

**POLAND NATIONAL PROTECTION SECTOR MEETING**

Meeting Minutes – 28 April 2022

<b>Meeting subject:</b>	Weekly National Protection Sector Meeting
<b>Time &amp; location:</b>	2pm, online meeting
<b>Chaired by:</b>	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights; UNHCR
<b>Minutes prepared by:</b>	UNHCR
<b>Participants:</b>	Adra Poland; Ashoka; AVSI; Catholic Relief Services; CORE Response; Corus International; Faros Elpidas; GOAL Global; Halina Nieć Legal Aid Center; Help Age; Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights; IFCR; International Rescue Committee; IOM; Lutheran World; Oxfam; Plan International; Polish Humanitarian Action; Premiere Urgence; Project Hope; Reach Initiative; RET International; Safe Passage; Save the Children Norway; SGDD-ASAM; UNHCR; United States State Department;
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p><b>Agenda</b></p> <p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Status of action points from the previous meeting</li> <li>2) Statistics on PESEL registration, international protection and temporary protection</li> <li>3) Update on the amendment to the Act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens</li> <li>4) Brief updates from the sub-sectors and working groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-Based Violence</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Third-Country Nationals</li> <li>• Countertrafficking</li> <li>• MHPSS</li> <li>• Accountability to affected people</li> <li>• PSEA network</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>AGENDA POINT</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>Introductions and Overview</b>	Participants were welcomed to the seventh weekly Protection Sector meeting for the Refugee Response on Poland. The agenda was presented.

<b>Agenda point 1</b>	<p>A status update was provided on the action points from 21.04:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Refugee Response Plan (RPP) has been released. A global presentation took place to mark the occasion; however, no public announcement has yet been made.</li> <li>• UNHCR has started granting some partners access to the mapping platform through referral links. Organizations that would still like to request access should reach out to Andrii Mazurenko (muzurenk@unhcr.org).</li> <li>• Sector leads are trying to facilitate a discussion on problems faced by Roma people. There are plans for a presentation during the next meeting.</li> <li>• A semi-final version of the protection sector indicators was shared with coordinators on 26.04. The indicators are short by design. It is hoped this will facilitate the actions of partners in the context of the RPP. Preferred language was included as an indicator as discussed previous and will be used going forward. Otherwise, some minor comments on wording are still being worked out. A final version will be shared by the end of the week.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda point 2</b>	<p>Updated statistics were provided on PESEL registration, international protection and temporary protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on recent figures over 1 million Ukrainians have been granted PESEL numbers. Between 24 February and 20 April 1000 applications were filed for refugee status or subsidiary protection. These applications were mainly filed by Third Country Nationals (TCNs). It was further noted that there are legal gaps regarding the status of many TCNs. They are not covered by temporary protection or the special act for Ukrainian citizens.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda point 3</b>	<p>Updates were presented on amendments to the Act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Halina Niec Legal Aid Center summarized that under the special act put in place by the Polish government, Ukrainian nationals enjoy special benefits. These includes the granting of a PESEL number. A PESEL allows, <i>inter alia</i>, the right to obtain social benefits and access to the labor market. It was further presented that there are several categories of individuals fleeing the war who are subject to different classifications under Polish law. Not all individuals fleeing Ukraine are entitled to benefits under the act. These classifications are based first on when an individual left Ukraine. Those who left previous to 24 February are not entitled to special protection under the Act or under an EU Directive. Further classifications are based on legal status in Ukraine. Finally, Ukrainian nationals already holding residency in Poland have had their residency prolonged until at least the end of 2022. They can also benefit from simplified access to the Polish Labor Market.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Halina Niec Legal Aid Center also presented the 14 April revisions to the Act. Under this amendment non-Ukrainian spouses of Ukrainian nationals can also benefit from the Act. The period for individuals with no passport stamp to apply for a PESEL number has been extended from 60 days to 90. Procedures have been established for the issuance of PESEL numbers to those individuals with disabilities that prevent them from registering in person. Procedures have also been established for issuing PESEL numbers to unaccompanied minors.</li> <li>• The Halina Niec Legal Aid Center concluded that the law and the potential complexity of classification of certain cases created a challenging situation for those providing legal advice. This is further compounded by the fact that the text of the Act is not yet available in Ukrainian. The Center is in the process of creating a translation; however this is also a challenging process given the complexity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agenda Point 4</b></p>	<p>Updates were provided on sub-sectors and working groups:</p> <p><b>GBV Working Group:</b></p> <p>The Working Group will hold a training on GBV 6-8 May in Przemysl through partner Care International. There will be six sessions. The training is designed for first responders working for NGOs and local authorities.</p> <p><b>Child Protection Working Group</b></p> <p>The last two group meetings covered Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). This was in an effort to ensure from the beginning of the response that all partners have the same basic level of understanding regarding PSEA, legal frameworks, and legal reports.</p> <p><b>MHPSS</b></p> <p>WHO has developed an informational leaflet about access to psychotropic medication. It highlights that those with chronic health conditions can access prescriptions through family doctors. This will be shared with the Working Group mailing list. They have also prepared a two page leaflet on key terminology on mental health. The group hopes to be able to present at the next meeting specifically regarding the use of the word “trauma.” Finally, the group is also hoping to begin conducting weekly meetings with simultaneous translation into Polish.</p> <p><b>Countertrafficking</b></p>

The group has delivered trainings on countertrafficking to border guards and local officials in Przemysl and Chelm cities. These trainings included procedure and referral pathways, as well as stressed the need for a concrete vetting system. Further trainings and informational materials were requested. The group is also discussing the possibility of similar trainings for partners based in the Warsaw region.

**Third Country Nationals (TCNs)**

The Working Group has started office hours at IOM Warsaw. They have so far covered education regularizing legal status, and access to protection and shelter. The WG is likewise using its existing knowledge network to gather information about TCNs in detention centers while they await a response from the border guard. The main priorities of the WG include mapping of services and actors helping TCNs, information sharing on relevant legal structures, and conducting research about the possibility of onward travel.

**PSEA**

The group is currently carrying out a PSEA rapid risk assessment.

**Accountability to affected people**

The WG has been in the process of drafting a Do No Harm guide for interactions with refugees. The guide was shared in the chat during the meeting and is open to feedback.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
1.	Protection partners to contribute to mapping of services. Access to information can be granted upon request.	All partners	1 June	Ongoing