

Malopolska Coordination Group Meeting

Meeting Minutes – 03 November 2022

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am UNHCR Office Krakow
Chaired by:	UNHCR; Krakow Open Coalition
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	Centrum Praw Kobiet; Federacja Znaki Równości; Fundacja Instytut Polska-Ukraina; Fundacja Jedność; Fundacja Understanding; Fundacja Źródło życia; Halina Nieć Legal Aid Center; Harangos; OWiM; Stowarzyszenie Romano Ilo; Integracyjne Stowarzyszenie Sawore; Polski Czerwony Pryz Małopolski Oddział Okręgowy; Salam Lab; Save the Children; UNHCR; UNICEF; VOICE Amplified; UAinKrakow.pl; Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Małopolskiego; Wolontariat 4 Peron; Zupa dla Ukrainy Krakow;
Agenda:	<p>Agenda</p> <p>Introduction from the co-chairs and updates on the points decided on the last Coordination meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Updates from the refugee community and UA-led organizations2) Updates from representatives of the Voivodeship3) Introduction from the Marshall's Office4) Updates on Roma communities5) Presentation on PESEL Registration and amendments to the special act on assistance to citizens of Ukraine6) Presentation on referral system and eligibility criteria for UNHCR targeted cash assistance7) AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introduction from co-chairs	<p>Participants were welcomed to the sixth I Małopolska Coordination Group meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNHCR shared plans for the opening of a new community center in Krakow. The center will open in November and be run jointly with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The center will be open to other organizations to use for refugee related activities. Interested partners can contact Francois Kernin (Kernin@unhcr.org).• Open Krakow Coalition provided updates about the Coalition's latest activities. On 2 November representatives of the Coalition Working Groups met to discuss various issues. These included food, information, and models of further cooperation

	<p>with UNHCR in regards to co-chairing the Coordination meetings. The Coalition is also currently fundraising winter items to be sent to Ukraine. These include 4000 mats, 4000 sleeping bags, and 4000 power banks.</p>
<p>Agenda point 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAinKrakow shared that the organization has created a help page covering different questions for Ukrainians who have recently arrived in Krakow. Topics covered include available services and how the city works. UAinKrakow has included information about all services of which they are aware. However, they organization also remains eager to learn about new initiatives. Any individuals who wish to include information about their services can contact Ivan Kysloshchuk (ivan.kysloshchuk@uainkrakow.pl).
<p>Agenda point 2</p>	<p>The Plenipotentiary of the Voivode of Małopolska for Contact with NGOs in the Context of Support for Refugees from Ukraine responded to questions asked during the last Coordination meeting on 20 October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 20 October participants asked for up-to-date information on refugee numbers and on border crossing trends. The Plenipotentiary shared that by 31 October, about 137,400 PESEL numbers had been registered in Małopolska. The busiest months in terms of registration remain March and April, during which about 60,000 and 40,000 PESEL numbers were registered, respectively. In May this number dropped to about 9,000, and for the subsequent months remained at about 4,500 registrations a month. • • The Plenipotentiary also provided information about the Voivodeship’s actions regarding the current refugee situations and preparations for a potential second wave. The Voivodeship has a contract signed with ZHP to run the reception point at the Krakow train station. This includes the provision of food parcels and warm meals for individuals who can confirm their travel with a ticket. Over the preceding 9 days about 1800 people average per day have used the services provided by the reception point. ZHP also has a contract to run a temporary accommodation point in the old train station building where refugees may remain for up to 48 hours. Over the preceding week, about 40 people a day had stayed at the accommodation point. The Voivodeship continues to maintain a database of accommodation sites and number of available beds. Currently the database contains about 26,000 beds for refugees. Of these, about 16,000 are occupied and 10,000 remain available. While there is a lack of space in Krakow, other locations in the Voivodeship outside of the city have more open beds. The locations with the most free places are Nowotarski, Tarnowski, and, Limanowski Counties. • UNHCR noted that PESEL registrations are currently taking place at the Municipality level and inquired whether there is a need for a PESEL registration point at the UNHCR community center in Krakow. • The Plenipotentiary responded that this is an idea worth discussing further.

