Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Coordination meeting

MINUTES

Date: 22.04.2024 (Monday)
Time: 11.0o a.m. – 1.0o p.m.
Place: Voivodeship Office in Lublin, column room

The main points of the agenda

Introduction and welcoming participants
Andrzej Maj – Deputy Governor of Lubelskie Voivodeship Office in Lublin • The meeting was opened by Andrzej Maj, Deputy Governor of Lublin. The Vice-Governor presented the state of collective accommodation facilities for refugees in Lubelskie Voivodeship as at 17 April 2024. • Number of collective accommodation facilities in the Lublin Province (as of 17.04.2024) - 117 facilities • number of slots available - 4 281 • number of occupied slots 2 785 • number of free slots 1 496 • Ratio of occupied slots to all slots at available - 65% • From 1 January to 17 April, the number of collective accommodation facilities decreased by 18 facilities. The number of places in these facilities decreased by 309 places. The number of persons using collective accommodation is on a downward trend, but remains at around 2,800. • 6% (161 persons) of persons participated in the costs of collective accommodation; 93% (2615 persons) of persons were exempted from participation, 1% (31 persons) were not subject to participation due to staying less than 120 days. • Number of slots that can be activated in the situation of an influx of refugees within 72 hours - 796 slots. • The draft amendment to the law provides for the possibility of providing collective accommodation in facilities for at least 10 people. The number of facilities currently accommodating less than 10 persons is as high as 56, of which 37 are social housing, 19 are private facilities. • The number of currently issued active UKR PESEL numbers as of 13.02.2024 is 35,436 in the Lubelskie Voivodeship. • Reception and information points: - HOSiR in Hrubieszów (the facility is scheduled to be closed from 1 May 2024) - Railway Station in Chełm - Voivodeship Office in Lublin - Railway Station in Lublin **Marco Procaccini – Head of UNHCR Field Office in Lublin**

- UNHCR welcomes the provisions that have been drafted to inform the revision of the Special Act, which overall provide many positive developments, including extension of Temporary Protection Directive until September 2025, an innovative solution for legalization of stay of current TPD holders, and more many other provisions that we will be discussed during the meeting. UNHCR has provided recommendations on how to improve, in our view, some of these changes and maximize their impact, both for the refugee community and the polish society.
- Once the amendment will be set and new regulations will be in place, there is a role for the LCG in supporting mandated authorities to implement the changes which are likely to have major impact at least in several areas of the refugee protection and assistance, including accommodation and education.
- Given the possibility of discontinuation 40+ support, we can expect that large part of that group will be in need to alternative accommodation and most likely subsidized one. There is still capacity to absorb new guests by the 117 collective shelters subsidized by the VO, but the transition need to be guided. NGOs, INGOs are all keen to play a role, and the LCG is the place where this coordination happen.
- Regarding changes foreseen in the area of education, with a very rough figure between 6 000 – 7 000 children are expected to be joined polish education system in next school year.
- On the PL-UA borders the dynamic remains stable with roughly 7500 persons crossing in and out every day, which almost 9% are evacuees.
- UNHCR took the commitment to better understand profiles, needs and context of the refugee population who still heavily rely on distribution of humanitarian assistance. Our team has visited 4 distribution points and has conducted approximately 65 interviews among refugees and aid workers.
- Given the events in Ukraine, we were notified of a group arrival in the context of evacuation of civilians from Easter Ukraine, initially internally displaced in Rivne Oblast, and then arriving to Hrubieszów. We may not exclude that this will continue.
- UNHCR has set up a Community Reference Group, currently consisting of a dozen of refugee women and man, mainly from Ukraine and elsewhere, who met the first time on April 12th . The scope of the initiative is to empower refugees and ensure they are consulted regularly on the issues affecting their life. This will complement other existing UNHCR and Partners outreach and mobilization efforts.

Protection sector updates

Felicia Byrne – UNHCR

- UNHCR conducted 59 interviews with refugees and 6 humanitarian aid workers at 4 distribution points to examine the reasons for the increase in the number of people seeking material support.
- Key findings:
  - Profile of recipients: The majority are women from eastern and central Ukraine who arrived in early 2022. Many are staying in collective accommodation facilities or subsidised private accommodation and have household members with special needs or vulnerabilities

- How in-kind support meets their needs: Half said that in-kind support is used to supplement the assistance they receive to reach the minimum level necessary for their family. The other half said they use the savings from not having to purchase the items they receive to allocate their limited resources to other priorities
- If support is discontinued: Most will cut back on food and clothing to save on costs. Some indicated that they may consider returning to Ukraine as they will not be able to meet these needs on their own.

Legal changes regarding amendment of the Special act on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country

