Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting

Meeting Minutes – 18 June 2025

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
Chaired by:	UNHCR
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	IOM, UNHCR, Vela foundation, Halina Niec legal aid centre, City Office of Krakow, Ośrodek Interwencji Kryzysowej, Unbreakable Ukraine, Foundation Understanding, Malopolskie voivodeship office, Patchwork, Zustricz, Centrum Praw Kobiet
Agenda:	1. Updates from the Malopolska voivodeship 2. Establishing the Gender-based violence (GBV) coordination mechanism under the lead of the municipality of Krakow 3. Safety audit and findings of the pilot exercise 4. World Refugee Day 5. AoB
AGENDA POINT	**DISCUSSION**
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	Participants were welcomed to the 43rd Małopolska Coordination Group (MCG) meeting.
Agenda point 1	Updates from Mrs Paulina Diob Plenipotentiary from Malopolski Voivodship: • **Małopolska** leads nationwide in both the **number of collective shelters (CS)** and the **number of refugees residing in them**.

	• Current number of residents in CS in Małopolska: **approx. 6,300**.
	• Comparison with other voivodeships:
	  ○ **Mazowieckie:** ~3,400
	  ○ **Śląskie:** ~2,720
	  ○ **Dolnośląskie:** ~2,514
	• Several CS have been **closed** due to their **non-cooperation** with the **PCPM "Together to Independence" program**.
	• Highest number of CS residents in the following **powiats**:
	  ○ **Myślenicki**
	  ○ **Chrzanów**
	  ○ **Nowy Sącz**
	  ○ **Nowy Targ**
	  ○ **Kraków**
	Outreach and observations:
	• **Mrs Paulina Diob (Voivodeship Representative)** informed that authorities have conducted **outreach missions** for the past **2 months:**
	  ○ **14 CS that she personally visited**
	  ○ **24 CS visited** by the **City of Kraków**
	• Observations from the field include:
	  ○ A pattern of **"learned helplessness"** among many residents.
	  ○ **Low participation** in information meetings.

	○ Many residents express an intention to **return to Ukraine** once benefits end, with limited interest in becoming self-reliant. **Special Act Amendment – information dissemination:** • In light of the upcoming amendment to the **Special Act**, the **Małopolska Voivodeship** plans to require **powiats to formally acknowledge** that they received a **leaflet in Ukrainian** and distributed it to **all collective shelters** in their jurisdiction. **Continuation of Coordination Meetings:** • Due to the **closure of the UNHCR Kraków Office**, **Mrs Paulina Diob informed that she is ready to host coordination meeting in September** at the **Voivodeship Office premises.** • Sabrina informed that UNHCR Warsaw is committed to support the voivodship in taking over this role. **The focal points in Warsaw are:** - Konrad Rahal Linkewitsch, External Relations Officer linkewit@unhcr.org - Aleksandra Kaplon, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Associate, kaplon@unhcr.org -
Agenda point 2	Sabrina shared the strong engagement of Mrs Ewelina Pytel Plenipotentiary for Gender Equality of the City of Krakow on enhancing the efforts to build stronger GBV response. The steps that were already initiated by UNHCR to support the lead of the Municipality in coordinating GBV actors and establishing a **formal coordination mechanism on GBV**, led by the **City of Kraków**. The main outcomes of the **GBV panel held on the 10th Dec 2024** and the GBV **coordination meeting that took place on the 23th Jan 2025**. Confirmed the following points • a strong need for a **dedicated, interdisciplinary forum** to coordinate GBV response and prevention. • the importance of: ○ **Improved inter-institutional cooperation** ○ **Greater emphasis on prevention strategies**

	○ **Continued training** for front-line professionals **Current discussion points:** • **Patrycja Durska**, newly appointed **Municipal Representative for Violence Prevention (Rzeczniczka ds. Przeciwdziałania Przemocy)**, expressed her **willingness to lead and continue the coordination meetings**. • Organizations **interested in participating** are encouraged to **contact Ewelina Pytel**. ewelina.pytel@um.krakow.pl • Meetings will take place at the **MOPS premises**. **Key issues to address:** • The need to **include Blue Card procedures** as a discussion topic in future meetings. ○ It was noted that **Ukrainian refugees often fear this process**, associating it with potential loss of custody over their children. Clarifying these procedures is crucial to foster trust and encourage help-seeking behaviors. • **UNHCR emphasized previous good collaboration with Małopolska Police**, who have shown willingness to **support GBV training sessions** and attend meetings as active partners. UNHCR focal point in Warsaw to continue support these efforts: Miriam Aertker Senior Protection Officer aertker@unhcr.org
Agenda point 3	**3. Safety Assessment of Collective Shelter at Piłsudskiego 13 in Kraków (February 2025)** **Overview of the Safety Assessment** Conducted jointly by **UNHCR**, **IOM**, and **Fundacja Vela** between **18–21 February 2025** Included: ○ **68 individual interviews** with residents ○ **Facility walkthrough** ○ **Informal conversations** ○ Distribution of **hygiene and school kits** **Shelter Demographics**

