

Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting

Meeting Minutes – 22 September 2022

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
Chaired by:	VOICE Amplified; UNHCR; Open Krakow Coalition
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	Biuro Wojewody Malopolskiego; Malopolski Urzad Wojewodzki w Krakowie; Centrum Praw Kobiet Oddzial w Krakowie; Clear Global/Translators without Borders; CORE Response; Faros Elpidas; Fundajca Kocham Debniki; Fundacja Widowisk Masowych; Fundajca Wolno Nam; Fundacja Zrodlo Zycia; Internationaler Bund Polska/Centrum Wielokulturowe; IOM; Polski Czerwony Krzy Malopolski Oddzial Okgowy; Project Hope; Salam Lab; Save the Children International; UAinKrakow.pl; Ukrainian Relief Initiative Pennsylvania, USA; UNHCR; UNICEF; ZHP Choragiew Krakowska
Agenda:	<p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction from the co-chairs and update on the points decided on the last Coordination meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Updates from the refugee community and UA-led organizations 2) Accommodation: overview of situation in Krakow 3) Accommodation: shelter strategy and mapping (UNHCR) 4) AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	<p>Participants were welcomed to the fourth Małopolska Coordination Group meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR introduced the meeting and noted that the topic of the given meeting would be accommodation.
Agenda point 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAinKrakow shared that in recent days the organization had been approached most often with questions regarding income taxes. The period of 183 days of presence after which tax residency is established in a given country has just passed for many Ukrainians who crossed the border in February and March 2022. As such, these individuals are unsure whether they will

	<p>need to pay income tax in Poland. This situation is further complicated by the fact that there are Ukrainians who continue to work remote jobs in Ukraine from Poland. Many in the Ukrainian community are unclear how to proceed and if guidelines have been established by the Polish and Ukrainian governments. UAinKrakow is currently investigating the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Foundation of Mass Performance introduced the organization and noted that it works mainly with children. The Foundation further emphasized that a large number of children continue Ukrainian school remotely from Poland. Many of these children now have laptops but do not have a location from which to study and attend school. Such locations where children can collectively attend remote school are important for the continuity of education, but also from the perspective of integration. A second concern related to children is that of childcare. Schools for the youngest children work only until mid-day. The same is true for the in-person Ukrainian school in Krakow, where classes for children up to the age of 9 conclude at 11:30 am. This lack of childcare makes it difficult for parents to work. • UNHCR noted that childcare remains an acknowledged issue for refugees who wish to work, especially given that many are mothers with children. UNHCR further noted that there are organizations that work specifically with childcare and that UNICEF has announced an initiative to map available places in schools in various municipalities. Some private sector employers are also reportedly providing childcare to meet this need and facilitate employment.
<p>Agenda point 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Representative of the Office of the Voivode of Małopolska suggested that representatives of the Marshall's office be invited to subsequent meetings, as the Marshall's office has been designated by the Voivode to lead the humanitarian response. Furthermore, the Marshall's Office possesses additional information about grants and funding opportunities. • The Representative of the Office of the Voivode of Małopolska highlighted that the Voivodeship maintains a database of safe accommodation for refugees throughout Małopolska. The database currently has 27,000 spots, of which 16,000 are taken. Food is included in the rooms the Voivodeship offers for refugees. The Representative further noted that the accommodation situation is currently changing. For example, as the academic year approaches students again require places in student dormitories. This may lead to the need to relocate more refugees. Currently there are over 900 places for refugees in student dormitories throughout the Voivodeship. These are being used fully. The number of such available places will likely decrease in the coming weeks. • The Representative of the Office of the Voivode of Małopolska also responded to the question on how many refugees the Voivodeship is able to accommodate. The Office of the Voivode cannot provide such figures. It was further highlighted that no one is in a position to predict this information. Additionally, as the situation remains dynamic, this information is also not strictly necessary. The Representative shared that 132,000 PESEL numbers have been given out in Małopolska, but that only 16,000 refugees are using accommodation provided through the Voivodeship's database. However, The Representative

noted that in the future, an increased need for collective shelters is anticipated. While viable options are running out in Krakow, there remain many open spots outside of Krakow in the larger Region. In that regard, the Office of the Voivode is making efforts demonstrate to refugees that services and accommodation can be found outside of the city as well. The current largest challenge facing the Voivodeship is the relocation of families living in three apartment blocks in the Kliny neighborhood of Krakow. Because these buildings were initially funded and built as part of a public national development program, they must return to their original use for Polish families after 30 September. As such, the Voivodeship needs to relocate the refugee families currently residing there. For those families who cannot find their own alternate living arrangements the Office of the Voivode is looking for mutually agreeable solutions in coordination with the Ukrainian Consul. The Voivodeship is also communicating with other actors to find a middle road that would be acceptable to both host and refugee communities.

- UNHCR shared about support for the Minister for Integration’s strategy to distribute the refugee population more evenly throughout the country and encourage refugees to move to location outside of city centers. In line with this strategy, there should be support with matching available accommodations, education, child care, and employment opportunities. The strategy is meant to benefit both host and refugee communities, possibly through subsidized renovation of homes which host refugees. In part, UNHCR will support the ministry strategy bringing these related efforts together and consulting with both refugee and host communities.

