



Coordination meeting

MINUTES

Date: 27.06.2024 (Thursday)

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Place: Voivodeship Office in Lublin, column room

The main points of the agenda

Introduction and welcoming participants

Andrzej Maj – Lubelskie Voivodeship Office in Lublin

- The meeting was opened by Deputy Governor of Lublin Andrzej Maj. In his speech, he referred to the upcoming legal changes and their implications, as well as preparations for the entry into force of the amendment to the Law on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with Armed Conflict on the Territory of that State from the perspective of VO in Lublin. The agenda of the coordination meeting was briefly outlined.
- An important element of the meeting is also education and preparations for the new school year 2024/2025, which raises further challenges related to the inclusion of children and young people from Ukraine in the Polish education system. Today's meeting is an opportunity to talk about the upcoming changes and reflect on how they can be implemented without major obstacles.

Marco Procaccini – Head of UNHCR Field Office in Lublin

- Marco Procaccini thanked the members of the Lubelskie Coordination Group for their commitment. It is important to appreciate the opportunity to exchange information, as well as cooperation and collaboration between the various organizations, institutions and municipalities of which the LCG is composed. At the same time, tributes were paid to the efforts made and to carry the message of solidarity and empathy through more than 20 initiatives that were organized during the commemorations of World Refugee Day in the Lubelskie Voivodeship.
- No changes were observed in the dynamics of PL/UKR border traffic. As last year, there was a slight increase in the number of arrivals in Poland, which may be due to the availability of seasonal work and the end of the school year. Significant improvement in the formal registration of departures and arrivals in the context of the use of the DIIA.pl document and the declaration of evacuation as a result of the armed conflict has been noticed, resulting in a significant reduction in the problems associated with the reactivation of social benefits.
- UNHCR has repeatedly raised concerns and risks related to the accommodation of refugees in the context of legislative changes, in particular the limited availability of places in collective accommodation facilities in large cities, which may require the search for additional organizational solutions in the future. At the same time, credit should be given to all institutions and organizations making efforts to ensure that this process is carried out in a smooth manner, without the need to revert back to the use of sports halls as was required in the early stages of



the influx. In the coming days, it will be crucial to provide refugees with reliable information on the accommodation options available to them.

Updates from the Protection sector

Felicia Byrne – UNHCR

- From January 2024 to 26 June 2024, a total of 662 interviews were conducted representing 1,765 household members. Of these, 125 respondents arrived in 2024.
- 87% of respondents were women; Average age is 43; 42% from eastern Ukraine; 23% from Kyiv city or Kyiv region; 21% from regions bordering Poland; 37% have at least one household member with a serious illness; 15% have at least one family member with a disability
- -The most commonly spoken language in Lubelskie Voivodeship: Ukrainian - 91%, Russian - 42%, Other - 9%, Romani - 1%. In Podkarpackie Voivodeship, on the other hand, in addition to Ukrainian and Russian, Hungarian - 3%. Romani language - 6%.
- Since the beginning of 2024, more than 450 refugees of Roma origin have arrived in Poland from Ukraine. The main challenge in supporting this group of refugees is finding housing. In the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, 24 group relocations to other regions of the country have been carried out so far, including to the Lubelskie Voivodeship and directly to the Lublin reception point.
- We have to also keep in mind that all refugees, including Roma refugees, need to be protected from situations such as homelessness, on a non-discriminatory basis. Information on accommodation should be provided to all refugees. A significant support in this case can be cooperation with Roma organizations. There are two partners UNHCR is cooperating with on this regard: Central Roma Council and Towards Dialog. If anyone is interested in being put in contact with any of these organizations we'd be very happy to share it.
- Within the framework of this agenda item, a brief discussion was held on the situation of Roma refugees, working with them and the challenges involved. Attention was drawn to the need to use and cooperate with the above-mentioned expert organizations, as well as to good practices in the city of Lublin and available educational programs for working with Roma children.

(Detailed presentation attached)

Legal and organizational changes resulting from the entry into force of the amendment to Article 12 and Article 13 of the Law on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine

Janusz Iwanicki – Voivodeship Office in Lublin

- The agenda item was opened by Janusz Iwanicki, Director of the Social Policy Department of VO in Lublin. In his speech he referred to a number of consultations and teleconferences with the Ministry of Internal Affairs during which the upcoming changes were discussed. VO in Lublin has been preparing for a long time for the entry into force of the amendments to the law, especially those parts of it concerning the accommodation of refugees from Ukraine. The Governor of Lublin has already issued a detailed order on the matter addressed to local municipalities in the Lubelskie Voivodeship.



