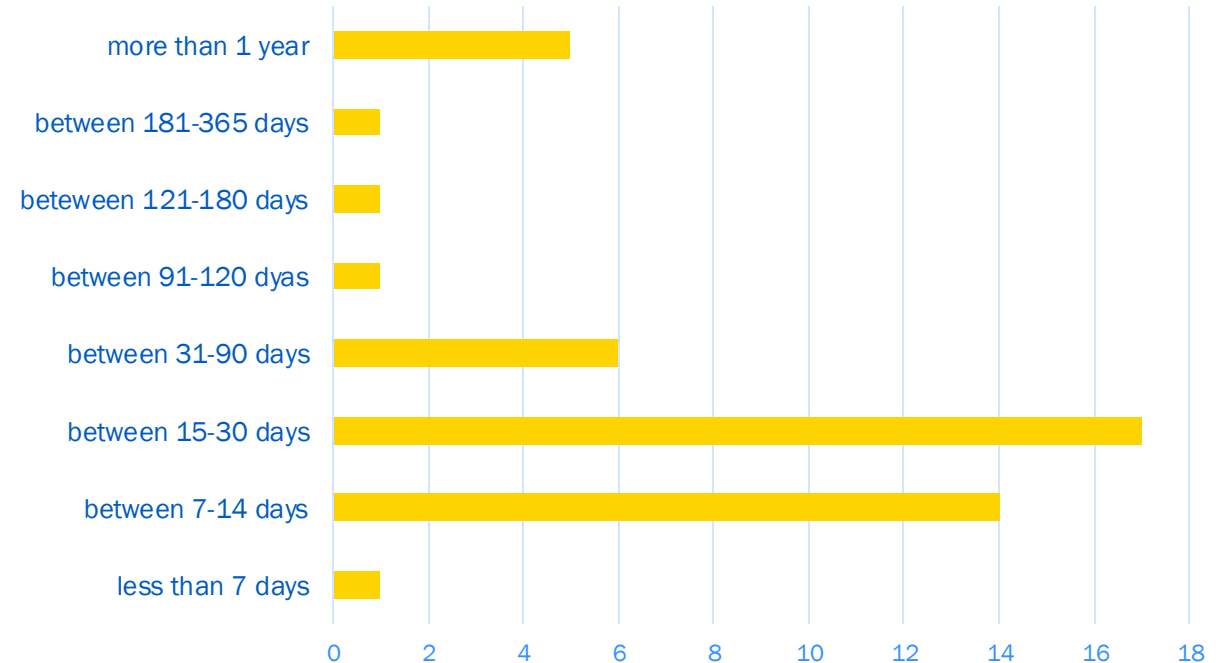
## Age

	Count	Percentage
<18	3	6,5%
<b>19-24</b>	14	30,4%
<b>25-30</b>	16	34,8%
31-40	12	26,1%
41-45	1	2,2%
	<b>46</b>	

## Support provided

	Count	Percentage
<b>Accommodation</b>	30	65,2%
<b>Financial Support</b>	19	41,3%
<b>Travel</b>	15	32,6%
<b>Fee</b>	21	45,7%
<b>Visa</b>	17	37,0%
<b>Subsidies</b>	15	32,6%
Residency	8	17,4%
Workshop	2	4,3%
Rehearsals space	13	28,3%
Mentoring	10	21,7%
	<b>46</b>	

## Duration of hosting

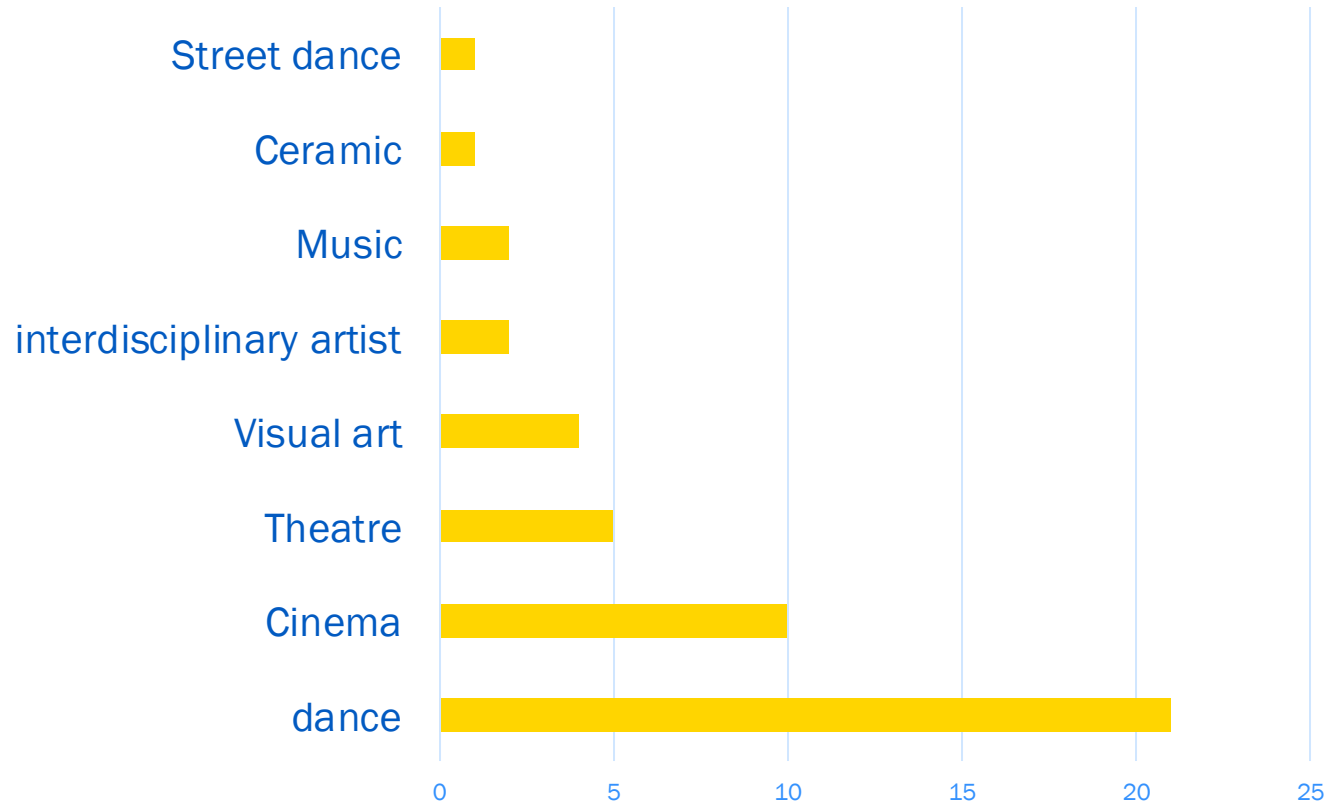


The snapshot reveals a **demographic concentration of young displaced artists**, with nearly two-thirds between the ages of **19 and 30**.

The duration of hosting varies widely, though most stays have been **short-term (7 to 30 days)**, indicating the predominance of emergency responses or temporary residencies rather than long-term integration schemes.

In terms of support provided, the most frequent forms include **accommodation (65%)**, **financial support (41%)**, and **coverage of travel, visa, or fee-related costs**. However, the relatively low incidence of **residencies, workshops, or mentoring** suggests that sustained artistic development and professional anchoring remain areas of unmet need.

# Field of activity



The data reveals a **predominance of dance artists** among the displaced creatives involved in the project, followed by those working in cinema and theatre. This overrepresentation of dance can be partially attributed to the **specific composition of the organisations responding to the survey**, many of which operate within the field of performing arts and particularly contemporary dance. Nonetheless, the presence of artists from a range of disciplines—including visual arts, music, and interdisciplinary practices—confirms the **plural and hybrid nature** of creative trajectories among forcibly displaced artists.

