



The current situation of doctoral candidates in Ukraine and their support in Poland - insights from the interviews

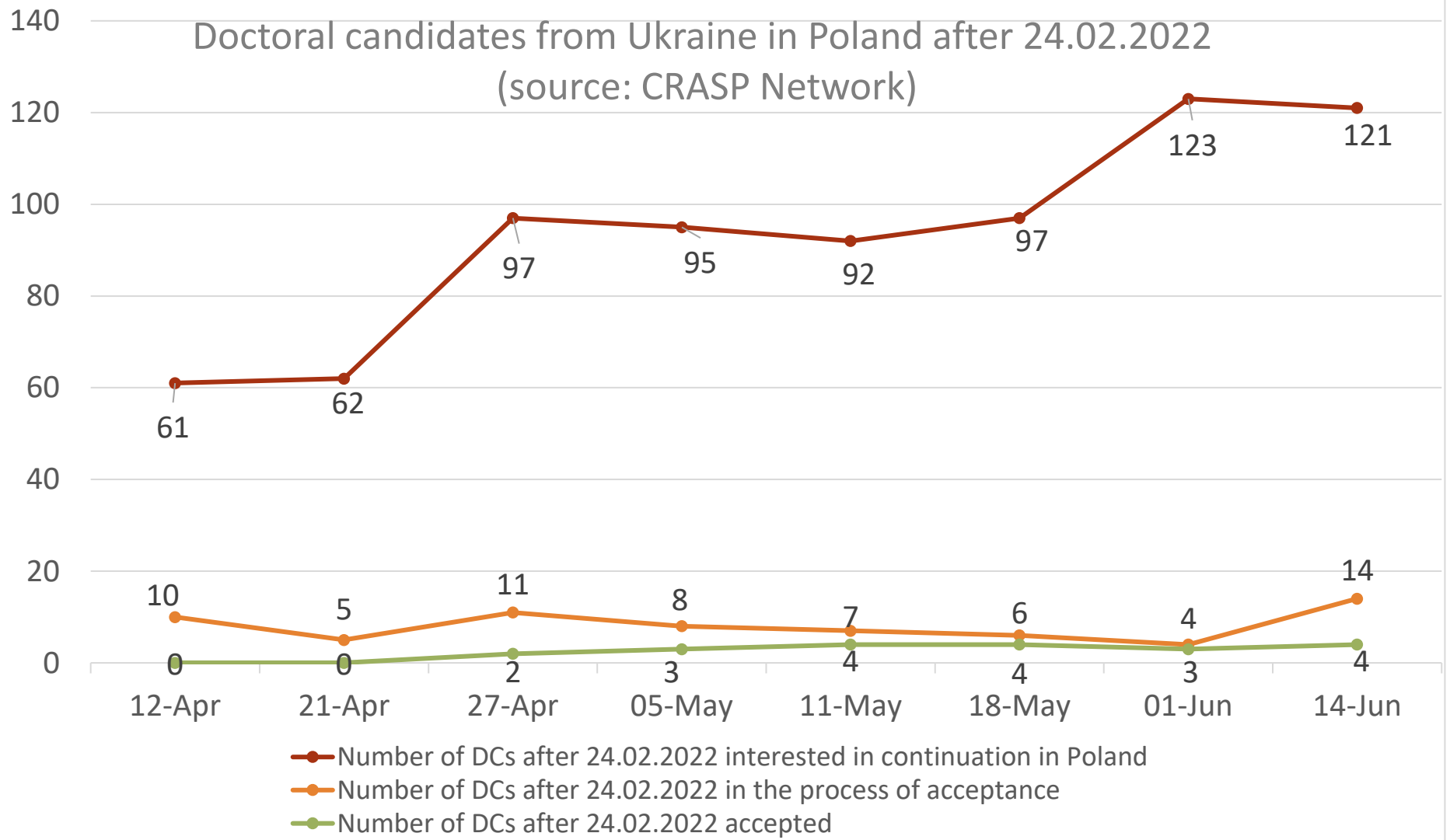


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General background

- *Project „Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation of Academic Stakeholder Organisations Representing Rectors for Improving University Performance”* – sharing good practices and information exchange: CRASP-URHEIU Boards Meeting, consultations, participation in the 25th Anniversary events
- CRASP internal network to support Ukrainian academic community since 24 Feb 2022
- Focus on support schemes avoiding brain drain
- Emergency operation and immediate reaction
- No specific regulation in the Special Law on support Ukrainians in Poland
- Low (close to zero) number of doctoral candidates - spotlight on situation

Doctoral candidates from Ukraine in Poland after 24.02.2022 (source: CRASP Network)



Data collection

- Ongoing study: May-June 2022
- 10 IDIs: 5 (+2) universities in Poland and 5 (+2) in Ukraine
- Respondents' profile: rectors/vice-rectors /heads of doctoral schools/persons responsible for delivering support for DCs
- Criteria for selection in Poland: number of declared DCs in the CRASP Network (max and zero), institutional diversity
- Criteria for selection in Ukraine: geographical diversity + displaced university
- Additionally: open information on the universities' websites + follow-up conversations with DCs

