Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting

Meeting Minutes – 17 April 2024

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
Chaired by:	UNHCR
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	Małopolski Urząd Wojewódzki w Krakowie; IOM; International Bund Polska; Alight; Fundacja Zustricz; Project Hope; Wolno Nam; Save the Children; Fundacja Kocham Dębniki; UNHCR; Migralink; ZHP; Spilno Hub
Agenda:	• Introduction and updates from the co-chairs • Updates from UKR and refugee-led organizations • Updates from the Voivodship • Update on recent changes of the legal framework (special act and military conscription) • Update on issues related to collective sites • AoB
AGENDA POINT	**DISCUSSION**
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	Participants were welcomed to the 31th Małopolska Coordination Group (MCG) meeting. • UNHCR opened the meeting and highlighted that coordination continues to remain important in 2024. The UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office continues to cover 5 Voivodships – Dolnośląskie, Łódzkie, Małopolskie, Śląskie and Wielkopolskie – in which UNHCR works closely with regional and municipal authorities to strengthen the coordination system.

Agenda point 1	No updates were provided under the given agenda point.
Agenda point 2	• The Malopolska Voivodeship Office stated that the situation with refugees is stable, the relocation point is open, and continues offering support to refugees in finding a shelter. • The Office is preparing for the amendments to the Special Act, information can be also checked on the government page gov.pl. Important changes: cancellation of the article 13 of the Special act, which talks about funding food and lodging for Ukrainians (40 zlotych) in small, private centers for up to ten people with the exception of centers run by nuns, religious associations; cancellation of "300 PLN for the start" benefit; mandatory education for children – the Office plans meeting with the Curatorship on that (Kuratorium). • Regarding the plan of closure of shelters for up to 10 people – meetings with Powiats and Voivodship have taken place. Malopolska is a specific location because there are many refugees. Only systemic solution can work for that, and that changes should take place step by step. According to the plan refugees living in such shelters will be relocated to bigger shelters. However it is important to continue monitoring the situation in bigger shelters where some challenges might occur.
Agenda point 3	I. The UNHCR shared a presentation on planned amendments to the Special Act on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of the country. • Legal status of Ukrainian refugees under Temporary Protection (PESEL UKR) will be extended until 30th September 2025. Also includes spouse/minor child of spouse or citizen of Ukraine/newborn child. The law does not concern other persons under international protection. • Persons under PESEL UKR will have opportunity to transfer to the residence permit. There is no requirement to be employed or to have an entrepreneurship, applying will go through an electronic system. In offices, assistants will provide support to elderly people who struggle with applying through an electronic system. Refugees will receive permit automatically for three years, review process of application should take 90 days. There will be need to pay for the issuance of the plastic card. Problem with naming in the law: persons will apply for residence card, not for the residence stay. Status #CUKR will confirm that person is granted temporary protection. There will be also possibility to apply for temporary residence based on the family reunification. • Legal status of those who arrived before 24th February 2022 will be extended. No legal deadlines are applied for voivodeship to respond to complaints regarding residence procedures, complaints also cannot be filed because it is covered under Special Act. • There will be obligation to apply for PESEL UKR status immediately upon arrival in the Republic of Poland, but there is no sanction for that.

	• There will be obligation to confirm identity in the municipality office if person arrived based on invalid document or another document than passport. Such change can cause problems in connection to the changes in the Conscription law of Ukraine.
	• 800+ PLN benefits will be granted only to those families whose children attend Polish schools. In practice, ZUS will check if children are going to schools, and ZUS will have possibility to call the school or check the education registry which is not updated often.
	• Changes in accommodation: after 30th June cash benefits for housing and meals in the amount of 40 pln per day will be cancelled. Shelters with less than 10 persons living will be closed, we are heading towards bigger collective shelters. There will be co-payment with different amounts for minors – for children fixed amount of 15 PLN per day.
	• Voivode will become responsible for checking difficult life situations from the point 6 of the Article on exemptions from payment. The voivodeship office commented that it will be more difficult as powiats have more overview on the situations.
	• Changes on eviction: possibility to grant 14 days' notice to the tenant.
	• Ukrainian psychologists will renew their right to work in Poland, the same system was ceased for some time.
	• Lower requirements for the knowledge of the Polish language for teachers and intercultural assistants.
	• Right to work for all the Ukrainians: 7 days notification through electronic system to the Labor office needed.
	• Changes regarding the institutional care, support for those living there under the age 25 y.o.
	
	II. Ukrainian military law changes.
	  • Was signed by the Ukrainian president on 16th April 2024.
	  • There will be a need for men of conscription age to have updated military documents to obtain documents at foreign consular services of Ukraine.
	  • Current address, phone, and e-mail of men should also be updated. The 60-day period to comply after the law will enter into force.
	  • Observations from passport services: big lines of men mostly those who arrived in Poland before 2022, including those picking up passports, there are aggressive approaches among people, no conditions for disabled people.
	  • According to the changes in law there is a risk that some men will lose their status PESEL UKR and will not have valid documents.
	  • UNHCR through its protection monitoring activities is continuously assessing how these new legal developments might impact the refugees.

Agenda point 4	In the end of May 2024 UNHCR and IOM are planning conduct training to strengthen the capacity of powiat coordinators and managers of collective shelters. Training will focus on the protection safeguards, critical aspects of running shelters, and understanding the aspect of minorities.

AOB	• Spilno Hub opened the community centre in Krakow, address: str. Chlopickiego 4. Target groups – youth and children, refugees and migrants, local community. Planned services: legal advice, general information, education – catch-up classes. • Open Place (IBP) shared an initiative to reach out with mobile team to shelters and provide psychological support. • MUW flagged the problem of duplication of services provided to the same refugees by different humanitarian actors. • Project Hope presented their new project with mobile outreach to shelters with main focus: MHPSS and social support. • Fundacja Zustricz shared that their schedule is published on their Facebook page every week. • RRP – low reporting, only 24% reported in the first quarter. Request UNHCR if you have technical complications. • Natalia Solarz is leaving UNHCR after two years of service, Wlada Komar komar@unhcr.org will be temporarily responsible for Coordination meetings. • UNHCR plans a dedicated session on humanitarian principles.