From the perspective of host organisations, the level of integration of forcibly displaced artists into the local artistic ecosystem is perceived as moderate. While a few organisations observed a strong or positive integration (4 and 12 respectively), the majority reported only partial integration (16), with isolated cases of weak or no integration at all. This suggests that although efforts have been made to welcome artists into local networks, structural and relational barriers still limit their full participation. The data highlights the need for more sustained and strategic support to ensure displaced artists are not only temporarily included but meaningfully embedded within local cultural ecosystems.

# LOCAL ARTISTIC ECOLOGY

Level of integration into local ecosystem



2



6



3



1



# The structure of exchanges/collaborations/dialogues

The integration of Ukrainian artists into the local artistic ecosystem has occurred organically, with host organisations facilitating regular meetings and collaborations with local artists.



Encounters and meetings with local artists occurred organically, given that our space is frequented daily by various artists

8



Meetings with local artists happened on a regular basis

6



Meetings with local artists were encouraged to foster mutual understanding and collaboration

6

Host organisations facilitated the integration of Ukrainian artists into the local cultural ecosystem through a variety of relational formats. In many cases (8), encounters with local artists emerged organically, driven by the daily life of artistic spaces shared by multiple professionals. In other instances, meetings were organised regularly (6), or were intentionally promoted to stimulate mutual understanding and artistic collaboration (6). These findings suggest that while informal proximity plays a key role in enabling exchange, some organisations have also taken structured steps to ensure opportunities for deeper interaction and shared creation.

Beyond numerical data, host organisations described a rich diversity of strategies to encourage interactions between displaced Ukrainian and local artists. These included invitations to artist talks and showings, open conversations, and active networking events with local or neighbouring cultural scenes. In many cases, collaboration emerged from shared spaces such as cultural centres or residencies, while in others, direct engagement was facilitated through professional networks and associations. Some initiatives even led to co-creation processes, with Ukrainian artists involving local artists—especially musicians and performers—in new projects, workshops, and long-term learning formats. These testimonies underline the importance of relational infrastructures and cultural proximity in fostering meaningful dialogue and creative exchange.

*We organised events where both local artists and Ukrainian artists participated. Our residency activities are structured in a way that artists' encounter and collaboration is fostered.*

*We have a space - a cultural centre, and the interactions were happening around that space and also in the frame of different activities like artists-talks organised with participants from Ukraine.*

*We did series of networking events for Ukrainian artists to meet with Slovak artists and cultural organisations.*

*We contacted our network of local artists and informed them of the Ukrainian artists' needing contacts, help, support and working opportunities. We also contacted directly some associations and/ or other local actors that we considered relevant regarding the artistic field the Ukrainians represented, and invited the Ukrainians to all of the events we organised.*

*Different ways. UA artist invited Czechs to cooperate in new creation projects - it worked many times very well with musicians as well as performers. UA artists participated in different workshops - long life learning (Dance to Schools, workshops in dramaturgy etc.).*

*We invited the local artists to come and see the sharing and presentation of works; organised a conversation and also tried to be directed by the Ukrainian artist in terms of what they are interested to do and who they are interested to meet.*

# Collaboration with other organisations

Collaboration with other organisations played a crucial role in supporting displaced Ukrainian artists. The majority of host organisations activated partnerships with national (5) and European (3) cultural organisations, building bridges across institutional and geographical boundaries. Additionally, some engaged with social and charitable entities (1), as well as academic institutions (1), although no partnerships with schools were reported. This confirms the cultural sector's strong transnational ties, while also pointing to the potential for more cross-sectoral engagement in the future



National cultural organisations 5



European cultural organisations 3



Other 2



Social/charity Entities 1



Academies/Universities 1



Schools 0

# ACTIVITIES FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

The relationship with civic society



# Solidarity Actions

The responses highlight a strong and multifaceted commitment to solidarity. Among the 8 organisations engaged in support of Ukrainian civilian refugees, the most common actions involved collaborations within broader solidarity projects (7) and the issuing of public solidarity statements (6). These were often accompanied by regional or national-level project participation (6), and concrete actions such as fundraising (5) and hosting civilians (3). Although fewer in number, initiatives like language classes, humanitarian aid, and research activities signal a willingness to address both immediate needs and long-term integration challenges. This layered approach reflects the sector's capacity for both reactive and strategic support.

## Activities for forcibly displaced citizens

Only five organisations reported having organised activities specifically targeting forcibly displaced citizens. These initiatives - ranging from workshops and performances to meetings and language classes - remain limited in scale but are crucial first steps towards social cohesion. Their relatively small number highlights the challenges and capacity constraints of the host organisations, which often prioritised direct support to artists. Nonetheless, these activities show a commitment to fostering encounters, cultural participation, and linguistic accessibility for wider displaced communities.

### Just 5 organised activities for citizens

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| – Workshops                              | 4 |
| – Shows and performances                 | 3 |
| – Activities to encourage people to meet | 2 |
| – Access to events/exhibitions           | 2 |
| – Dance classes                          | 1 |
| – Language classes/lessons               | 1 |



# CHANGES

6 respondents stated *working with Ukrainian artists has been a*  
*TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE*

# Changes

*After this experience, has there been a change in your artistic programming? (e.g. through new formats, themes, focus, choice of artists...)*

YES

54,5%

NO

45,5%

More than half of the organisations (54.5%) reported that working with Ukrainian artists led to changes in their artistic programming. This reflects how hosting displaced artists not only addressed urgent needs but also became a transformative encounter—opening up new curatorial perspectives, formats, and partnerships. However, the nearly equal share of organisations that did not experience changes (45.5%) suggests that integration into existing frameworks was not always accompanied by deep structural or thematic shifts. This tension between continuity and transformation points to the different levels of institutional adaptability and openness across the sector.

# What happened in the hosting Organisations

The experience of hosting Ukrainian artists has generated a multifaceted transformation within the organisations involved. On the one hand, many report tangible benefits such as improved access to national and EU funding, strengthened financial resilience, and even the economic independence of hosted artists. On the other, a deeper shift is visible: organisations feel more prepared for future hosting, have launched new projects with and for Ukrainian artists, and expanded their networks across borders.

Crucially, this process also led to increased awareness—both of the social role of the cultural sector and of the importance of collaborative actions to support artists in exile. What emerges is a dual transformation: logistical and relational, pragmatic and political. Hosting was not a one-way act of support but a reciprocal process that reshaped visions, practices, and alliances.



- We improved relationships with national funding bodies
- Hosted Ukrainian Artists have learned the language
- The artists we hosted have achieved economic independence
- We have benefited from new financial resources
- We were able to benefit from EU funds



- Hosted artists have initiated collaborative work with other cultural organisations
- We have developed new projects focusing on Ukrainian artists
- We developed new connections with cultural organisations active and based in Ukraine
- We feel more prepared to host new forcibly displaced artists in the future
- We gained greater awareness of the social impact of our cultural sector



- We gained greater awareness of the importance of collaborative actions in support of artists in exile
- We have started to collaborate in a more organic/structured way with local stakeholders from different fields

# Final thoughts

The picture that emerges from this first section is one of generosity, flexibility, and civic imagination. Cultural organisations across Europe—many of them small, under-resourced, and operating in precarious conditions themselves—have stepped up to respond to an emergency with creativity, care, and commitment.

At the same time, the findings highlight a number of fragilities. The support offered has often relied on short-term funding, volunteer energy, and exceptional efforts rather than solid, structural guarantees. This model is not sustainable. If we want artistic freedom, cross-border solidarity, and cultural democracy to thrive, **we must move from goodwill to shared responsibility**.

Support for forcibly displaced artists must be recognised as a permanent dimension of cultural policy—not an exception. Host organisations have already proven that integration through the arts is possible. Now, they need the means, the recognition, and the infrastructure to make this work last.

2 ARTISTS



# Premise: the journey of displaced Ukrainian artists

This section explores the stories, challenges, and aspirations of forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists, highlighting their resilience as they strive to rebuild their practices in new and uncertain environments. Survey responses and personal testimonies paint a vivid picture of how displacement has acted both as a rupture and a catalyst for artistic transformation.

