

## Podkarpackie Coordination Group (PCG)

Date: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
 Time: 11:00am – 1:00pm  
 Venue: Governor’s Office in Rzeszów

### General Discussion Highlights:

Opening Remarks by Representative of the Voivode of Podkarpackie	
<p><b>Bogdan Mazur, Director Department of Security and Crisis Management – Podkarpackie Voivodeship</b></p> <p>There were no significant changes on refugee situation since last PCG meeting in early March. Average daily border crossings remain same, but not more than 30,000 each way. Estimate that currently about 3% of all border traffic may be refugees or persons in need fleeing Ukraine. As I mentioned in previous meetings, it is problematic all the time to find an appropriate form of assistance for Roma refugees, especially those arriving from Transcarpathia (specific sub-group of Romani population). This year, thanks to good weather and refugee support systems in place, the situation is more manageable than a year earlier.</p>	
Financial Situation of Unitatem Shelters and Potential Closures	Action Points
<p><b>Katarzyna Kubas, Unitatem Foundation:</b></p> <p>Unitatem Foundation, runs four shelters for refugees (total capacity of 1,434) in and around Jarosław, providing accommodation and food, psychological help, medical assistance, a private kindergarten, assistance in finding employment, etc. Unitatem shelter have capacity to accept marginalized groups, large families and single men. Most residents are mothers and children, while more than 50% of residents who stay in Unitatem Shelters have resided there over 120 days. Many do not have capacity to work, for example elderly or mothers with children, and also many with psychological challenges that inhibit.</p> <p>Main challenge is funding – see below how it impacts operations:</p> <p>Food - ACF is helping to fund food, through their support provide about 125 lunches a day during this period, or for about 35% of our residents but as of April, we will only issue lunches to people who have been in the centers less than 120 days (for which we receive funding still from the government under the 40+ Program) and to elderly and financially vulnerable people (through ACF support).</p> <p>Hygiene kits – currently providing to all, but will being to decrease distributions.</p> <p>Accommodation Duration - A large number of people have resided in Unitatem shelters since the beginning of the conflict, more than a year. To date no set limitations on the length of stay in centers, but due to the lack of funding for people who are in Poland for more than 120 days, from May it me be necessary to start imposing the maximum length of stay to 120 days (within this period the shelter receives support via 40+ Program) as lack of sufficient financing.</p>	<p><b>Voivodeship and Unitatem</b> – on site visit to UNITATEM shelter to gain awareness on situation, preferable to visit next week.</p>

Regarding the application of the Amendment to the Special Act which provides, among other things, an introduction of partial co-payment of the cost of stay and meals in collective accommodation centers - Unitatem does not charge refugees for residence.

If we receive financial support from the government or NGOs, Unitatem will be able to keep the four shelters operational without a duration limit and with the provision of 3 meals a day and provide hygiene items. However, a lack of financial support will result in the closure of shelters by July.

**Question – Jack Haffner CORE:**

Have you contacted municipality or voivodship for help in finding a solution to your financial problems?

- **Response – Katarzyna Kubas Unitatem:** already sought various solutions by contacting authorities at many levels, even writing to the Prime Minister, we are waiting for his response. We cordially invite Mr. Director Bogdan Mazur or other representatives of the Voivode's office to visit one of our centers, where we can present our problems in detail and seek a solution together.

**Comment – Mr. Bogdan Mazur Voivodship Office:**

Since last year there is a fund to help organizations providing temporary shelter, the path to request these funds is defined by law. Not many organizations applied for this assistance. However, all refugee can apply for a UKR PESEL (giving rights on par with Polish citizens) with an aim that this person can become "activated" in economy/employed if there are not clear contradictions/reasons why cannot work. Thus the Amendment is also a motivator for them "activate" and find employment. The current labor market offers many potential positions. There are also cases where refugees take jobs but remain in shelters – this is a concern. It is also worth mentioning that remote work is an available alternative, thus can address mothers who have to stay at home with their children.

I don't know the details of Unitatem's efforts to apply for government funding, but I think a representative of the Voivodship office will take up the invitation and visit the shelter run by Unitatem to better understand the situation.

**Caritas Rzeszów**

**Action Points**

**Valentyna Movchan – Caritas Rzeszów**

Caritas Diocese of Rzeszów has been providing various forms of support since February 2022. Total of 32,100 people received assistance. Running the Migrant and Refugee Assistance Center since August 2022.

Caritas Rzeszów observed that the most important humanitarian needs of refugees in their center are:

- Security of residence for the duration of the conflict
- Ensure a permanent source of income
- Securing the immediate financial situation, to address current needs - purchase of medicines, hygiene products
- Psychosocial support