Tomasz Sieniow, Julian Hofman, Patrycja Gustyn - The Rule of Law Institute

- According to the draft, the stay of citizens of Ukraine who have been granted the UKR PESEL number (as well as residence permits of citizens of Ukraine who arrived in Poland before the outbreak of full-scale war and whose residence permits expired after 24.02.2022) will be legal until 30 September 2025. At the same time, with the entry into force of the amendment, it will be possible to change the residence status from the current temporary protection to a new type of residence card.
- Children of Ukrainian citizens and minor children of the spouse of Ukrainian citizens who do not hold Ukrainian citizenship have been added to the catalogue of persons eligible for temporary protection.
- Change of the deadline concerning the application for the UKR PESEL. The 30-day deadline is changed to "immediately upon arrival in Poland".
- Persons applying for a UKR PESEL number and those who already have one are required to update their data based on a valid travel document (within 60 days of the date of issue of the travel document).
- A new concept of PESEL CUKR has been introduced, which is granted when a Ukrainian citizen obtains a simplified residence card.
- After 30.06.2024, the 40+ support programme will be terminated. The last date for payment under the 40+ programme for the month of June, will be 30.07.2024. The owners of the premises may call the accommodated persons to leave the premises within not less than 14 days. Those who have benefited from the indicated form of support so far will be able to be accommodated in collective accommodation.
- The group as to persons with disabilities exempted from contributing to the costs of collective accommodation was narrowed down to persons with a severe or moderate degree of disability or equivalent certificates (certificate of incapacity to work, certificate of incapacity to live independently). Minor changes were made to the other groups.
- The legislator shortens the deadline for submitting a notification to the labour office (from 14 to 7 days) in the case of entrusting work to a Ukrainian citizen. A catalogue of situations in which the submission of a new notification is required has been introduced.
- If a citizen of Ukraine obtains a temporary residence and work permit, it is incumbent on him/her to notify the employer of this fact within 7 days from the date of delivery of the decision. The employer has 7 days to submit a new notification.

- The legislator waives the punishment of a foreigner for illegal work if it is the employer who does not fulfil his/her obligation to notify the labour office.
- Citizens of Ukraine whose stay has been recognised as legal in connection with their entry to Poland as of 24 February 2022 are entitled to benefits, including family benefits, 800+, social assistance benefits (e.g. benefits, intervention aid), Good Start. These benefits are entitled on the same basis as Polish citizens.
- The payment of family benefits, upbringing benefit, good start benefit, family care benefit, subsidy for a stay in a nursery will be stopped in the case when an entitled citizen of Ukraine or a child leaves the territory of Poland. In the case of re-entry and fulfilment of the conditions for entitlement to benefits, payments will be made from the month in which they were withheld. The upbringing benefit and the Good start benefit will be granted for a child only if the child is receiving education in the Polish educational system. ZUS will be obliged to verify the above information in the Educational Information System. The above change will come into effect: Good start - school year 2025 / 2026; 800+ - starting from benefit period June 2025 - May 2026).
- Introducing a special type of residence card (conversion of UKR PESEL to temporary residence) for beneficiaries of temporary protection when the foreigner meets the criteria: as of 4 March 2024, the Ukrainian citizen has UKR PESEL, on the date of application he/she should have UKR PESEL, as of the date of application he/she has had UKR PESEL continuously for at least 365 days. The legislator has 90 days to issue the residence card. A person with the above residence card will be entitled to work and carry out economic activities.
- Reintroduction of the possibility for psychologists from Ukraine to work without the need to nostrify their diploma. The change will come into effect from 1 July 2024.
- The law provides for a number of facilitations for doctors and dentists from Ukraine. A citizen of Ukraine will still be able to obtain a permit to practise as a doctor or dentist if he or she has a diploma of 5 years' studies. i The existing provisions are supplemented by the requirement to submit a certificate confirming knowledge of the Polish language at a minimum B1 level. Persons already holding the right to practice the profession are required to submit a document certifying their knowledge of the Polish language by 1 January 2026.
- The Act proposes the placement of a child who, in the course of proceedings for the appointment of a temporary guardian, does not have a candidate for such a guardian identified, in a foster family, a family home or in institutional foster care. Subsequently, the court with jurisdiction over the minor's place of residence requests OPR/OPS to indicate a candidate for a temporary guardian for the minor alien from Ukraine. The authority indicates the candidate within 48 hours and sends his/her written consent to be appointed temporary guardian.

Anna Dąbrowska - Homo Faber

- Anna Dabrowska shared information on the course of the consultations on the amendment of the Act conducted by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, in which Homo Faber participated.
- The Ministry of the Interior and Administration assured that the Act will be introduced once the ICT system for accepting applications is properly prepared. Applications will be accepted in

online form (1-page application). In addition, a set of fingerprints will be taken when applying for UKR status.

- Homo Faber is concerned about difficulties arising from the need to update data when applying for a UKR PESEL based on a valid travel document by persons who have arrived in Poland without a travel document.
- During the consultations at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, information was provided that the issues of exclusion from participation in the costs of accommodation in places of collective residence are still being discussed, mainly in the context of people with disabilities and differences in Polish and Ukrainian certificates (deaf people in Ukraine have a certificate with a low degree of disability, in Poland with a significant degree of disability).
- Homo Faber recommends the MoI fully responsible for informing Ukrainian citizens about legal changes and disseminating information material related to them.

The obligation to introduce the Standards of Protection of Minors under the Kamilek Act in the context of working with children with refugee experience

Marta Szczodrak – Sempre a Frente

- On 15 February 2024, the so-called 'Kamilek Act', an amendment to a number of laws aimed at increasing the protection of minors who have been victims of violence, came into force. The Act makes the implementation of the Standards for the Protection of Minors mandatory. The deadline for the implementation of the standards is 15 August 2024.
- The standards, which are developed in writing, are to be tailored to the nature and type of facility or activity, and to set out in detail the rules to counter abuse and the procedures for prevention and handling of abuse.
- Entities subject to the Act are required to evaluate the standards at least every two years to ensure that they are adapted to current needs and comply with current legislation.
- For failing to implement the standards for the protection of minors, the Act provides for a number of sanctions, including up to PLN 10,000 for failing to check an employee in the Register, or a prison sentence of between three months and five years in the case of allowing a prohibited person to work.
- Sempre a Frente offers support and advice to entities in the Lublin Coordination Group in the development and implementation of the Standards for the Protection of Minors.

  (Detailed presentation attached)

AOB / Ending

- The meeting was summarised and concluded by Andrzej Maj, Deputy Governor of Lublin. VO in Lublin undertook to forward the comments collected during the meeting to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

Participants

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