Renata Rojek – Voivodeship Office in Lublin

- The main change in the area of accommodation concerns the definition of a collective shelter. Until now, there was no such definition. As of July 1, the definition states that it is a facility where at least 10 people are accommodated daily, full-day meals are provided, the premises are owned or managed by public sector entities. The requirement for a minimum number of persons in the facility does not apply to NGOs that have been involved in the accommodation of refugees with disabilities and the elderly. Poviats acting on behalf of the Governor may sign an agreement with them to operate a collective shelter.
- According to data as of June 19, 2024, there are 2,805 people in collective accommodation facilities. The number has remained at a similar level for many months. The number of vacant places is 822. The number of facilities alone has decreased by 16 in the last month (facilities that were scheduled for discontinuation).
- The largest number of refugees in collective accommodation resides in the following poviats: the city of Lublin - 463, Włodawski - 437, Lubelski - 361, Krasnostawski - 372, Janowski - 325 and Chelmski 0 194.
- Lubelskie Voivodeship is ranked 3rd among other voivodeships in terms of the ratio of the number of PESEL UKR and people living in collective shelters - 7.85%.
- As of June 19, 2024, 42 collective shelters have less than 10 people accommodated (14 commercial facilities, 28 facilities owned or managed by local municipalities). 2 collective accommodation points in bialski powiat are scheduled for closure due to insufficient available capacity. 12 facilities reported the discontinuation of operations as of June 30. Of concern is the number of 34 refugees that will have to be relocated at the end of the month to other locations. The other collective shelter from this list has the potential to continue housing, also taking into account the increased interest and ongoing relocations of people from 40+ accommodations.
- Owners of 40+ apartments will be able to receive refunds for costs incurred for the period until June 30. Application for refunds can be submitted no later than July 31. After this date, applications will not be considered. The person lending the premises may request in writing the Ukrainian citizen to move out setting a deadline for vacating the premises of no less than 14 days. The above may mean that around July 14 we can expect more people leaving the 40+ accommodation.
- The challenge is to accommodate new arrivals and relocated people in collective shelters according to their preferences. There is a shortage of available slots in big cities. Increasingly, refugees are not accepting offers of accommodation in locations far from them. However, the limits of these possibilities are set by available slots.
- 1,229 people in 84 municipalities till 30 July 2024 are using accommodation in private premises, the so-called 40+. The largest number of people are staying in Lublin - 322, Świdnik - 116, Biała Podlaska - 88 and Niedrzwica Duża - 65. Those who previously lived in 40+ housing will be able to live in collective accommodation facilities if they are unable to find suitable housing on their



own. The number of available places covers this demand, but they largely do not coincide with the locations where refugees are currently accommodated.

- 6% of people in collective accommodation participate in the cost of accommodation, 31% are not subject to the fee obligation of Article 12, paragraph 17, 93% of people are exempt from participation.
- As part of the so-called humanitarian grounds for exemption from participation in the cost of collective accommodation, the legislature narrowed the group of people with disabilities to severe and moderate disabilities. Refugees were also required to confirm their living situation on the basis of relevant documents. VO estimates that about 700 people will apply for exemption under the so-called, humanitarian grounds.
- VO in Lublin has developed a standard application form in Polish and Ukrainian for exemption. All applicants for exemption from participation costs are required to complete the form, including those who have so far been exempted from payment. VO in Lublin invites willing entities and NGOs to disseminate information and assistance in completing the form.
- Within the framework of this agenda item, a discussion was held on, among other things, the procedures related to the adjudication of disabilities of children from Ukraine, the interpretation of the guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, and how to implement and monitor legal and organizational changes in the Lublin Province.

(Detailed presentation attached)

Challenges related to the introduction of compulsory education for children and youth from Ukraine residing in Poland in the context of preparations for the school year 2024 / 2025

Aleksandra Sępoch – the Board of Education

- The main legislative changes relate to changes in regulations for financing educational tasks and regulations that directly affect the work and operation of schools. An example is the clarification of the maximum time for teaching the Polish language - up to 36 months. Very important from the perspective of principals and leading authorities is the retention of provisions on additional teaching locations in the event of a significant increase in the number of students, and the possibility of assigning additional hours to teachers, with their consent.
- An important change from the point of view of Ukrainian youth is the exemption from the obligation to take the eighth-grade exam and the corresponding way of recalculating its scores, so as to level the playing field in secondary school recruitment.
- The information below has been gathered from municipal and district levels, as well as from school principals. It is unclear what number of children and young people from Ukraine will be covered by compulsory education in the Lubelskie Voivodeship from September 2024. The Ministry of Education estimates the nationwide scale at 50-60 thousand students who are currently outside the Polish education system. In 2023/2024, 6059 children from Ukraine participated in the Polish education system in Lublin Voivodeship. The estimated data collected by the leading authorities shows that about 1,000 children and adolescents should be additionally covered by compulsory education from September 2024. It should be noted that



the data is incomplete, and its collection is hampered by both the mobility of refugees and the lack of mechanisms for collecting statements on education from the children's parents.