Most respondents - predominantly active in contemporary dance - had to move across multiple European countries before finding temporary safety. Host organisations have provided essential short-term support: shelter, financial aid, access to studios. Yet, the path to long-term integration remains full of obstacles. Language barriers, limited access to local artistic ecosystems, and lack of legal and administrative clarity have often left these artists in a state of precarity.

At the same time, displacement has deeply shaped their creative voices. Themes of migration, identity, and survival are now central to their artistic output. Many artists report a shift toward somatic practices, healing processes, and interdisciplinary forms, enriched by collaboration and exposure to diverse cultural contexts.

Their needs remain urgent and complex. Beyond income and infrastructure, these artists call for emotional and psychological support, mentorship, and most of all: recognition. They want to be seen as equal peers, not only as “displaced people,” but as contributors to the cultural life of Europe.

Projects like *Moving Borders* can offer time, space, and a platform to share, imagine, and build. They enable artists to reconnect with each other, with themselves, and with a future they can help shape.

Through their journeys, these artists remind us that art is not just a response to crisis, but a force of collective imagination. Their voices offer insight, urgency, and hope for a more inclusive cultural future.

# Premise: the Voice of displaced Ukrainian artists

This section offers a deep dive into the lived experiences, artistic shifts, and future aspirations of forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists as they rebuild their practices in unfamiliar contexts.

Based on survey data and personal testimonies, this analysis highlights how the intersection of trauma, migration, and creativity has shaped not only their individual trajectories, but also the broader landscape of cultural resilience in Europe.

## Key themes emerging from the survey

- 1. Artistic adaptation and transformation**  
Displacement acted as both disruption and catalyst. Artists embraced new formats, embodied approaches, and socially engaged themes, reshaping their creative language through movement, healing, and activism.
- 2. Personal and professional challenges**  
The need for **stability**, both financial and emotional, remains urgent.  
Legal uncertainty, language barriers, and lack of local networks often block full participation in the cultural field.
- 3. Needs and aspirations**  
Artists call for **mentorship, residencies, fair working conditions, and psychological support**.  
Beyond survival, they seek visibility, co-authorship, and the freedom to innovate.
- 4. Cultural and social integration**  
Belonging is not just emotional, It's professional. Building genuine ties with local institutions is essential to move from “invited guest” to **recognised peer**.  
There is a clear rejection of reductive labels like “refugee artist”.
- 5. The role of artistic platforms**  
Projects like *Moving Borders* provide more than support: they offer **time, space, and recognition**.  
These platforms are vital infrastructures of care, visibility, and long-term transformation.

*“We don’t want to be framed by war. We want to be seen through what we create.”*

# OVERVIEW

40 Respondents

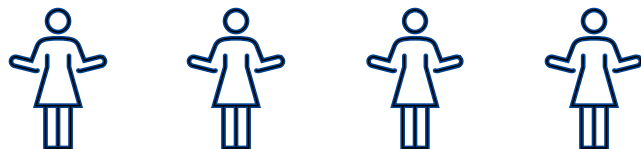
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Valsugana, Paris  
+direct contact/web

*June 2024-January 2025*



# ID Dance Artists

<24

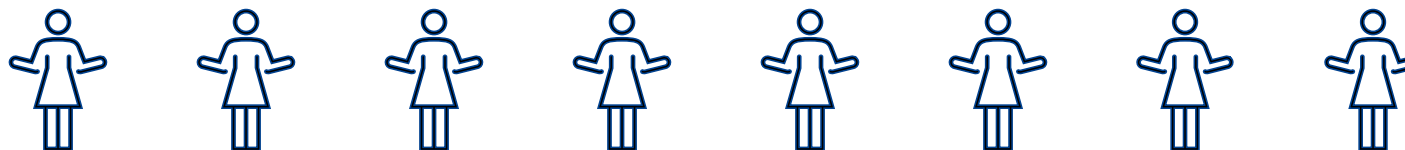


The respondents form a predominantly young cohort: most artists are between 25 and 35 years old, navigating a critical phase of professional consolidation while facing the disruptions of forced displacement. This age profile suggests a strong potential for long-term reintegration into the European cultural sector—provided that appropriate frameworks of support, recognition, and opportunity are put in place.

25-29



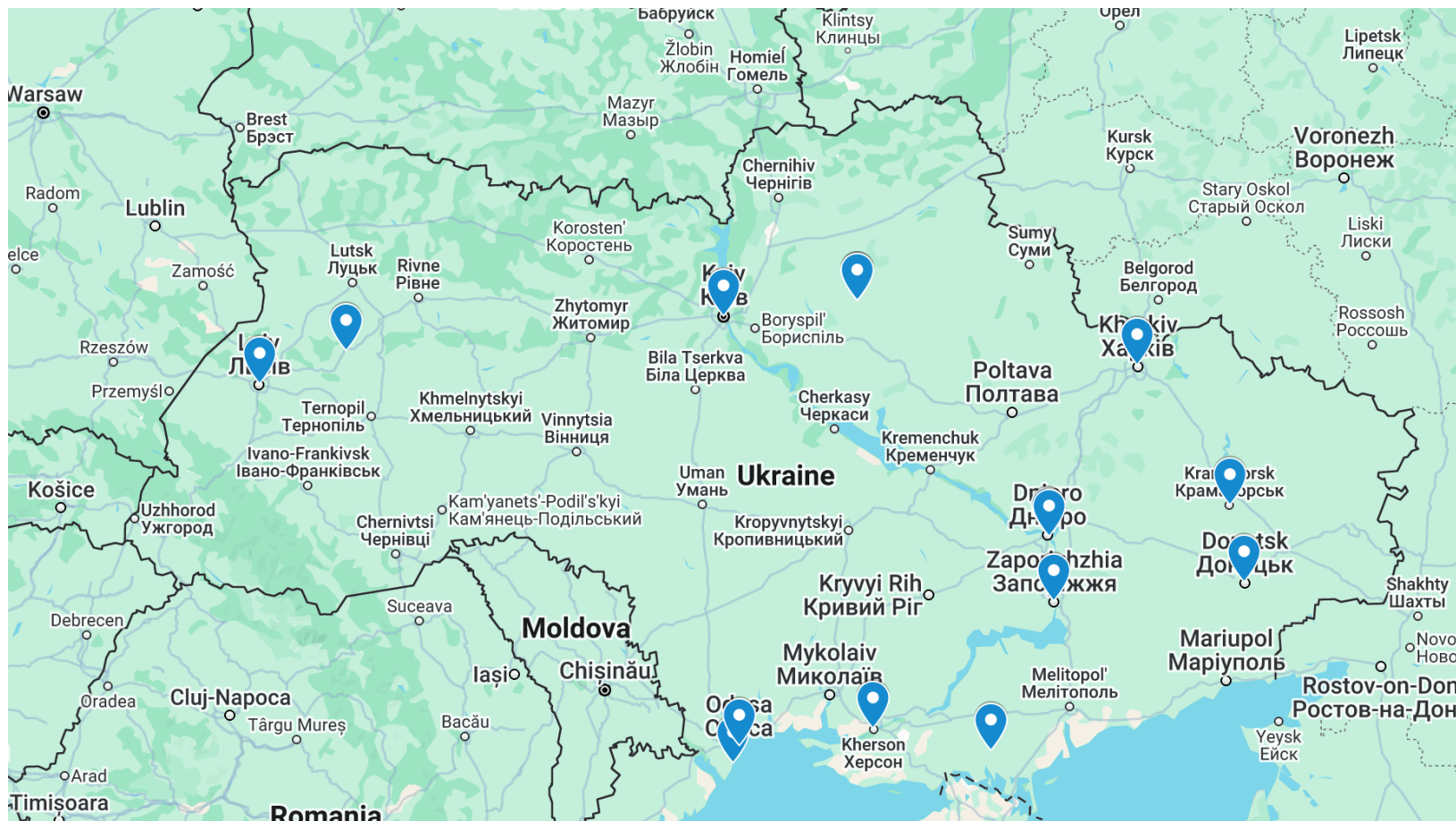
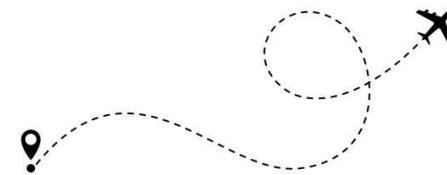
30-34



>35



# Home City in Ukraine



	Count
Kiev	14
Kharkiv	5
Dnipro	3
Odesa	3
Zaporizhzhia	3
Kherson	2
Lviv	2
Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, Odesa region	1
Chornomorsk	1
Kramatorsk	1
Kryvyi Rih	1
Pryluky ( Chernihiv region)	1
Radyvyliv	1
Simferopol	1
TOT	39

The map shows the geographical origins of the Ukrainian dance artists who responded to the survey. While they now live across Europe, their roots are firmly grounded in a diverse range of cities, from Kyiv and Kharkiv to smaller urban and semi-rural areas.