<p>Agenda point 3</p>	<p>Representatives of the Małopolska Marshall's Office shared information about the work of the Marshall's Office in regards to refugee issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1st Deputy Director of the Office of the Management Board noted that the Marshall's Office is not a central administration like the Office of the Voivode. Rather, it is a self-government. As such, the board is directly elected and has different competencies - for example finances and the distribution of EU funds. On the 24 of February funds were given to the Marshall's office for direct use to respond the refugee crisis. A portion of these funds were used to support NGOs. It was further highlighted that the refugee crisis is not only about refugees, but also a complementary process with Polish society. As such, NGOs should be included in this process. In this regards, The Marshall's Office has supported various initiatives, including the printing of brochures in Ukrainian and the planning of sport and integration activities. So far, the Marshall's Office has published 8 or 9 calls for proposals and are also in talks with the European Commission about funds that will likely be transferred to Małopolska. • The Marshall's Office further elaborated on past and ongoing projects. The past calls for proposals from NGOs have already closed. Most were about integration in different spheres – including culture, protection of the environment, support for volunteer coordination. In the latter sphere a large need was observed. This included trainings and financial help for volunteer coordinators. One specific project focused on creating books for mothers with children that contain information about Małopolska. It is unclear how long many refugees will remain in Poland, so it is important for them to feel comfortable here. • UNHCR noted that future calls for proposals may be of interest to many participants. If the Marshall's Office is in agreement UNHCR can share such future calls with meeting participants. • The Marshall's Office responded that this would be welcome and that the list of calls, including a Ukrainian component, will be available online in January.
<p>Agenda point 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harangos expressed that the Association wants to share the experience thus far of working with Ukrainian refugees from the Roma community. Many community members have been facing additional difficulties in Poland due to discrimination. • Sawore shared that early on the situation was very difficult for Ukrainian members of the Roma community, and the Polish Roma community felt the need to help and continues to help today. Ukrainian refugees from the Roma community face specific difficulties, including those with accommodation. Places in collective accommodation shelters exist. However, the shelters do not want to accept members of the Roma community. The Roma community does not want special treatment,

but rather just the same treatment as everyone else. Sawore further highlighted that there are no Roma refugees, only refugees.

- Harangos shared that a subsequent issue revolves around employment. When Polish representatives of Roma organizations speak with potential employers the employers state that they have jobs available. The employers remain interested even when they are told that the potential employees are refugees. However, at job interviews when employers see darker skin the job opportunities disappear.
- Harangos highlighted that there are four main problems faced by Ukrainian Refugees from the Roma community. The first two are the previously mentioned problems with accommodation and employment. In addition, there is the matter of education. Many Roma cannot read or write, so education must begin from the beginning. Finally, because of relocation and the uncertainty regarding the permanency of living situations, there are difficulties in enrolling children in schools. Harangos further highlighted that organizations which work with Roma communities must understand and know how to work with Roma culture.
- A participant added that Ukrainian refugees from the Roma community face additional challenges when accessing medical care. Often they are accepted for appointments, but made to wait a long time while other patients are seen before them. An example is a very pregnant woman who was only given medical assistance because she had a member of a Polish Roma organization accompany her.
- Halina Niec Legal Aid Center noted that there have been reports that many members of the Roma community are missing identity documentation and asked if this if the Roma organizations present had noticed a similar phenomenon.
- Harangos and Sawore responded that there have been some reports that members of the Roma community have been discriminated against on the Ukrainian side of the border in regards to receiving stamps. In other cases people may lose their documents. There was one case of a woman with five children who lost one document and was also unable to read and write.
- Sawore emphasized that there are also positive experiences and outcomes. Children have been born in Poland, and there are people who have found jobs and apartments and placed their children in schools.
- The Plenipotentiary of the Voivode of Małopolska for Contact with NGOs in the Context of Support for Refugees from Ukraine mentioned that it is beneficial to also talk about positive experiences and outcomes. The work of Roma organizations in translating and explaining behavior is very valuable. The Voivodeship is grateful to the participating Roma organizations for the assistance in that regard. However, one additional challenge pertaining to relocation of groups from the Roma

community is often the large group size. Hosts may refuse based solely on group size, as they cannot take so many individuals at once.

