

POLAND NATIONAL PROTECTION SECTOR MEETING

Meeting Minutes – 7 April 2022

Meeting subject:	Weekly National Protection Sector Meeting
Time & location:	2pm, online meeting
Chaired by:	UNHCR, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights;
Minutes prepared by:	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Participants:	A21 Campaign Ukraine; ACTED; Action Aid; ASAM; CARE; CORE; Corus International; CRS; Faros Elpidas; Halina Niec Legal Aid Center; ICRC; IFRC; Intersos; Lutheran world; Mercy Corps; MSF; Ocalenie Foundation; Oxfam; Polish Humanitarian Action; Polish Migration Forum Foundation; Premiere Urgence; Relief International; Red Pencil; RET International; Safe passage; Save the Children; UNESCO; UN Global Compact Network Poland; UNHCR; UNICEF; WHO.
Agenda:	<p>Agenda</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Updates on the status of action points 2) Review of priority protection needs – interventions by speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services and assistance; Relation with host community – by Agnieszka Kosowicz, Polish Migration Forum Foundation, • Access to territory and asylum/international protection – by Tomasz Pietrzak, Ocalenie Foundation, • Human trafficking and other forms of exploitation – by Julia Sachenko, The A21 Campaign Ukraine, • Persons with specific needs or at risk – by Maria Pamuła, UNHCR 3) AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introductions and Overview	Participants were welcomed to the fifth weekly Protection Sector meeting for the Refugee Response on Poland. The agenda was presented.
Agenda point 1	Updates on the status of action points were presented (as below in the table “Action points summary”).

Agenda point 2

Review of priority protection needs – interventions by speakers:

1) **Access to services and assistance; Relation with host community – by Agnieszka Kosowicz, Polish Migration Forum Foundation,**

The speaker, Agnieszka Kosowicz, indicated the lack of appropriate mechanisms of services and assistance, the need to create new solutions and the problem of coordination of communication between NGOs, government and local governments in Poland. It was highlighted that as a result many services were not equally distributed or are not broadly accessible. Agnieszka Kosowicz also stressed the need for mapping of services in order to achieve more i.a. reasonable distribution of services and funding NGOs. The second issue raised was the relation with the host community and the likelihood of problems arising in this area, including fatigue and resource depletion. In a discussion, the following issues were indicated:

- third country nationals as one of the groups excluded from assistance,
- potential sense of injustice between beneficiaries: Ukrainian nationals formerly residing in Poland and newcomers incl. third country nationals,
- the issue of unaccompanied minors,
- the exclusion of parents of Ukrainian nationals who are third county nationals from services and assistance.

2) **Access to the territory and asylum/international protection – by Tomasz Pietrzak, Ocalenie Foundation,**

The difference between the access to protection mechanisms for persons fleeing from Ukraine and those crossing the Belarusian-Polish border was highlighted. At the Polish-Ukrainian border, the access to the territory and international protection was described as fairly unrestricted but very chaotic and selective to the disadvantage of particular groups (third country nationals, including parents of children of Ukrainian nationality). Tomasz Pietrzak recalled the situation of the third country nationals fleeing from Ukraine – firstly broadly invited to enter the territory of Poland and promised legalization of stay, at the end left out from any special legislature. The second issue raised was the level of national protection. The national protection system was described as of a fairly high standard and probably unprecedented in terms of Polish migration law history, but still selective in terms of different vulnerable groups, for example, minors and third country nationals. During the discussion following issues were covered:

- stateless persons indicated as a potentially vulnerable group,
- low probability of extending national regulations to third country nationals,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the problem of interpretation of the possibility for beneficiaries of temporary protection to return to their country of origin or leaving Poland for more than a month which may result in losing the protection status. <p>3) Human trafficking and other forms of exploitation – by Julia Sachenko, The A21 Campaign Ukraine</p> <p>Armed conflicts and wars were indicated as a perfect basis for the development of human trafficking, exposing refugees as a vulnerable group. Based on the experience of the 2014 Russian invasion in Donbas, Julia Sachenko pointed out that despite no official victims yet, the phenomenon cannot be denied. Due to the cultural and linguistic similarities, Poland was identified as one of the main destination countries for Ukrainian human trafficking victims. Desperation to find any source of income, regardless of its legality, was highlighted as the main vulnerability factor. The need for the development of a comprehensive response plan of preventive mechanism was expressed.</p> <p>4) Persons with specific needs or at risk – by Maria Pamuła, UNHCR</p> <p>The majority of people arriving in Poland from Ukraine are perceived to be a part of vulnerable groups. The following groups were highlighted as at heightened risk: single women, children, especially separated ones, elderly persons, people with disabilities, GVB survivors, stateless persons, Roma population, LGBTIQ community, refugees without community support, men of conscription who have not decided to go to go back to Ukraine or those who came after 24, third country nationals. The need for specific solutions tailored for those groups was expressed, especially a governmental response.</p>
AOB	The next weekly protection sector meeting will take place on 14 April at 2 pm.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
1.	Final TORs for the Protection Sector to be circulated and uploaded on the data portal.	Co-leads	7 April	Completed
2.	Schedule a discussion on refugee registration, statistics and profiles.	Co-leads	7 April	Completed
3.	Share list of websites where Ukrainian professionals can be recruited for protection-related jobs.	MHPSS sector co-leads	7 April	Completed

4.	National partners interested to co-lead the PSEA network should reach out to Nadia Abu Amr (ABUAMR@unhcr.org)	All partners	7 April	Completed
5.	Launch of the mapping tool for referral to national services	UNHCR	3 April	Completed