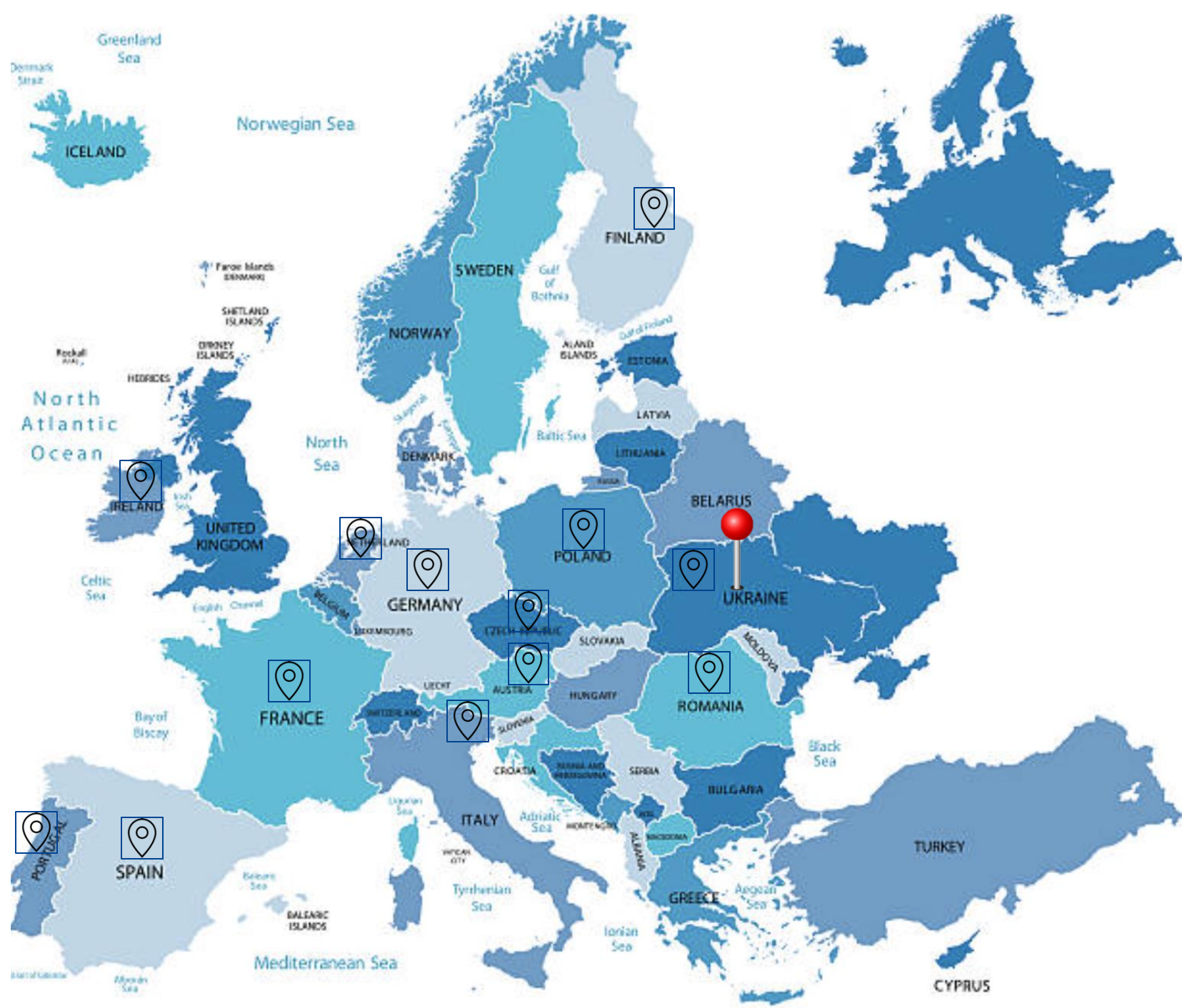
The presence of artists from cities like Simferopol, Kramatorsk, and Kherson also reflects the complexity and historical stratification of displacement—many respondents have been forced to relocate multiple times even before leaving Ukraine.

These origins carry with them cultural specificity, emotional weight, and artistic vocabularies that enrich the transnational conversation brought forth by *Moving Borders*.

# From Ukraine to Europe: *Current State*

	Count
Kyiv	6
Prague	5
Berlin	3
Amsterdam	2
Paris	2

This map illustrates the current locations of the artists surveyed, highlighting their dispersion across key European cities. From Kyiv to Prague, Berlin, Amsterdam, and Paris, artists have settled in both cultural capitals and mid-sized hubs—often depending on existing networks, residency opportunities, or temporary protection status.





# The journey through Europe

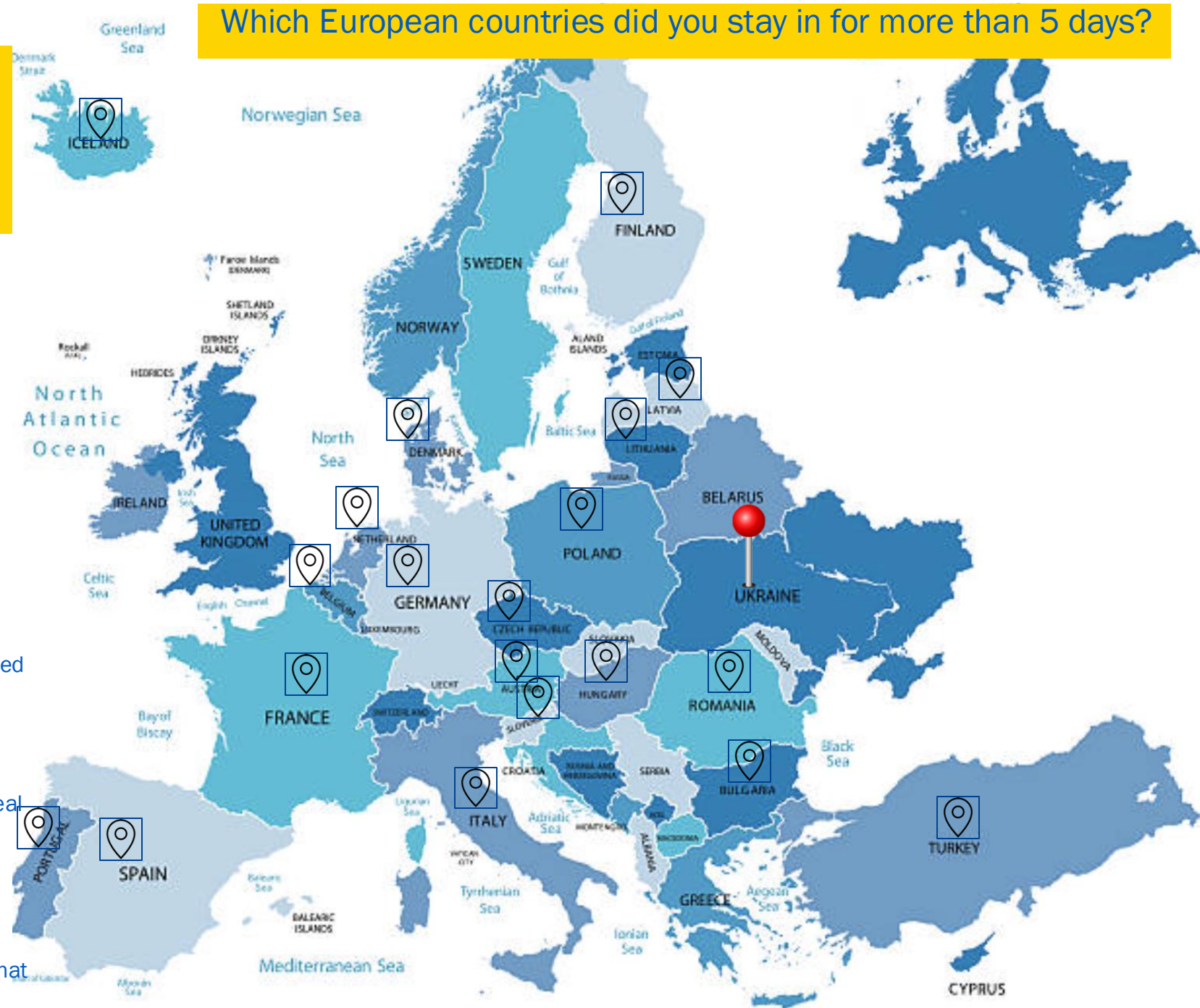
	Count
Germany	6
Spain	5
Bulgaria	3
France	3
Hungary	3
Czech Republic	2
Italy	2
Lithuania	2
Poland	2
Portugal	2
Latvia	1
Luxembourg	1
Malta	1
Romania	1
Slovakia	1
Tot	35

