

Coordination meeting

MINUTES

Date: 21.09.2023 (Thursday)

Time: 11.00 p.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Place: Lublin Voivodship Office, column room

The main points of the agenda

Introduction and opening remarks

Mariusz Kidaj – Deputy Director of Social Policy Department, VO in Lublin

- The meeting was opened by Mr. Mariusz Kidaj, Deputy Director of the Social Policy Department of LUW in Lublin. The agenda for the meeting was presented and each agenda item was presented. During the speech, Mariusz Kidaj referred to how the Lublin Coordination Group has evolved since the first meeting in 2022.

Marco Procaccini – Head of UNHCR Field Office in Lublin

- A focused analysis of the Border crossing movements for the last 30 days shows border traffic fluctuating patterns, with more crossings recorded to Poland (entries) than those to Ukraine (exits). Border traffic is deemed to show pendular movements rather than a fixed displacement pattern, as it changes during the official holidays, some weekends, and recently due to end of the summer season.
- Significant decrease of TPD holders has been observed from about 62K registered PESEL UKR holders in September 2022 to approximately 35K as of 21 September. 45% reduction. In the same period of time, the population hosted in collective shelters has changed from 4,200 to 3,400 in the same reporting period. Only a reduction of 20%. This tells us that while the overall population has reduced persons with specific vulnerability from whom basic needs are still provided for in the shelters, have reduced much less. Although it is difficult to predict, UNHCR planning assumption for 2024 is that the number of temporary protection holders in Poland will remain stable and main needs will be related to assistance to extremely vulnerable individuals among them, and socio-economic inclusion for the ones who are still facing challenges on this regard.
- Overall percentage of persons in collective shelters in Lubelskie compared with other Voivodeships shows that while in Lubelskie the population in collective shelters account to almost 10% of the total while in the Tri-city area is only 3%, in Mazowieckie is about 2%. More similar situation to Lubelskie is found in Malopolska. This may be an indication that persons who have opted to remain in Lubelskie are not doing so only for personal consideration related to distance, family links and other, but may have a heightened vulnerability compared with the population that has been able to undertake steps to be self reliant.

Community Based Protection - UNHCR

UNHCR – Felicia Byrne



- What is community protection? Rights-based and people-centered approach; Promotes community agency and leadership in identifying risks and needs and proposing solutions; Places the community's voice and knowledge at the center of our programming; Respects the diversity and agency of the people and communities we work with and for; CBP (community-based protection) is a process, NOT a project or activity.
- CBP recognizes that many protection problems exist in a community or society even before an emergency occurs and can be exacerbated by it: harmful practices, domestic violence and public violence, criminal behavior, neglect of people with special needs, exclusion or discrimination (e.g., based on gender, ethnicity, etc.).
- CBP requires us to critically analyze the role of communities, recognizing them both as sources of support and assistance, and working together to mitigate pre-existing sources of risk and harm.

Current situation in collective shelters - Lublin Voivodeship Office in Lublin

Andrzej Osipowski – VO in Lublin

- According to data as of September 20, 2023, there are 3060 people in collective accommodation in the Lublin province. By comparison, at the end of March, the number was 4136. A steady decline is being observed, and thus the number of places of collective accommodation is decreasing.
- At the end of August 2023, according to the reasons for the exemption of costs participation for humanitarian reasons, out of a total of 3216 people, 98 were exempted. This represents about 25% of the total. In comparison, according to data as of the end of May 2023, of the 3638 people exempted on humanitarian grounds, there were 816 people participating, accounting for 22% of the total number. The above figures do not take into account the other prerequisites for exemption from the cost of participation, which are verified on a zero-one basis (age, disability, child care, among others).
- Participation in the cost of accommodation as of the end of May 2023 - 237 people (6.5%). As of 21 September, the number is 83 people (2.5%). A clear decreasing trend is observed. During the implementation of the provisions of the amended law, attention was drawn to the fact that the law makes participation mandatory. At the same time, it should be remembered that no mechanisms have been put in place to effectively enforce this obligation.
- The biggest challenge remains socio-economic inclusion and the passive attitude of a large part of those staying in collective shelters. Rotation and frequent trips to Ukraine are also a problem. At the same time, in some places tensions and conflicts are observed inside, as well as outside collective shelters. There is a clear need to look for systemic solutions and measures to mitigate the above mentioned elements.
- As a part of agenda item, a discussion on the current situation in collective shelters was held. Representatives of the following LCG members took part: Lena Grochowska Foundation, Volunteer Center in Lublin, Homo Faber, The Rule of Law Institute and UNHCR. Each speech highlighted trends and challenges from the perspective of organization working directly in





collective shelters. Overall, most of the participants to the discussion expressed concerns over declining interest in engagement by the community and the risk of increased aid dependency. UNHCR stressed particularly on the fact that collective shelters remain of critical importance for many vulnerable individuals, including women with small children, disabled persons, elderly population among others, who in absence of this support will find themselves in very difficult conditions, probably homeless. Reference to reports heard about the risk of a very small part of the population that may try to use the system while at the same time showing limited interest and efforts in increasing self-reliance, which may also be linked to other underlying causes, such as trauma, this dynamic is not unexpected especially when a crisis gets protracted. If there are confirmed abuses, this should be detected and solutions identified, but always keeping in mind the importance of making available safe accommodation and support to the ones who need it.

