



### Note for the File

<b>Event</b>	TCN Working Group Meeting
<b>Date and Place</b>	10.06.2022 12:00, Teams
<b>Attended by</b>	See participant list below
<b>NFF prepared by</b>	Natalie Payne, IOM Poland

#### Overview:

- Bilingual Meeting (Polish/English) with simultaneous translation provided by Anna Szlezinger (IOM Poland)
- Joined by colleagues from IOM Slovakia and Hungary
- Focus on TCNs of Roma Origin, with an intervention by the Central Council of Roma in Poland
- It is stressed that Roma are not inherently TCNs, but that Roma fleeing Ukraine share many similar vulnerabilities with TCNs, as well as many being both Roma and TCNs (for example, holding Russian or Belarusian passports)

#### Participant List:

- DOBRZYNSKA Hanna
- PIECHOWSKA Emilia
- Mirga-Wójtowicz Elżbieta, Council of Roma
- BURBAK Kateryna
- Karolina Kwiatkowska Council of Roma
- SZLEZINGER Anna
- PAYNE Natalie
- Aga Macura (Guest)
- Frances (Guest)
- CACOVA Zuzana
- Kornelia (SIP) (Gość)
- Elzbieta Kramarczyk (Gość)
- Barbara Blok (Guest)
- Julia Wojciechowska-Fijałkowska

- Anna (Gość)
- Michal Zawistowski
- MESZAROSOVA Simona
- KHAN Aurang
- FEKETE Bernadett
- Frances Tish
- Asia Wojtarowicz
- BOZIK Katarina
- Jara Henar
- Daccarett, Lucia
- Magdalena Biednik
- Aga Macura
- SEDLACKOVA Petra

### **Needs of TCNs of Roma Origin, Central Roma Council of Poland**

- The Central Roma Council of Poland worked for Roma Community for 30 years. They are a self-advocacy organization that works on integration and inclusion

#### **Context: Roma in Ukraine**

- No exact data on number of Roma in Ukraine prior to the war, but it was estimated to be between 200,000-400,000 throughout the country with a range of cultures and backgrounds, many in Transcarpathia, Odessa and Donetsk regions
- Roma in Ukraine are considered to be a vulnerable minority, and face discrimination, racism and antigypsyism
- There is a lack of representation of Roma in public life in Ukraine, cases of attacks by far right including on 9 June 2018 (violent attack on Roma camp in L'viv (Lwow)) and 2 July 2018 (1 Roma woman killed)

#### **Roma Fleeing Ukraine in the Context of War**

- Many Roma crossed through the Medyka and Korchova crossings to Poland, although some from eastern Ukraine crossed into Russia and entered Poland via Baltic states and therefore do not have stamps expected/required
- Numbers of Roma fleeing Ukraine are fluid. Approximately 10,000 Roma have travelled from Ukraine to Poland, with 100,000 estimated to have fled Ukraine overall.
- There are multiple mobilities at play - some left Ukraine, returned, and came back to Poland again
- Issue in some countries Roma with double citizenship (for example, Ukrainian-Hungarian) excluding them from protection
- Western Ukrainian Roma often speak Ukrainian, Russian, and Hungarian; those from the East often only speak Russian
- Some have multiple passports (dual nationality), some have Belarusian or Russian passports, some have no documents at all

- Challenges also include a lack of legally recognized marriages (in some cases having a traditional marriage only); extended family structure (children in care of grandparents, aunts, not legal guardians) – need for support accessing necessary documentation and having family ties legally recognized
- Issues of discrimination at border crossing points - often move in large groups, which distinguishes them from other travelers. Difficulties with shelters 'not prepared to hold so many people', people w specific needs including medical, etc.
- There have been reports of tensions between Roma and non-Roma refugees, and between Roma refugees and non-Roma volunteers. Hungarian colleagues report discrimination against Roma at Hungarian-Ukrainian BCPs, even by NGOs and municipalities at the border.
- Need for informed consent and adequate information in languages people understand – there was a case of Roma going to Sweden from Poland on an early train - many were not sure where they were going.

#### Needs

- Needs of Roma refugees are same as other refugees but because of their ethnicity they may face challenges accessing support
- Need for psychosocial support, especially those therapists specialized in working with cultural difference
- Many lack trust in both Polish and Ukrainian institutions
- Access to education can also be an issue in some areas
- Access to medical care difficult due to Polish system, many require assistance from Roma council and other NGOs
- Look for advice from Roma and Romani-speaking volunteers
- Need to create safe social space for Roma refugees: Far fewer cases of roma being housed by private individuals, but it has happened on occasion (cases in Radom, Warsaw, Bialystok, Szczańnica, 14-50 people each time). Shared facilities pose some challenges owing to numbers of individuals and length of stay.

#### Central Roma Council offers support with:

- Transport of humanitarian aid
- Cooperation with authorities and Ukrainian organizations
- Allocating Roma refugees support in other countries
- Organizing support groups in different regions
- Legal and psychosocial support
- Shelter and accommodation
- Help filling out forms to claim support they are entitled to
- Creating info materials in Romani language

#### Recommendations:

- Create effective support systems based on monitoring and reporting data
- Monitoring and reporting of anti-gypsy discrimination
- Create conditions for integration of Roma including workshops, trainings, activation of national Roma structures
- Refugee support structures should not exclude Roma

- Organizing trainings for Roma activists and volunteers to play and active part in the response and national/transnational structures
- Establish contact with humanitarian organizations at border etc.
- Need for legal recognition of antigypsyism

### Sharing Information

- How to best share information – Many refugees feel safer if they can communicate in their own language, sometimes Roma refugees can only communicate in basic Ukrainian and might face issues filling in documents for social assistance, particularly because of the use of formal language. Therefore, there is a need for interpreters. Printed materials in Romani may not be practical as there are many different dialects, and some do not have strong reading skills.
- How to build trust - Roma for Roma project - participatory mixed groups has been one method employed (Roma and non-Roma, men and women, range of languages spoken)
- Referral of cases to the Central Roma Council of Poland is possible

### Important contacts and resources

- <https://ukraina.interwencjaprawna.pl/en/> - a list of organizations providing legal assistance to TCNs
- More about ERIAC Roma for Roma project: [https://prouddroma.org/main-page/roma-for-roma-documenting-the-oral-history-of-roma-refugees-from-ukraine/?fbclid=IwAR3gpOxpDHubtWt67u4\\_Wazt7gRqMJ0E0Qh18s97UG037mGtt\\_QQe-TjeA](https://prouddroma.org/main-page/roma-for-roma-documenting-the-oral-history-of-roma-refugees-from-ukraine/?fbclid=IwAR3gpOxpDHubtWt67u4_Wazt7gRqMJ0E0Qh18s97UG037mGtt_QQe-TjeA)
- <https://www.facebook.com/prouddromacampaign/>
- More about situation in Poland: [https://pl.boell.org/en/2022/05/16/uwazajcie-tam-w-tej-cyganskiej-dzielnicy-antycyganizm-w-warunkach-wojny?fbclid=IwAR23i\\_vj0pAGtw9KF9TEk0cmDFIkniDEKceaNZsIzO9A3Z25zTO0sflfKS4](https://pl.boell.org/en/2022/05/16/uwazajcie-tam-w-tej-cyganskiej-dzielnicy-antycyganizm-w-warunkach-wojny?fbclid=IwAR23i_vj0pAGtw9KF9TEk0cmDFIkniDEKceaNZsIzO9A3Z25zTO0sflfKS4)
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