**Caritas – to share an events calendar to partners can refer**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polish language courses</li> </ul> <p>To meet the above needs, Caritas Rzeszów provides support in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help in finding a flat/accommodation</li> <li>Support in the form of a food parcel – MEB (minimum expenditure basket)</li> <li>Psychosocial support</li> <li>Functioning of a child-friendly space</li> <li>Organization of language classes</li> <li>Employment support</li> <li>Organized product collections</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Przemyśl Area Update</b></p>	<p><b>Action Points</b></p>
<p><b>Jack Haffner – CORE:</b> Core is supporting the Polish Red Cross (PCK) in their operations in Przemyśl. PCK, as administrator of Tesco has stopped accepting refugees at Tesco facility since this week, with the expected opening of Bilana (today or by Friday). Shelters in the area are crowded, Tesco was the first transit point. The situation in the region is getting more difficult. We know that Bilana shelter needs toys and books for children, I invite all organizations to review the lists of needs child related items.</p> <p><b>Katarzyna Kubas – Unitatem:</b> We have free places in our shelter in Radymno, and we also have places in and around Jaroslaw - including for the Roma community. If needed, we invite you to contact us and refer refugees. We can also provide some books in Ukrainian for new Bilana facility.</p>	<p><b>All Partners</b> – To check list of needs reported by City of Przemyśl/CORE for child friendly activities at Bilana.</p>
<p><b>Communal Shelter Managers Meeting – Summary</b></p>	<p><b>Action Points</b></p>
<p><b>Mateusz Mejza – IOM:</b> The first meeting of shelter managers brought together representatives of 16 facilities - 10 run by I/NNGO, 4 by municipalities and 2 by religious communities. Among the main conclusions of the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need to establish a mailing list and a Whatsapp group for ongoing communication between managers.</li> <li>Meetings should continue - preferably at a frequency of every 1-1.5 months.</li> <li>Many of the questions asked were related to the Amendment to the Special Act.</li> <li>There are training needs - facility supervisors often lack knowledge of the basics of humanitarian activities.</li> <li>Need to inform about financial assistance opportunities, grants, programs, and subsidies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNHCR/IOM</b> – to prepare next shelter managers meeting, establish WhatsApp Group and identify potential training themes.</p>
<p><b>Other Partner Updates</b></p>	<p><b>Action Points</b></p>

<p><b>Volodymyr Mychalysyn – Folkowisko Foundation:</b> April 4 will mark the finale of the "Animal Hero" campaign organized by Folkowisko in cooperation with the Rzeszow City Hall. The mission of the event is to bring together Poles and Ukrainians with their animals. It will also be possible to receive advice from veterinarians. You are cordially invited to participate in Grand Market, we will provide more information via email to PCG members.</p>	<p><b>UNHCR</b> – To send to PCG Members details about event organized by Folkowisko and City of Rzeszów</p>
<p><b>Andrzej Bodnar – City of Rzeszów:</b> Thanks to the support of UNICEF and UNHCR, we opened a Remote Learning Center in Rzeszow for refugee children from Ukraine. We cordially invite you to refer to us cases in which there is a need to provide a place and care during remote learning for children from Ukraine. A competition for projects on professional activation of women from Ukraine will be launched soon. We invite you to follow our website and participate in the competition.</p>	<p><b>UNHCR</b> – To distribute to partners more detailed information after being sent by City of Rzeszów</p>
<p><b>Marzena Styga-Durak - Rzeszowski Dom Kultury (Rzeszów Community Centre):</b> With Children's Day approaching, we would like, as the city's community center, to invite you and ask you to spread the word to refugees about events related to this holiday. We are planning a number of smaller, neighborhood events (such as talent shows, joint games) as well as the main event, which will take place on June 3 on Rzeszow's boulevards (along the river). A large children's playground will be organized there that day from 12 to 6 pm. Concerts will also be held there in the evening.</p>	<p><b>UNHCR</b> – To distribute to partners more detailed information after being sent by City of Rzeszów</p>
<p><b>Eleonore Dupre – DRC:</b> DRC begins its cooperation with UNHCR starting next week. It will have a presence in 2 Blue Dots and the Protection Hub. Other activities such as shelter monitoring, information provision, PSS, CFA and on a small-scale case management are also planned, including support in Bilana.</p>	

<b>Participants:</b>		
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>
ACF	Lucia	Ferri
ACF	Giannis	Antrias
Caritas Przemyśl	Małgorzata	Sielska
Caritas Rzeszów	Krystian	Snopkowski
Caritas Rzeszów	Valentyna	Movchan
CORE	Izabela	Napiórkowski
CORE	Jack	Haffner
PSAR	Ewelina	Podoba
PSAR	Jan	Marković
UNHCR	Tomasz	Pajda

UNHCR	Bryant	Castro
UNHCR	Rick	Sollom
UNHCR	Małgorzata	Chmielnik
UNITATEM	Katarzyna	Kubas
Fundacja Q	Sana	Vitvitska
Voivodship Office	Bogdan	Mazur
WHO EMTCC	Mashhour	Halawani
WHO EMTCC	Tienna	Phan
Folkowisko Foundation	Volodomyr	Mychalyszyn
DRC	Eleonore	Dupre
UNICEF	Małgorzata	Kurkowska
UNICEF	Jakub	Buż
Rzeszowski Dom Kultury (Rzeszów Community Centre)	Marzena	Styga-Durak
OXFAM	Shreeju	Shrestha
PRO-FIL	Tomasz	Kobylański
PRO-FIL	Marcin	Mołoń
IOM	Ahmad	Ismail
IOM	Mateusz	Mejza
OXFAM	Machinda	Marongwe

**Contact:** Bryant Castro, UNHCR Inter-Agency Coordination Officer, [castro@unhcr.org](mailto:castro@unhcr.org)

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