Update of legal changes and their implementation – The Rule of Law Institute

Julian Hofman – The Rule of Law Institute

- Legal changes that do not strictly concern refugees, but to some extent affect areas related to refugees: 300+ support being transformed into 800+; Expansion of the catalog of people eligible for free medicines; Introduction of pre-verification of the application of a person who seeks to enter the Schengen area.
- Crossing the border by refugees, including returns to Poland, remains a problem from a legal perspective. Refugees who receive social benefits in Poland, after returning to Poland, often have problems with the reactivation of the above-mentioned benefits, as well as UKR status. The above situations most often require individual legal interventions. The main reason for this is the insufficient synchronization of the internal systems of ZUS and the Border Guard. At the same time, there are repeated errors regarding the reactivation of UKR status for people for whom it should not be revoked. Fortunately, as time goes by, the errors are fewer and fewer.

Patrycja Gustyn – The Rule of Law Institute

- At the moment, the legality of residency for refugees from Ukraine is defined by the legal framework until March 4, 2024. For students and their guardians, it is August 31 or September 30.
- The cancellation of the state of epidemic emergency (July 1, 2023), in connection with which the validity of foreigners' residence documents was extended from March 14, 2020 to July 31, 2023. By the end of July, foreigners should legalize their stay or leave Poland. The above issue does not directly affect Ukrainian citizens. However, a marked increase in inquiries related to legality of stay from third-country nationals has been observed.
- Refugees from Ukraine are increasingly turning to the Rule of Law Institute with questions not directly related to the outbreak of war in Ukraine, but elements of everyday life, such as concluding contracts for renting an apartment, taking up legal work, issues related to access and use of Polish institutions, starting a business.





2024 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) – key steps of the RRP process; how to join RRP, Q&A - UNHCR

Filippo Busconi – UNHCR

- The Regional Response Plan (RRP) is a strategic, coordination, planning, advocacy, programmatic and fundraising platform for partners to respond to the Ukrainian refugee situation in Poland.
- The geographic scope covers Ukraine's neighboring countries, including extensive chapters covering Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.
- RRP partners may include relevant UN agencies, international and national NGOs, IFRC and Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, regional organizations, community-based organizations and refugee-led organizations.
- Schedule for partners:
 - August 18 - kick-off
 - September 13 - 14 - RRP workshop
 - September 29 - Deadline for expression of interest (sending budget and contact person)
 - October 2 - training of partners on how to submit projects
 - October 20 - deadline for submission of detailed projects
- All questions can be directed to: polwa2024rrp@unhcr.org

Evaluation of the functioning of the Lublin Coordination Group. Conclusions of the evaluation survey.
- UNHCR

Kamil Raczyński – UNHCR

- UNHCR together with LUW in Lublin conducted an evaluation survey in August 2023 based on a questionnaire consisting of 9 closed and 6 open questions. 41 people participated in the survey.
- Main conclusions:
 - positive evaluation of the speakers and topics, the way the meetings were conducted, simultaneous translation, the way the meetings were organized, the lunches after the LCG meetings, the minutes and the way of communication. Varied evaluation of the length of the meetings and the time devoted to the various elements of the agenda,
 - emphasis on discussion and increased cooperation between LAG members outside of meetings,
 - Emphasis on efficiency through cross-sector cooperation
 - a range of suggestions for topics and areas that should be on the agenda for future meetings, including topic related to Polish – Belarusian border,
 - a range of ideas and suggestions on how to improve the efficiency of the LAG and what can be changed in the operation of the LAG

Detailed results of the survey in the attached presentation.

Summary and conclusions





Bolesław Gzik - Deputy Governor of Lublin Voivodeship

- The meeting was closed by Deputy Governor of Lublin Voivodeship Boleslaw Gzik. In his speech, he touched on the development of the situation in Ukraine, the situation in the Lublin region, as well as the conclusions of the LCK evaluation.
- Assessing the strategic situation in Ukraine, positive symptoms are observed, as well as strategic solutions to improve the overall situation in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the situation is still difficult to predict.
- From the perspective of VO in Lublin, the situation in 2024 should be similar to that observed today in terms of refugee reception. The number of refugees from Ukraine is decreasing, including those staying in collective shelters.

Participants

Name and surname	Organisation / Institution
Bolesław Gzik	Lubelskie Province Governor's Office in Lublin
Renata Rojek	Lubelskie Province Governor's Office in Lublin
Felicia Byrne	UNHCR
Kamil Raczyński	UNHCR
Małgorzata Gałan	UNHCR
Felicia Byrne	UNHCR
Filippo Busconi	UNHCR
Marta Brożyna	Lena Grochowska Foundation
Justyna Orłowska	Volunteer Center in Lublin
Dorota Cieslik	Municipality of Chełm
Julian Hofman	The Rule of Law Institute
Patrycja Gustyn	The Rule of Law Institute
Magdalena Tota	The Rule of Law Institute
Yevhen Duzhyi	Consulate General of Ukraine in Lublin
Solomiia Mykytseis	Consulate General of Ukraine in Lublin
Agnieszka Tracz	Homo Faber





Lidia Kokszarowa	Polish Red Cross Lublin Regional Branch
Małgorzata Reszka - Ryczek	Voivodeship Labor Office in Lublin
Ks. Łukasz Mudrak	Caritas of the Lublin Archdiocese
Jacek Jęczmionka	Caritas of the Lublin Archdiocese
Ks. Zygmunt Jagiełło	Caritas of the Zamość – Lubaczów Archdiocese
Anna Mielnicka	For the Earth Association
Filip Bujnowski	Save the Children
Sylwia Niemirowska	Brotherhood of Charity of St. Brother Albert in Lublin