The artists' journeys across Europe reflect a fragmented yet resilient attempt to find safety, continuity, and opportunity.

Most respondents spent extended periods in multiple countries—Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, France—before reaching their current location. These trajectories reveal a pattern of **non-linear mobility**, where survival, bureaucratic delays, and cultural disconnection often intersect with moments of hospitality and artistic reconnection.

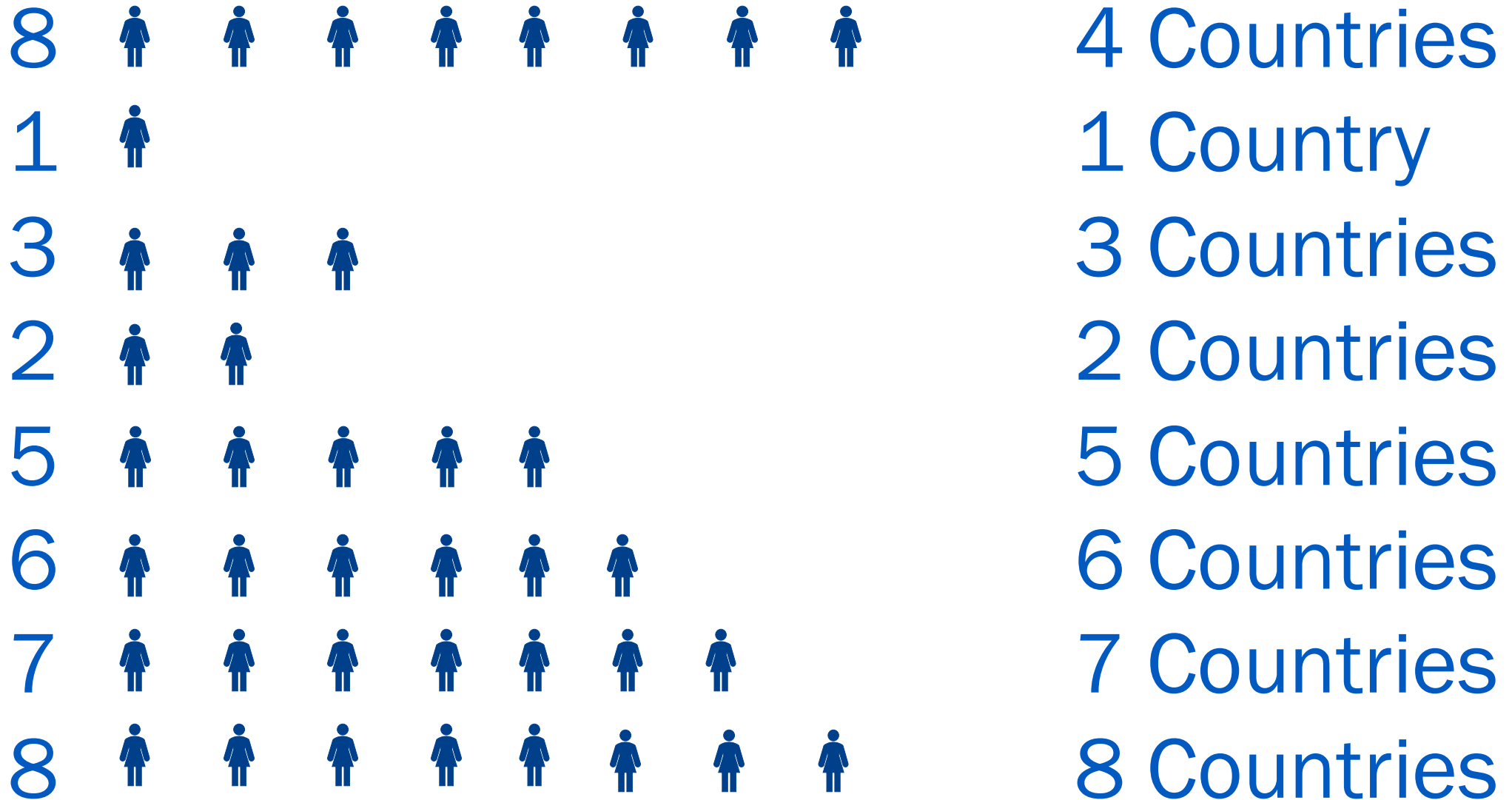
Understanding these paths is essential to designing policies that address not just where artists are, but what it took to get there

Which European countries did you stay in for more than 5 days?



# Around Europe

Nearly half of the respondents stayed in **five or more countries** during their displacement journey, with some passing through **up to eight countries** before settling. This high degree of mobility reflects not only the instability of early displacement but also the **structural fragmentation of the European reception system**, where temporary solutions often fail to ensure continuity, belonging, and artistic development



	Count
0	3
1	2
2	5
3	6
4	6
5	6
6	2
8	1
9	1
10	3
TOT	35

# BACK TO UKRAINE

Despite the ongoing war, **the majority of artists returned to Ukraine multiple times**, with some making the journey back as many as 10 times.

These returns reflect not only emotional and familial ties, but also practical needs such as caring responsibilities, visa issues, or the pursuit of artistic continuity within their home context.

The data points to a reality of **oscillation**, where displacement is not linear, and where many artists live between countries—physically, administratively, and emotionally.

# Actions benefitted

Connections with other European cultural organisations

Financial support to stay in the country

Connection with other Ukrainian refugees

Spaces to work artistically

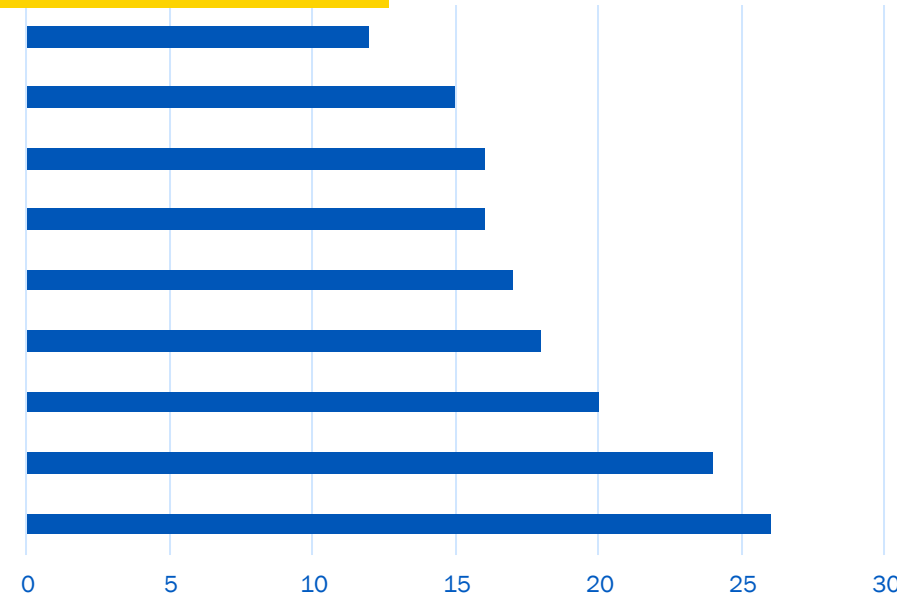
Connections with other Ukrainian artists

