



Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Meeting Minutes – 23 March 2023

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
Chaired by:	UNHCR; Open Krakow Coalition
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	Małopolski Urząd Wojewódzki; Urząd Miasta Krakowa Wydział Polityki Społecznej i Zdrowia; Urząd Marszałkowski Województwo Małopolskiego; All Hands and Hearts; Faros Elpidas; Friends for Ukraine/Przyjaciele dla Ukrainy; Fundacja Mission-U; Halina Nieć Legal Aid Center; IB Polska; IOM; Małopolski Fundusz Ekonomii Społecznej; UNHCR; VOICE Amplified; Wolno Nam;
Agenda:	<p>Introduction from the co-chairs and update on the points decided on the last Coordination meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Updates from refugee and Ukrainian-led organizations 2) Presentation on Amendments in the special act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens (Halina Nieć Legal Aid Center) 3) Presentation of Protection Sector plan of joint mechanisms to monitor the impact of Amendments in the special act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens (UNHCR) 4) AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	<p>Participants were welcomed to the fifteenth Małopolska Coordination Group meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IB Polska provided updates about recent activities. Partners were kindly invited to the last Open Krakow Coalition meeting to be co-chaired by IB Polska. Afterwards, the meetings will continue with a new co-chair. NGO partners that are not yet part

	<p>of the Open Krakow Coalition are invited to reach out to Izabela Kucmin-Bemelmans (ukraina.ibpolska@gmail.com) to be added to the contact list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR provided updates about recent activities. Partners may still refer persons in difficult life situations and persons in vulnerable groups for cash assistance from UNHCR. Referrals can be made through UNHCR Protection Monitors. Soon the latest report with Protection Monitoring findings will become available. The report focuses on the situation of Ukrainian persons residing in Poland. Currently, partners may still contribute to the survey by REACH done in cooperation with UNHCR in Kraków and in neighboring municipalities (gmina). • The Representative of the Voivode shared that there are still protective masks available for partners from the Voivode's Office.
<p>Agenda point 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundacja Mission-U shared that the financing on which the Foundation has relied so far has been discontinued. No new sources of funding have emerged for small actors operating locally. As a result local organizations such as the Foundation face challenges in sustaining their activities, despite growing interest and continued needs from the Ukrainian community in Poland. The Foundation continues to operate in Dom Miłosierdzia (House of Mercy) in Kraków, supporting persons with disabilities and their families, women and children, and other vulnerable persons. The Foundation also inquired about the availability of hands-on assistance in drafting and filing of financing applications in Poland.
<p>Agenda point 2</p>	<p>Halina Nieć Legal Aid Center (HNLAC) presented on amendments to the special act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HNLAC facilitates consultation sessions in its 5 centers in Kraków. Currently HNLAC operates in Galeria Kazimierz, Miejsce Otwarte Community Center at on ul. Życzkowskiego, Dworzec Główny, Zustricz Foundation on ul. Karmelicka and in a point on ul. Łagiewnicka. HNLAC welcomes all interested in legal assistance to its five point of operation, as well as to contact HNLAC directly: https://www.pomocprawna.org/kontakt • PESEL registration is now mandatory for all Ukrainian citizens within 30 days of crossing the border. Previously, the deadline for applying was 90 days after having crossed the border. Previously, applying for a PESEL and UKR status was also only mandatory for persons who had no stamp in their passport, either due to lack of passport or having only non-paper ID. Other Ukrainian citizens did not need to apply for UKR status (PESEL). • Persons who entered Poland before the new amendments should apply for UKR status within 30 days of the new law coming into power. However, no sanctions have been established for lack of application or belated application. A question

to HNLAC was put forward whether any of the clients of the Center have signaled problems related to belated or omitted PESEL application. So far, no such cases have been recorded at the Center.

- With regards to the undue cancellation of UKR status, HNLAC explained that a one-time entry into Ukraine for under 30 days should not result in the loss of UKR status. Nevertheless, instances of lost status have been noted among the Center's clients since autumn 2022. The Amendments to the Special Law did not address this recurring problem. As a result, undue losses of UKR status are likely to continue. The loss of UKR status means that access to social services and healthcare is no longer available.
- The procedure for reversing the revocation of UKR status in case of undue loss should in principle be a matter of updating the database of beneficiaries and should not involve reapplying for UKR status. In such cases, any social services and support should be retroactively continued, meaning that all skipped tranches of payments should be paid out.
- Requirements for temporary stay applications are becoming stricter. They currently include only 3 bases for stay: staying in Poland for the purpose of work, performing work requiring special qualifications (Blue Card), and conducting business (działalność gospodarcza). Applicants must demonstrate that they earn at least the gross minimum wage amount throughout one or more work positions. Under the current temporary stay model, children (including children in working families) have no right to apply for temporary stay. The situation is similar for all persons unable to work or unable to find employment, even if they are under the care of a working and earning adult. However, no business plan or viability documentation is required from applicants willing to stay in Poland for the purpose of conducting business. The mode of applying for temporary stay will not require in-person visits to the Foreigners' Office, although the specific tool for filing the applications has not been made public so far.
- The Foreigners' Office in Kraków holds information sessions on Saturdays, as well as maintains an info point for foreigners and a hotline (with ca 1h of waiting time). The Office also responds to email within 3 working days. More information can be found on <https://infoopt.pl/>
- New regulations concerning financial contributions by refugees living in collective centers have come into force. Certain refugees are now required to pay up to 50% of the cost of their stay, or up to 40 PLN/day. The payments should come in forward installments. Certain vulnerable groups of residents may obtain a contribution exemption. However, the documents required will need to adhere to stricter documentation requirements than previously. For example, only the Polish confirmations of disability will be valid. The general criterion for contribution requirement or exemption should be whether a resident is capable of work and can find employment.