Agenda point 3

- UNHCR shared information on the UNHCR Shelter Strategy. It was noted that at the national level bi-weekly sector meetings co-chaired by UNHCR and Habitat for Humanity on accommodation take place. Furthermore, in June and July UNHCR donated NFIs to several large municipalities based on needs expressed by the Union of Polish Metropolises at the beginning of the crisis. These NFIs included items such as bedding and towels that can be used in reception centers, as well as in more mid to long term accommodation such as apartments, social housing, and dormitories. UNHCR is looking at the possibility of conducting thermal upgrades for refugee accommodation. However, the focus of this exercise would likely be locations closer to the border. Additionally, UNHCR will maintain its normal role of coordination and advocacy. This includes advocacy with the national government on strategies to increase housing capacity and distribute refugee populations to municipalities and towns with more capacity. At the national level, Intersectoral contingency planning ahead of a possible second refugee wave in the winter is taking place.
- UNHCR presented on the national-level shelter mapping initiatives. This includes a mapping tool which shows accommodation sites across Poland. Partners were encouraged to use the Kobo tool to upload information about accommodation sites they are aware of to the map.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knights of Columbus inquired about the link between the UNHCR database and that maintained by the Voivodeship. Knights of Columbus further asked who would have access to the UNHCR database and how this information will be verified. • The Representative of the Office of the Voivode of Małopolska highlighted that according to the Special Act on Ukrainians, refugees who are not able to find their own accommodation are entitled to use the Voivodeship’s database. There are additional safety precautions built into the database, and sanitary standards are verified. All relocation is done through the train station in Krakow. Property owners who want to join the database must express their interest at the level of the Starostwo. • UNHCR clarified that the UNHCR and the Voivodeship databases are two separate exercises. In this regard, UHCR is trying to meet with the Voivodeship to create a coordinated response. • IOM provided an example of how such a database works in practice. IOM cooperates at the national level with UNHCR and REACH, and also works at the border zone. At the border, when there is no space for new arrivals in the shelters that IOM cooperates with, they can contact other shelters from the database and inquire whether they are able to accept referrals. IOM can then help with transportation and other logistics. • The Representative of the Office of the Voivode of Małopolska highlighted that the database it the responsibility of the Crisis Response Department. In the past, there have been situations where carrying out short notice interventions had been necessary. For example, situations where additional spaces need to be prepared in a period of 24 hours when a property owner withdraws from an agreement at the last minute. For this reason the Voivodeship is very cautious about sharing the database information. The Voivodeship needs an up-to-date information about free and ready places, in the event that people need to be placed quickly. So far, coordination at the Voivodeship level has worked well and the Voivodeship does not foresee making any changes. In the situation that refugees are looking for accommodation, they can also seek help from the scouts at the train station. • UNHCR highlighted that UNHCR did not mean to imply any change to the existing Voivodeship system is necessary. Rather, if two parallel systems exists, UNHCR can explore ways to support and complement the current system.
AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Multicultural Center shared that the Szafa Dobra clothing distribution site and warehouse located at Plaza Shopping Center has closed. It will reopen in two new locations. Nowa Huta – os. Gorali 7, with opening hours from 10-4, and ul. Sniadeckich 3, where shoes and underwear – two of the most in-demand items – will be distributed. • IOM provided information about activities in Poland. This includes the implementation of a displacement tracking matrix. In October, IOM will also being labor market inclusion activities, including a support tool for labor offices across the country,

activization centers, as well as entrepreneurship and labor market counseling. The activities are planned to begin on a small scale. IOM further shared about the support provided for economic inclusion. This includes some equipment support.. It also includes translators, training on intercultural communication, Polish and English language courses and childcare opportunities.

- Knights of Columbus shared that the organization is working with foundations which provide wheelchairs. If any other partners are aware of such needs they are invited to get in touch.
- I Love Debnicki foundation noted that the Foundation supports another Foundation based in Ukraine which assists 800 elderly and disabled individuals. They provide help with medical devices and equipment. As such, wheelchairs could be of use. The Foundation also shared that there remain several free sports in the psychotherapy center on Podzamcze street. There are also some open places available in after school classes for children in the 8-10 and 13-17 age groups. The psychotherapy center will soon also begin a Polish-language support group for volunteers working with the refugee response. In October they will also open a support group for families hosting refugees long term.
- I Love Debnicki Foundation asked about UNHCR’s plans to introduce community centers. The Foundation further noted they are working on a similar activity.
- UNHCR has been running a Blue Dot in Krakow, which provides mental health and psychological support as well guidance about and referrals to available services and assistance. Currently, UNHCR is sharing space with Multicultural center where multiple actors are present and services available in one spot. Going forward, UNHCR is looking for a bigger space where UNHCR could invite other actors and local organization, including through the use of a community based approach where both Polish and Ukrainian organizations will be present. Such a center is already functional in Wroclaw.
- Save the Children provided information about the organization’s cash assistance. Save the Children is currently providing multipurpose cash assistance in line with the National Cash Working Group modality. This includes 3 payments over 3 installments. Save the Children also has some gaps in coverage, so partners who have identified vulnerable families in need of cash assistance are invited to reach out to Ghulam Sakhi-Rahjoe (ghulam.sakhi-rahjoe@savethechildren.org). Save the Children further noted continued gaps in information sharing, especially regarding winterization plans.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status (as of)
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