Support to solve administrative and bureaucratic issues

Connections with other national artists

Accommodation

Work opportunities in the cultural field

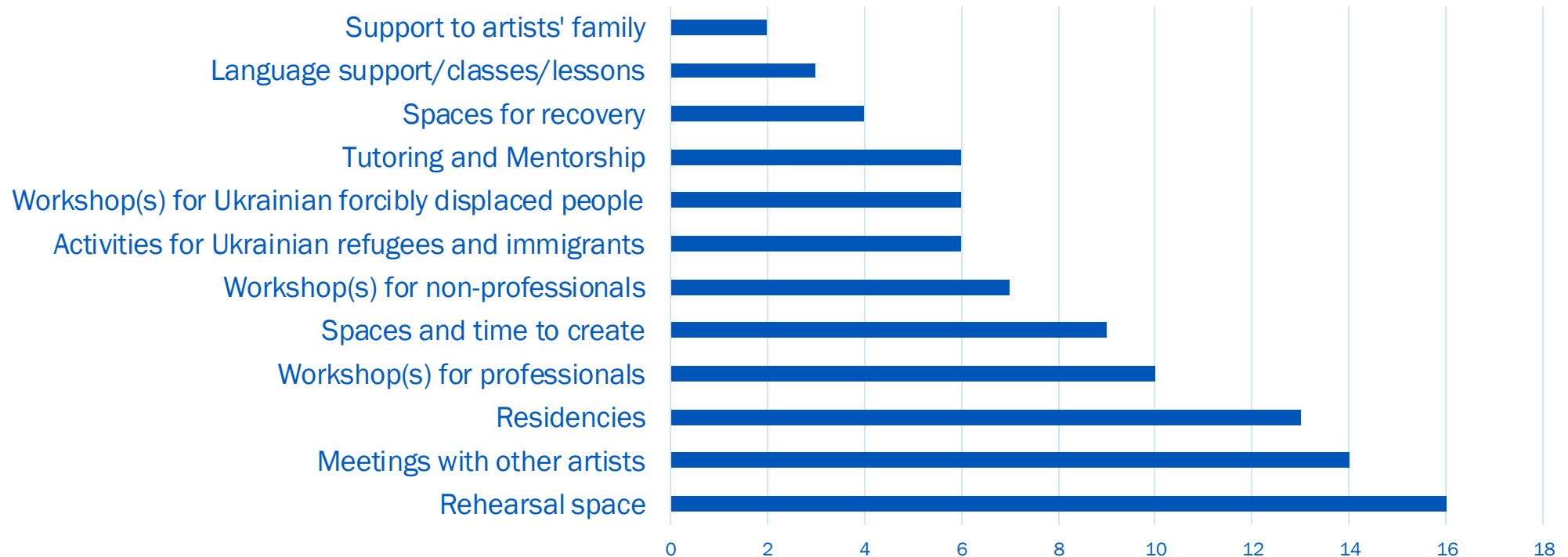


	Count	Percentage
Work opportunities in the cultural field	26	67%
Accommodation	24	62%
Connections with other national artists	20	51%
Support to solve administrative and bureaucratic issues	18	46%
Connections with other Ukrainian artists	17	44%
Spaces to work artistically	16	41%
Connection with other Ukrainian refugees	16	41%
Financial support to stay in the country	15	38%
Connections with other European cultural organisations	12	31%
Connections with other national cultural organisations	9	23%
Language support/classes/lessons	8	21%
Work opportunities outside the cultural field	6	15%
Active listening	6	15%
A grant to research within the organisation	4	10%
Psychological support	4	10%
Research activities	4	10%
A grant to create within the organisation	3	8%
Support to artists' families	0	0%

The most impactful forms of support were **work opportunities in the cultural field** (67%) and **accommodation** (62%). These reflect the urgent need for both professional continuity and basic living conditions.

However, more **relational and long-term needs**—such as psychological support, active listening, and research opportunities—are significantly underrepresented. This suggests a gap between immediate aid and the deeper support required for artistic and personal sustainability.

# Activities carried out with the host organisations



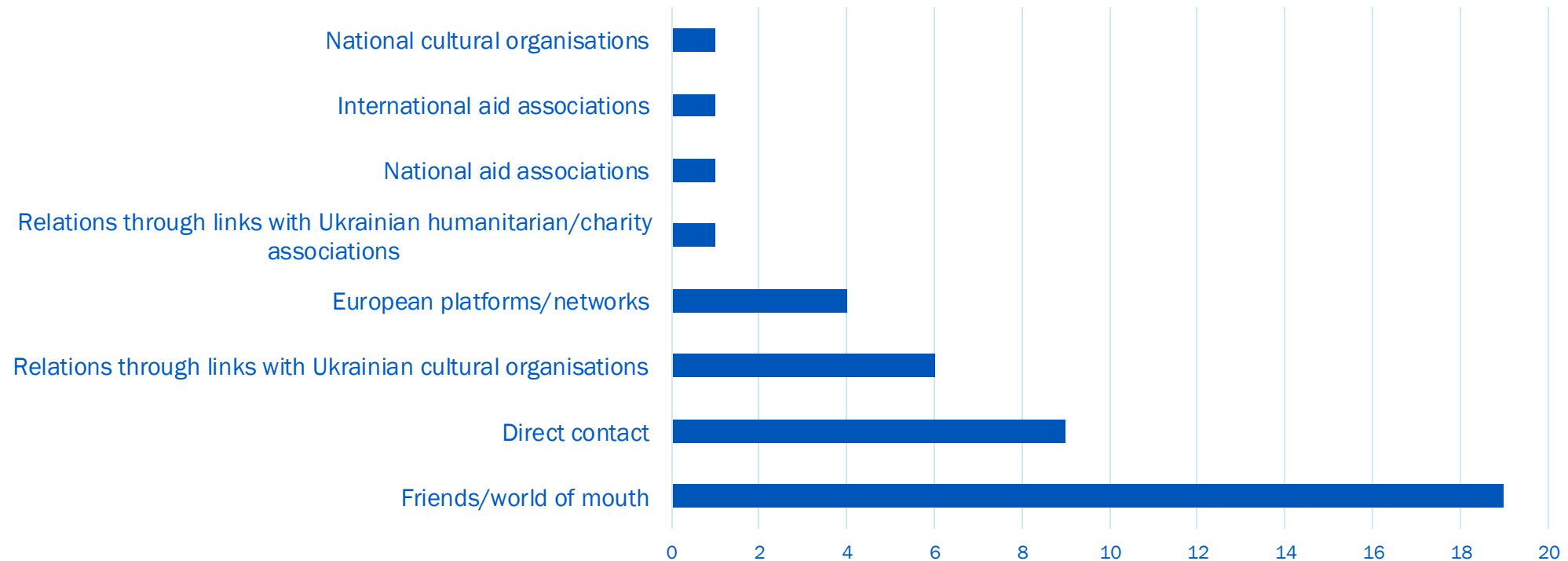
The most common activities provided by host organisations were **rehearsal spaces**, **networking with other artists**, and **residencies**—all crucial for restoring a sense of continuity in artistic practice.

However, fewer artists benefitted from **language support**, **mentorship**, or **recovery spaces**, which are essential for longer-term integration.

These findings suggest the need for a **more holistic approach** that balances creation with care, and professional development with personal support.