	Capacity: **159 residents**, approximately **80 families** Population includes: ○ **Elderly persons**, **children**, **youth**, **single men**, **women with disabilities**, persons with **mental health conditions** ○ **94% of residents are women** ○ **54% retired**, only **12% employed** ○ **113 people** receive **government financial assistance** **Key Safety Conditions Identified** ○ **Building is not accessible** for persons with disabilities ○ **Shared rooms and bathrooms**, lack of privacy ○ Limited **security**: ○ No 24/7 visitor registration or control ○ No clear system to **prevent unauthorized access** ○ Presence of **conflict and verbal aggression** among residents **Gender-based risks** observed: ○ **Shared bathroom facilities for men and women** ○ **Unaccompanied children**, **children separated from parents** ○ Reports of **substance abuse** and **threatening behavior** ○ Presence of **single men** and **individuals with untreated mental health issues** **Structural and Procedural Gaps** ○ **No trained staff** on refugee protection and safety

	○ **No code of conduct**, background checks, or standard behavior protocols ○ **No confidential feedback mechanism** for residents ○ **No reporting protocol** for staff misconduct **Access to Services** ○ Information boards present ○ Some residents aware of support offered by **MOPS** and **Zustricz**, but **barriers remain** in accessing help Fear of **eviction** reported among residents **Recommendations:** ○ **For Voivodeship Authorities:** ○ Improve building infrastructure to ensure **safety and accessibility** ○ Support implementation of **standard safety protocols and training** **For Shelter Management:** ○ Establish a **code of conduct** and conduct **criminal background checks** for staff ○ Introduce a **confidential complaint mechanism** ○ Train staff on **protection principles and GBV prevention** **For Humanitarian Organizations:** ○ Increase **protection monitoring and outreach** in similar shelters ○ Provide **targeted GBV prevention programming** ○ Enhance **awareness-raising** on residents' rights and access to support

Agenda point 4	**1. Publication of a New Study on the Economic Impact of Refugees** • UNHCR and **Deloitte** released a new **study** analyzing the impact of **Ukrainian refugees on the Polish economy**. • **https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116621?_gl=1*59fyl7*_gcl_au*MzY0MzAwODI2LjE3NTA0MjQ2MjY.*_rup_ga*MjkyNDMwNDQyLjE3MDEzNTM1NTQ.*_rup_ga_EVDQTJ4LMY*czE3NTA0MjQ2MjYkbzYxMCRnMCR0MTc1MDQyNDYyNiRqNjAkbDAkaDA.*_ga*MTM5MTM3NzE0LjE2ODY2NDUwNzQ.*_ga_BW98LQL08N*czE3NTA0MjQ2MjYkbzE4JGcwJHQxNzUwNDI0NjI2JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..** • **2. New Calls for Proposals** • A **list of funding opportunities** is now available for **international and national NGOs** involved in the refugee response in Poland. • The list is published on the Operational Data Portal in both **English** **Document - Poland: Funding Opportunities for Polish NGOs (ENG) (30 May 2025)** and **Polish** **Document - Poland: Funding Opportunities for Polish NGOs (PL) (30 May 2025)**. **3. UNHCR Recommendations on Temporary Protection** • UNHCR shared updated **guiding principles for the continued use of Temporary Protection** in the context of the Ukraine Refugee Situation. https://www.refworld.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/unhcr_recommendations_on_temporary_protection_and_transition_arrangements_ukraine_refugee_situation_may_2025.pdf • These principles aim to support sustainable transition and ensure continued protection. 3**World Refugee Day – 24 June 2025** • UNHCR Kraków and **Villa Decius** will co-host a **World Refugee Day event**. **Location:** Villa Decius, 28 Lipca 1943 17/a, Kraków • **Time:** 1:00 PM • The event theme is **"Solidarity with Refugees"**, and all partners are warmly invited to attend.

	Registration needed! https://lnkd.in/deJ2gjPZ As World Refugee Day approaches, UNHCR, in cooperation with the Villa Decius Foundation, is pleased to invite you to a panel discussion on the remarkable resilience of refugees. For our discussion, the panelists will be: Marcelline Butza - a farmer, feminist and human rights defender from DRC known for her contribution to the fight against the socio-economic violence faced by women in the Eastern part of her country. She is the winner of the Sergio Vieira di Mello 2024 price. She is also the founder of Rebuild women's hope. Vałdzis Fuhaš, human rights defender/educator in exile from Belarus. He is the co-founder of Human Constanta an NGO focusing on rights of foreign citizens, statelessness, anti-discrimination and human rights education. Yulia Klymenko is from Ukraine, working as social media and marketing specialist with Patchwork a refugee-led organization working with refugees with disabilities. Olena Postolnyk is from Ukraine, she is the co-founder of Jednosc, a refugee-led organization focusing on education, development and promotion of leadership of the youth. Video Testimony from Mamadou Mounir Sylla from Guinea- Conakry, he works in telecom field and is a basketball player at the Foundation for Heroes (TBC).
AOB	**Updates from IOM:** Magdalena Kuśka has completed her assignment with IOM Poland as Head of Krakow Sub-Office. New person will replace her soon. Thanks to her commitment and the cooperation she established with the different stakeholders in Malopolski.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	**Action**	**Responsible**	**Deadline**	**Status** (as of)
1.				