Time and timing in the war crisis

(extraordinary) **time for the universities and funding agencies – immediate reaction**

(hard) **challenges in timing of doctoral training in Ukraine** and doctoral defense

(need) **time to cope with mental condition** and figure out what to do

(lack of) **time to make decisions for DCs**

(short) **timing of deadlines, projects, doctoral programs**

(diverse) **timing of support perspectives: short-term vs long-term**

fear to loose/waste time vs. use time with purpose

lessons and experience of **pandemic times** are useful now

How the life of Ukrainian DCs changed in war times

- Change of hierarchy of life priorities – to survive and ensure security
- Personal choice: forced resettlement vs. staying
- New roles in the times of war: joining the Military Forces of Ukraine, territorial defense units, paramedic units, volunteering, family duties, professional activity, etc.
- Challenge to continue training and research - research funding drastically cut
- Forced academic leave and breaks
- Different situation of DCs across the country, regions, research fields, year of training
- Infrastructure damages and displacement of the universities
- Mostly female DCs got the support outside
- Mental condition and stress
- Lack of support schemes for displaced PhDs inside the country

Support from Polish Universities: the intention

*“We have rather acted on a principle: **do nothing to cut off these doctoral candidates from Ukrainian universities. If you can, do smth allowing them to survive and function here, but also with the idea that they can return to Ukraine and continue their training there at the first convenient moment”***
(POL4)

*„**Doctoral candidates** and people from Ukraine in general, **should feel supported and, in my opinion, they have this support and know that there are such possibilities, while the choices belong to a given person...** I understand and admire how people from Ukraine are connected with their country, with each other and want to stay at home, return to their country and work there*
(POL5)

Good practices in Polish Universities: types of support for DCs

NAWA Program
Solidarity with
Ukraine

Regular recruitment
to a DS

Research scholarships

Doctoral internships
& study visits

Positions in existing
projects

External doctorate

Free listeners/visitors

Scientific mentoring

Supportive
supervision

Support for Ukrainian
researchers as
supervisors

Integration, social and
humanitarian support

Language courses

Case 1: short-term mobility for DCs from partner universities within the existing program PROM

- Analysis of possibilities of existing programs and redirecting the funds
- Good timing: urgent decisions + support in the 1st period of the war
- Launched in March in cooperation with partner university / no random candidates
- Number of DCs: 4 female DCs (SSH)
- 2 months academic mobility + full funding of stay + humanitarian & social support
- Legal status: trainee/based on an agreement with Ukrainian university
- Flexible schedule: both education and research + integration with local academic community
- Long-term effects: connection, continuity, mentoring, virtual support

Case 2: doctoral internships within the University Research Excellence Initiative

- Internal funds + immediate response (2 weeks to organise)
- Good moment of time: launched in March till 30.09.2022
- Simple procedure, no deadline (5 days to make a decision)
- Reasonable timing: up to 6 months + up 3 months extension (for researchers 3+6)
- Number of DCs : 4 female DCs (SSH, physics)
- Legal status: trainee/based on an agreement of DC with a Polish university
- Preliminary scientific contacts and a Polish supervisor/mentor required
- No official documents from DCs/just statement on being a DC as for 24 Feb 2022
- Sensitivity and mental condition of DCs was taken into account

Case 3: study visits (3 or 6 months) within the University Research Excellence Initiative

- Fast decision and but following all the formal requirements
- Open from 27.04.2022 till 30.09.2023
- Reasonable timing: 3 or 6 months within a perspective 2022/2023
- No deadline for submission
- Target numer: 10 DCs (4 accepted for now)
- Legal status: visiting doctoral researcher/trainee
- Preliminary scientific contacts required
- Obligatory condition: DC must have a supervisor at the moment of application
- Flexible program: research + any training if needed
- Support in application process
- Social support

Challenges for the Polish universities

Limited interest from Ukrainian DCs

Insufficient funding and lack of flexibility

Students' approach doesn't work well for doctoral candidates

Formal limitations and regulations, also related to awarding a degree

Information doesn't reach the target group

Language challenges

More initiative from the Ukrainian universities needed

Time for adaptation, integration in a new academic environment for Ukrainian DCs

Insights: what should be done for Ukrainian DT

Universities should **analyse own potential** and **existing funds** & programs

Funding program dedicated to support of double doctoral programs or cotutelles

Cotutelles as a effective scheme to support doctoral training in Ukraine

Focus on the **bilateral partnerships** = **more trust and reliability** in the contacts

Research support is a priority + more research projects

Short-term **doctoral internships to continue their own research**

Professional support – from business and professional organisations

Using microcredentials for recognition

More university autonomy = more support both in Ukraine and Poland

Future focus on recovery and rebuilding of Ukrainian RTD & HE

Insights: impact on the development of doctoral training

Impact on research topics: new and challenges with Russia-focused

Increasing demand for new professionals

Open science as a modus operandi

More focus on research

Wider spectrum of the collaboration schemes

More virtual support

Deeper internationalisation

More double doctorates, double supervision, cotutelles

More values training (democracy, European values, human rights)

More societal engagement and social responsibility

Recognition of various forms of DCs activity

European Universities as a chance for enhancing doctoral training in Ukraine



Thank you for listening!

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