# How did you get in touch with your hosting organisation?



The vast majority of artists got in touch with host organisations through **informal channels**—primarily **word of mouth** and **direct contact**.

Institutional pathways (national or international organisations, platforms, and aid networks) played a **minor role**, pointing to a lack of visibility and accessibility of structured support mechanisms.

This underscores the importance of **strengthening communication infrastructures** to make opportunities more transparent, equitable, and reachable—especially in times of crisis.

# LOCAL ARTISTIC ECOLOGY

Most respondents reported a **neutral to moderately positive** experience in terms of integration into local artistic ecosystems.

While some artists feel well connected (12 positive, 4 very positive), the majority (16) express a **mixed or cautious stance**, often due to barriers such as language, recognition of expertise, or limited access to decision-making spaces.

These results highlight the need for **more intentional pathways to integration**, ensuring displaced artists are not just included, but empowered within cultural infrastructures.

Level of integration into local ecosystem



4



12



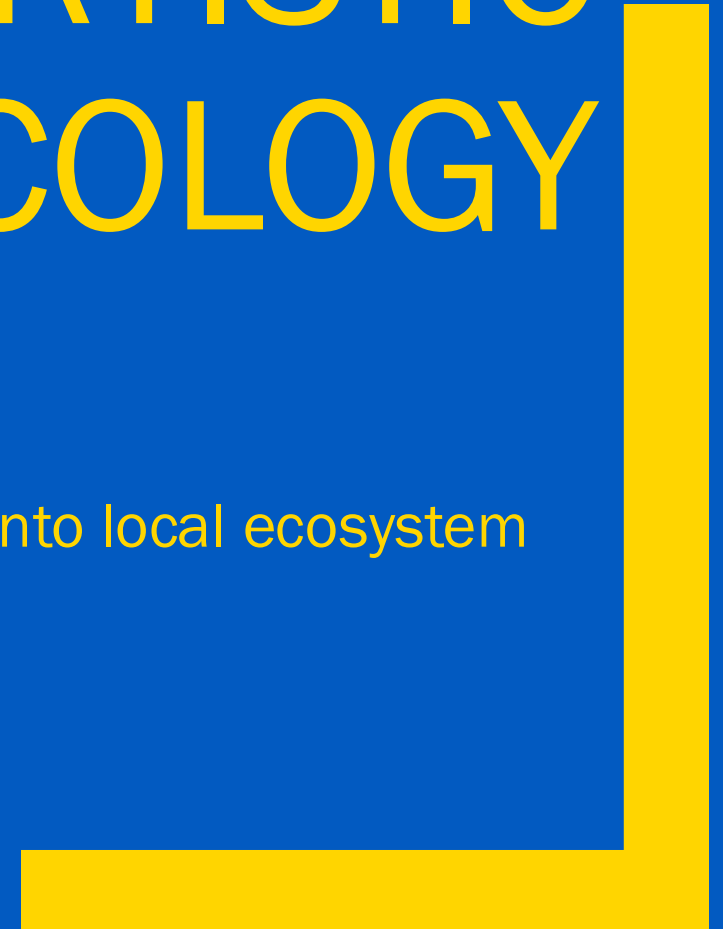
16



1



1



# Engagement in activities for Ukrainian forcibly displaced citizens



Artistic and cultural activities—particularly **shows and performances**, **access to events**, and **dance classes**—played a crucial role in fostering inclusion and creative continuity.

However, initiatives aiming to **bridge into the local community**, such as invitations to existing projects, remain limited.

This highlights a need to move from **parallel programming** to **shared spaces of cultural participation**, where newcomers can contribute and connect as active members of the cultural fabric.

# How has artistic practice evolved for forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists?

1

For forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists, artistic practice has become more than a tool—it is a life raft, a political gesture, and a way to reclaim voice and presence. What emerges here is a profound redefinition: from dance as craft to dance as care, as community, and as testimony.

Their work shifted toward the somatic, the therapeutic, and the collectively embodied. Openness to interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration reflects a will to belong, to be seen, and to contribute—often for the first time—from a place of agency rather than fragility.

The body becomes not just a medium but a refuge: the only “home” many could rely on. In this context, dance is no longer only an aesthetic act—it becomes urgent, relational, and transformative. Their art is now laced with political awareness and courage: “Dance helps me stay afloat. It helps someone else, too.”

This evolution tells us something essential not just about Ukrainian artists, but about what art can do in times of rupture: re-make meaning, restore dignity, and activate solidarity

- **Artistic transformation**  
From performance as craft to dance as a tool for healing, resilience, and meaning-making — especially through **somatic and body-based practices**.
- **Collaborative mindset**  
A new openness to **interdisciplinary collaboration** with musicians, visual artists, scientists and local communities, fostering mutual inspiration and support.
- **The body as refuge**  
The body becomes a **place of safety and identity**, the only “home” left for many — and a site to process trauma, build presence, and restore agency.
- **Sense of belonging and recognition**  
Discovering the value of their artistry within European contexts, artists reported feeling **seen and appreciated** — often for the first time.
- **Expanded political awareness**  
Themes of **migration, identity, injustice and resistance** permeate their work, challenging narratives and reclaiming space in the cultural discourse.
- **More courage, less fear**  
Displacement led to a clearer focus, more urgency, and a shift from hesitation to action: “**Dance helps me stay afloat. It helps someone else, too.**”

# How has artistic practice evolved for forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists

2

*“Dance has become my way to digest reality and bring my emotions to the surface.”*

*“I started to focus on practices that can release tension in the body through the topics of pleasure and playfulness.”*

*“I became more confident and open to collaboration – not only with dance artists, but also musicians, scientists and others.”*

*“Since moving to Paris, I felt for the first time that artists are truly valued.”*

*“My vision is expanding on the subject of migration. Every new meeting unfolds new emotions and states in me.”*

*“Less fear. More action.”*

*“Moving Borders helped me reconnect with dance in a way that is grounded, meaningful, and future-oriented.”*

# Artistic needs

## *What do forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists need to thrive in their practice?*

What we see here is not just a list of needs, but a framework for rethinking how artistic systems can be truly inclusive. These are not "extras" or temporary supports—they are the essential conditions that allow artistic practices to thrive: fair working conditions, access to space and tools, recognition as peers, and opportunities to grow.

At the heart of it lies a clear demand: to be seen and treated as artists, not recipients of aid. One artist said it best: *"We need a place to live like humans, not like refugees — only then can we truly create."*

This is an invitation to rethink the cultural ecosystem. A shift from emergency to structural commitment. A call for institutions to become places of justice, care, and long-term belonging—where creation is not contingent on survival, but inspired by dignity and possibility.



### **Fair Working Conditions**

Stable income, fair pay, supportive environments, and flexibility to balance emotional and physical needs.



### **Access to Space and Resources**

Studios to rehearse and create, residencies, access to stages, laptops, and materials for production.



### **Professional Development**

Opportunities for growth through coaching, mentorship, workshops, and collaboration with experts and institutions.



### **Recognition and Inclusion**

Being seen and trusted as professionals; treated as equals in the artistic ecosystem, not just as "guests" or "beneficiaries."



### **Community and Belonging**

Connection with peers (both Ukrainian and international), access to networks, partnerships, and long-term integration.



### **Freedom to Create Without Survival Pressure**

*"You can't create art when you're just thinking how to survive tomorrow. We need to live like normal people, not refugees."*

***"We need a place to live like humans, not like refugees — only then can we truly create."***

# Artistic desires

*“I don’t want to survive and create. I want to create and thrive”*

## *What do displaced Ukrainian dance artists hope to create, explore, and reclaim?*

What emerges here is not just a list of needs, but a vision—a collective horizon shaped by urgency and imagination. For many forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists, the desire to create is inseparable from the desire to reclaim authorship, continuity, and cultural agency.

They do not simply seek to be included; they seek to reimagine. Their priorities are clear: space for artistic experimentation, recognition beyond labels, opportunities for professional growth, and the long-term infrastructures that make artistic lives possible. Dance becomes both a language and a terrain where identity, displacement, and belonging are negotiated—not just for survival, but for thriving.

