

Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Meeting Minutes – 18 January 2024

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; US Consulate General; Alight; Fundacja Instytut Polska-Ukraina; Fundacja Jedność; Fundacja Kocham Dębniki; Fundacja Mission-U; IB Polska; IOM; Patchwork; VOICE Amplified; UNHCR; UNICEF;
Agenda:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and updates from the co-chairs • Updates from UKR and refugee-led organizations • Updates from the Voivodship • Updates on the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update on 2023 Q4 reporting ○ Launch of the 2024 RRP • Funding Opportunity - Presentation by the Public Affairs Officer US General Consulate Krakow • AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	<p>Participants were welcomed to the 28th Małopolska Coordination Group (MCG) meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR opened the meeting and highlighted that coordination continues to remain important in 2024, especially as many actors are facing reductions in funding. The UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office continues to cover 5 Voivodships – Dolnośląskie,

	<p>Łódzkie, Małopolskie, Śląskie and Wielkopolskie – in which UNHCR works closely with regional and municipal authorities to strengthen the coordination system.</p>
Agenda point 1	<p>No updates were provided under the given agenda point.</p>
Agenda point 2	<p>The Representative of the Voivode provided updates about the current situation in Małopolskie region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following parliamentary elections in October, Krzysztof Klęczar has been named the new Voivode of Małopolska. He has committed to continuing the support of refugees in the region. • Updates were provided regarding border crossing trends and PESEL registrations. Increased border movements have been noted around holidays, including 25 and 25 December, 6 January, and New Year’s. Increased entrances to Poland and new arrivals at the Kraków train station were also noted following an increase in bombings in Ukraine in late December. However, there has not been a big increase in PESEL registrations. In total 163,707 PESEL numbers with UKR status have been registered in Małopolska, which is 9% of the national total. In regard to PESEL numbers remaining active, Małopolska has the second most out of all regions of Poland. The locations with the highest number of PESEL registrations in the region are Kraków, Skawina, and Wieliczka. • Updates were provided related to the situation of collective accommodations. The accommodation database maintained by the Voivodship currently contains about 17000 beds, of which about 6700 are available. There are 556 collective accommodations registered in Małopolska, which makes it the region with the most such sites in Poland. Going forward, it will be examined whether the refugees currently exempt from participation in costs of accommodation adequately meet the given criteria, or whether there is abuse of the system. • Kocham Dębniki Foundation asked about active shelters and noted that there have been many cases of refugee women choosing to return to Ukraine because they cannot afford the cost of living in Poland. Kocham Dębniki further asked whether there a list of shelters to which these women can be referred? • The Representative of the Voivodship noted that there is no publicly available list. Refugees looking for accommodation must go in person to the information point at Przy Rondzie 6 street during public office working hours. In the case of the closure of an entire collective accommodation, this matter can be referred directly to the Voivodship Office and will be handled as a group.

- UNHCR noted that referrals to private shelters should not be done independently. Rather, they should be done through official channels run by the Voivodship authorities. This places referrals through the official system and minimizes the risk of abuse and trafficking.
- It was noted that the Blue Dot at the Kraków train station run jointly by the Voivodship and UNICEF closed on 31 December. The Voivodship remains open to cooperation with NGOs, especially those related to labor market activation or encouraging children to attend Polish schools. Interested organizations are invited to get in contact with Mrs. Paulina Dziob.
- UNICEF asked about activation of children outside of the education system. Approximately 20% of children are not enrolled in any education. It follows that it is difficult to reach them because they do not take part in any classes or activities, including in community centers. UNICEF further asked if there any ideas as to how to reach out to these children?
- The Representative of the Voivode responded that this is a matter best raised with the Curator of Education. During field visits to collective accommodations, the Representative has noted that many children were not at computers and did not appear to be attending online education. There appears to be reluctance from mothers of children towards sending them to school. This is for various reasons, including that fact that it may be difficult to bring younger children to school in more remote locations, and the fact that a level of Polish is needed for parents to be able to navigate the school system. It is possible that the situation will not change until in-person attendance in the Polish school system is mandated by law.
- Jedność Foundation noted that other barriers exist for teenagers. Language barriers can mean that teenagers are placed in classes with younger children, in which they have no peers. NGOs can create programs from these children which they feel comfortable attending and in which they would like to take part. These programs can be expanded with additional funding.
- The Representative of the Voivode noted that the work of such NGOs is very important. However, the education system should also be standardized.
- UNHCR noted that parallel systems, including those related to education, should not be created. The priority in any humanitarian intervention should be the strengthening of the national system, as this creates stability.

<p>Agenda point 3</p>	<p>UNHCR shared a presentation about the 2024 RRP process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of the 2024 Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for Ukraine took place in Geneva on 15 January. A clear message that the war in Ukraine remains ongoing was shared. There are around 4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine, and 6.3 million refugees in neighboring countries. Due to the dynamic situation in Ukraine there may be additional refugee influxes. • The geographical scope of the 2024 RRP remains the same as in past years, and a Poland Chapter is included. Population planning figures for Poland for 2024 are 1.1 million refugees. Localization is also a feature, and partners in Poland for 2024 include 80 national NGOs and 14 international NGOs. • Regarding identified needs of refugees in Poland, protection remains the most important. This includes child protection and gender-based violence. This also includes issues related to civil documentation and adequate response in preventing statelessness. There are additionally the group of Roma who are at risk of discrimination. A second identified need is education, especially regarding how Ukrainian families can be encouraged to integrate children into the national system. • Regarding funding, it is important to remember that the RRP is a funding appeal and not a funding mechanism. Working on mobilization of funds means jointly making efforts towards strong advocacy, including in terms of reporting. For those organizations which are RRP partners, this means reporting in Activity Info. This is an essential way to build accountability and better map gaps in the response, and then be able to bring those gaps and needs to donors.
<p>Agenda point 4</p>	<p>The Public Affairs Officer of the US Consulate in Krakow shared information about upcoming events and funding opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American and Ukrainian Consulates will hold a joint event for the two-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine. This will likely take place on the afternoon of 23rd February. The theme of the event will be teenagers. A competition will be held together with Fundacja Jedność open to Ukrainian citizens ages 14-18 from across Poland. The prize ceremony will take place in Krakow. • Two funding opportunities are currently available from the Consulate, and more will be listed throughout the year. The priority for funding through the Public Diplomacy Section is the creation of ties between the people of the United States and Poland. The first call for proposals falls under the annual program and funding is expected for 4-10 projects total, not all related to Ukraine. There is a special focus this year on university students and young professionals, and every proposal

	needs to be targeted to a specific audience. Each project also has to have an American cultural element. The second proposal is specific funding for activities at festivals. An information session on the two current calls will be held online on 1 February, and the first submission deadline is 1 March. More information is available at the following link: PD Poland
AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR noted several other funding opportunities. A recent email sent to all participants highlighted the open call from the American Consulate, and also a funding opportunity from the UN Trust Fund. A call from the Austrian Consul General for the Intercultural Achievement Award will also be shared by email with participants following the meeting.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status (as of)
1.	Schedule a session on the RRP	UNHCR		
2.	Schedule a session on service mapping	UNHCR		