- Estimates show that the vast majority of municipalities have sufficient premises needed to create additional classrooms. Only 12 municipalities and 30 kindergartens declared a lack of sufficient premises.
- The biggest concern for the leading authorities is the need to hire additional teachers and the short time needed to find them, including the organization of additional day care classes and the organization of additional Polish language classes.
- An additional problem, both for children with refugee experience and for Polish children returning to the country after receiving education in another country, is not participating in the recruitment process, and being admitted to schools on the basis of availability of places. The above involves the not uncommon disappointment of being admitted to a different school than the candidate's preference.
- Among the most important difficulties anticipated by schools is the problem of monitoring compulsory education, which also involves verification of residence. It is known that the Social Security Administration will have a database compatible with the education database system, while it is unclear at present how the verification will take place.
- The Board of Education in Lublin puts forward proposals for legislative changes: access to the database of the Social Insurance Institution - children/students receiving educational benefits residing in the municipality in order to enable control of the implementation of compulsory preschool/school/schooling; regulating the status of 18-year-old students who have completed secondary school in Ukraine; increasing subsidies for additional Polish language instruction (6 hours); financing preschool education, schooling of students from Ukraine (replacing funds received from the Fund for Assistance to Ukraine - a subsidy).
- Within the framework of this agenda item, a discussion was held on psychosocial support for children from Ukraine, anti-bullying and the need for intercultural assistants. Members of the Lublin Coordination Group express openness to support both the Board of Education in Lublin and individual schools in the process of adaptation of Ukrainian students during the new school year. They also noted the need to draw on the good practices and experiences of schools and municipalities in Lublin Province in working with children with refugee experience.

AOB

- Due to time constraints, at the request of ROPS in Lublin, the agenda item on Integration Centers for Third-Country Nationals was moved to the next meeting of the Lublin Coordination Group.

Action points

- Proposal to create a common instruction on how to complete the application for participation cost exemption.

Participants

Name and surname	Organisation / Institution
------------------	----------------------------



Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Tetiana Mahushak	AHF Polska
Anna Szadkowska-Ciężka	AHF Polska
Ewelina Wszola	Brotherhood of Charity of St. Brother Albert
Anna Bylicka	Brotherhood of Charity of St. Brother Albert
Joanna Księżka-Koszałka	Caritas Lublin Archdiocese
Ks. Marcin Jakubiak	Caritas Zamość-Lubaczów Diocese
Emilia Tsar	Consulate General of Ukraine in Lublin
Rafał Kołodziej	Eleon
Anna Milkivska	For the Earth Association
Inga Mgebrova	For the Earth Association
Elżbieta Rojek	For the Earth Association
Krzysztof Łątka	Foundation for the Development of Central and Eastern Europe
Wiktor Bujnickie	Foundation for the Development of Central and Eastern Europe
Agnieszka Tracz	Homo Faber
Sylwia Brzezińska	KIND Kids in Need of Defense
Barbara Litwińska	Marshal Office of the Lubelskie Voivodship in Lublin
Iryna Murawska	Marshal Office of the Lubelskie Voivodship in Lublin



Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Krystian Żaba	Marshal Office of the Lubelskie Voivodship in Lublin
Monika Zaborek - Turewicz	Municipality of Chełm
Krzysztof Stanowski	Municipality of Lublin
Jarosław Stanisławczuk	Nadbużański Border Guards Regional Unit
Edyta Borowicz-Czuchryta	National Education Operator, Ukrainian Education Center
Ewelina Bury	Polish Red Cross Lublin Regional Branch
Renata Jońska	ROPS
Małgorzata Rak	ROPS
Katarzyna Chumakova	Save The Children
Paweł Oleszek	Sempre a Frente
Aleksandra Sępoch	The Board of Education in Lublin
Marta Kazymyryv	The Rule of Law Foundation
Kamil Raczyński	UNHCR
Marco Procaccini	UNHCR
Felicia Byrne	UNHCR
Alensandra Duda	UNICEF
Ks. Mieczysław Puzewicz	Volunteer Center in Lublin
Małgorzata Dziekanowska	UMCS



Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Magdalena Wójcik	Voivodeship Labor Office
Andrzej Maj	Voivodeship Office in Lublin
Aneta Tkaczyk	Voivodeship Office in Lublin
Beata Chodorowska	Voivodeship Office in Lublin
Renata Rojek	Voivodeship Office in Lublin