As one artist put it: *“I don’t want to survive and create. I want to create and thrive.”*

This is a call for systems that do not merely accommodate, but align with the radical potential of cultural work in exile.

- **Artistic innovation & experimentation**  
Desire to explore new approaches, methods, and interdisciplinary forms, creating hybrid works that reflect both urgency and imagination.
- **Social and emotional relevance**  
A wish to create dance that heals, provokes thought, and addresses societal issues — including displacement, identity, and resilience.
- **Collaborative creation**  
Strong desire to co-create with other choreographers, dramaturgs, musicians, visual artists – not just in projects *about* Ukraine, but *with* Ukrainian voices at the center.
- **Recognition beyond labels**  
Artists seek to be seen not as “refugees” or “Ukrainian artists” but simply as professionals — able to access general funding, touring opportunities, and European open calls.
- **Continuity, sustainability, visibility**  
Long-term engagement in dance without the need to compromise or split focus; support for touring, residencies, archives, and educational programmes.
- **Community building and cultural agency**  
Artists dream of forming collectives, networks, and a contemporary Ukrainian dance field that connects displaced artists and those still living in Ukraine.

# Recommendations

## *How can host countries better support forcibly displaced dance artists?*

This is a roadmap—from empathy to responsibility. The voices of forcibly displaced Ukrainian dance artists are clear: they do not ask for charity, but for structural pathways to inclusion.

Supporting them means rethinking how systems work: ensuring access to rights, building equitable working conditions, and enabling participation not just as guests, but as peers and co-creators.

These recommendations urge host countries to dismantle barriers and invest in long-term frameworks of care, justice, and collaboration. As one artist said: *“Don’t see us as victims. Work with us. Be ready to unlearn. Be ready to listen.”*

- **Integration and language access**  
Provide free or affordable **language courses**, cultural orientation, and **clear information** on how to navigate everyday life and systems.
- **Legal and administrative guidance**  
Offer accessible **legal aid**, freelance registration info, tax guidance and visa/residency support — tailored to artists’ specific needs.
- **Fair employment and professional inclusion**  
Create pathways for displaced artists to **work in their field**, not just survive. Recognise skills, talents and experience **beyond the refugee label**.
- **Anti-discrimination and equal rights**  
Ensure compliance with anti-discrimination laws. Promote **equal rights for newcomers**, reduce systemic barriers and open space for **dignified participation**.
- **Psychological and emotional support**  
Provide **mental health programs** and community care frameworks to support artists dealing with trauma, grief, and complex transitions.
- **Cultural dialogue, not charity**  
Foster **collaborative spaces** with local artists and institutions. Encourage **exchange, co-creation, and shared authorship**, not top-down aid.

*“Don’t see us as victims. Work with us. Be ready to unlearn. Be ready to listen”*



# Personal (Social & Human) Needs

*What do forcibly displaced artists need to feel human, safe, and connected again?*

This section speaks to what it means to feel human again. The needs expressed here are not secondary—they are the foundation for healing and for being able to participate fully in society and artistic life.

They speak of the need for safety, stability, and emotional recovery. But also of daily connection, shared laughter, and being seen for who they are—not just as displaced artists, but as people with complex lives and relationships.

It's a reminder that integration isn't just a matter of policy—it's a matter of human connection

- 1. Sense of belonging**  
Feeling accepted and seen; building community through warm communication, social interaction, and shared values.
- 2. Safety and stability**  
Physical, emotional and legal security — from housing and visa clarity to basic respect and protection from harm.
- 3. Mental health and emotional support**  
Psychological assistance, peer care, rest, and space for emotional recovery and regulation.
- 4. Cultural understanding and trust**  
Creating space for mutual learning, respectful dialogue, and curiosity beyond assumptions or stereotypes.
- 5. Opportunities for integration**  
Access to education, dance spaces, legal and fiscal guidance, and meaningful professional networks.
- 6. Close human connections**  
The chance to **share daily life** — not only work — with loved ones, communities and kindred spirits.

*“My need is to feel that I am understood — not just heard. That people connect on a deeper level, and help build a safe space to simply be.”*

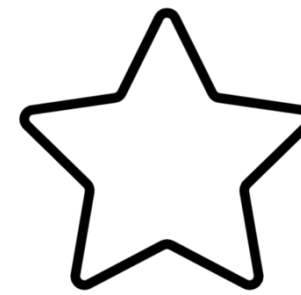
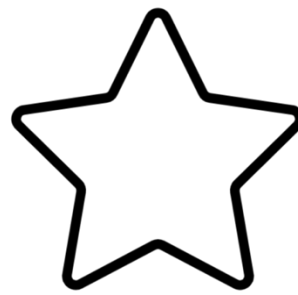
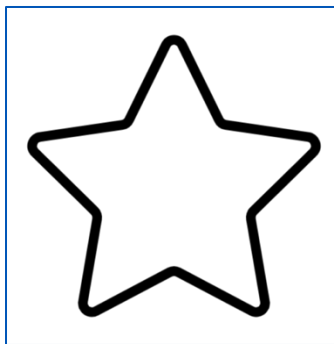
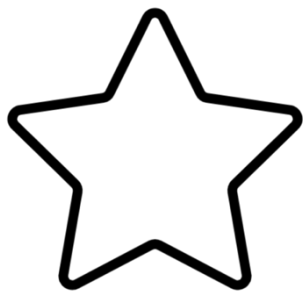
# What made a difference for forcibly displaced artists during *Moving Borders*?

What made a difference was not just *what* was offered, but *how* it was shared: through presence, trust, and shared movement. The experience of *Moving Borders* was powerful because it created spaces where artists could feel seen not as guests, but as protagonists.

Here, artistic expression became a bridge—from isolation to connection, from silence to voice, from survival to renewed purpose.

- **Human connection**  
Feeling not alone. Building emotional bonds, exchanging joy and pain, sharing hugs, eye contact, and live presence.
- **Collective experience**  
Dancing together, collaborating, learning from each other across countries and practices. **Being in the same space** was healing and energising.
- **Recognition and voice**  
Feeling seen and heard as Ukrainian artists — not only through words, but through **movement, expression, and creative contribution**.
- **Sense of purpose and future direction**  
Clarifying artistic goals and gaining confidence in one's path through meaningful participation and cultural dialogue.
- **Cross-border collaboration**  
Opportunities to connect with peers across Europe and imagine shared projects and performances across cities and countries.
- **Hope, belonging, empowerment**  
From surviving to **belonging**. From disconnection to mutual recognition. From silence to shared **action**.

*“Only true, alive human connection can make something timeless.”*



## HOW USEFUL DO YOU THINK A PROJECT LIKE MOVING BORDERS CAN BE?

The vast majority of respondents (25 out of 26) rated *Moving Borders* with the highest scores—4 or 5 stars—demonstrating a strong appreciation for the project’s relevance and impact.

This resounding endorsement reflects how initiatives like this are not only timely but vital: they provide a rare space for artistic continuity, emotional support, and cultural recognition amid instability.

# Towards a Shared Cultural Future

The Moving Borders survey gave space to voices too often unheard, revealing not only the challenges of displacement, but also the radical potential of dance as a tool for resilience, dignity, and reimagining belonging.

What emerged is not just a map of needs, but a constellation of visions. These artists do not ask for charity or concessions — they ask to be seen, heard, and trusted. As professionals. As creators. As people navigating rupture with extraordinary courage and depth.

In their words, we find calls for fairness and care, but also for experimentation, collaboration, and shared authorship. Their stories are not about loss alone—they are about the urgent need to imagine futures together, across borders and disciplines.

Projects like Moving Borders are not the end point, but the beginning of a necessary shift: from protection to participation, from survival to transformation.

We close this document with a commitment—to continue listening, adapting, and building conditions where displaced artists can not only survive, but thrive, shaping the cultural landscapes they are part of, and expanding the space of what art can be, and who it is for.

Moving Borders, an EU cooperation project



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

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