- According to the new regulations, the obligation to document and apply for contribution exemptions lies on the landlords and hotel owners. The Małopolska Marshall's Office confirmed that the applications for Kraków are now at the stage of verification. Re-verification of documents can be requested each month. Translators are available to translate documents written in Ukrainian and Russian. The exemption premise of being in a difficult living situation involves an open catalogue of possibilities and documentation. For the inability to find employment, a confirmation from the Labor Office should be sufficient. The Representative of the Voivode stressed that more information about the situation of persons with disabilities living in private accommodations should become available after April 5.
- As of now, there is no clear appeal procedure for the contribution exemption decisions. Private accommodation owners whose residents do not apply for a contribution exemption will have to pay for the accommodation of residents out of their own pocket. It is also not possible to ask the residents to leave the accommodation without a full eviction procedure. More information will be made available on the Open Kraków website: <http://otwarty.krakow.pl/>
- The situation of individuals who had left Ukraine for an EU country other than Poland and would now like relocate to Poland was discussed. In principle, these individuals are allowed to relocate to Poland, given that they resign from temporary protection status in the other EU country and are not benefitting from temporary protection status and related services in two countries at the same time. The European Commission has expressed a view that relocation within the EU should be possible for all refugees from Ukraine. However, as of now, persons relocating to Poland report obstacles in registering and acquiring UKR status (PESEL).
- The legal stays of foreigners in Poland on the basis of the Special Act on Ukraine or the Covid-19 Act will end on 24 August, 2023. However, an extension of this deadline is possible
- Fundacja Przyjaciele dla Ukrainy raised the question of legal assistance for unaccompanied minors between 17-18 years of age. The Foundation reported having worked with children in this age range who are afraid to cross the border into Poland due to legal uncertainty. HNLAC responded that in situations of such minors MOPS should assist in searching for temporary guardian. However if a suitable candidate does not come forward, children will be directed to intervention care institutions, which may not offer an appropriate environment for children from Ukraine. HNLAC is working on a handbook for prospective temporary guardians. UNHCR agreed to share a child protection referral pathway with partners, where addresses of go-to institutions can be found.

Agenda point 3

UNHCR presented on the joint mechanism to monitor the impact of the amendments to the Special Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exercise will include monitoring of the UKR status registration process and challenges. It will also include monitoring of the situation of persons residing in collective centers. Special attention will be given to individuals whose applications for UKR status were rejected, or whose UKR status was revoked or deactivated. • Indicators to be incorporated into the monitoring tool include: number of individuals unable to obtain UKR PESEL status upon first arrival in Poland; number of individuals reporting having lost UKR PESEL status without leaving Poland; number of individuals having lost UKR PESEL status with absences from Poland of less than 30 days; and number of individuals reporting having approached the Office for Foreigners and not having a TPD certificate issues. In regards to collective accommodation, indicators include: number of individuals having requested from the site manager to leave the site; number of individuals asked to financially contribute, and a number of individuals falling within the listed categories in Article 12 and asked to leave accommodation because of their inability to contribute • The case reporting questionnaire is still open to contributions and feedback. Partners wishing to contribute to the development of the monitoring survey are kindly asked to contact Maria Pamuła (pamula@unhcr.org)
AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Amplified shared that there are still free spots for the PSEA trainings offered by the organization in Kraków in March. • IB Poland inquired whether partners are still interested in receiving information about the language courses offered in Kraków. • In response to the above, other participants confirmed that there is still much interest in the offer of language courses. • IB asked partners for assistance in searching for about 200 laptops for a work and study point for Ukrainian children in Kraków. Partners are invited to contact Izabela Kucmin-Bemelmans (ukraina.ibpolska@gmail.com) for more information. • Faros Elpidas inquired whether there are meetings or trainings planned for Ukrainians who have to file taxes (PIT) in Poland. IB Poland informed that Fundacja Zustricz is planning to organize several such meeting, but that registration is required. The Multicultural Center and Zustricz also put together an online webinar on PIT (in Ukrainian): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tB0ewfCpDE

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

1.				
2.				