- Sawore provided further explanation regarding why some groups of individuals from the Roma community are large. Often groups are comprised of families and include not just children, but also cousins and others. Women often stick together. In addition, in some groups it is possible that only one woman can read and write and she is able to help the other women who cannot do so. For this reason the groups cannot split up. However, when the Association meets with groups, they explain that sometimes separation may be necessary.
- Romano Ilo noted that there was one incident in which a mother left her children at the train station and while the relocation staff were helpful, the train station security was very rude.
- The Plenipotentiary noted that during the above mentioned incident, the Voivodeship was grateful that Roma organizations were also on site to provide assistance. The Plenipotentiary highlighted that this further demonstrates why the work of the Roma organizations remains so important, including in regards to different social expectations such as attitudes towards leaving children. The Plenipotentiary also noted that the Voivodeship and ZHP are aware of reports of unacceptable behavior by security guards at the train station towards various refugee groups.
- Zrodlo Zycia Foundation noted that there has been a long discussion about problems faced by Ukrainian refugees from the Roma community without much discussion of solutions. Zrodlo Zycia further inquired what solutions representatives of the Roma organizations present would propose.
- UNICEF asked what specific project support is most necessary. Is training the most important, is it child care, or is it support for organizations that work directly with the Roma community?
- Harangos responded that the most important element is a safe place to sleep. Once this has been arranged, Roma organizations can further provide assistance. The next most important element is education. Two potential education centers – one by run Harangos and the other by Sawore – need support and financing. They aim to help not just children but also adults. They also require staff to work in these centers, not just in Krakow, but also in Malopolska more generally. Harangos further shared that the Roma organizations present had started a coalition of organizations. If any partners are interested in funding the projects run by the organizations, they are invited to get in touch. Likewise, if any partners are interested in meeting to learn more about work with Roma communities, they are invited to get in touch.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halina Niec Legal Aid Center shared a presentation on PESEL Registration and amendments to the special act on assistance to citizens of Ukraine
Agenda point 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR provided updates about the referral system and eligibility criteria for UNHCR targeted cash assistance. So far, UNHCR has provided multi-purpose cash assistance to about 280,000 individuals. From November until 15 December, cash assistance will be targeted to those families and individuals who fall into at least one of six categories for vulnerability criteria and who have not yet obtained cash assistance. It is hoped that the targeted assistance will assist 15,000 individuals. Willing partner organizations will be able to refer vulnerable families and individuals who they believe may qualify using an online form. An online workshop will be organized on how to conduct such referrals. • Halina Niec Legal Aid Center asked whether families and individuals would also be able to refer themselves in person. • UNHCR responded that all referrals will take place through partners and that refugees will not be able to self-refer. Likewise, all referrals will take place through the online form. The exclusion of walk-ins is aimed at minimizing the effort and cost burden that the need to travel would place on refugee families and individuals.
AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR thanked all partners who attended the UNHCR run PSEA training. In addition, UNHCR shared that UNHCR has been working on a referral pathway for GBV survivors. Partners providing assistance for GBV survivors are encouraged to contact Tai Sayarath (sayarath@unhcr.org) for further information on how to be added to the referral pathway. • Save the Children shared that the organization’s cash assistance program has reached almost 1,500 households. As such it has met its target and Save the Children will be looking for new funding opportunities in 2023. Save the Children further asked about coordination on winterization and contingency planning. The organization is planning to provide top-ups to 300 households and would also like to be added to any winterization and contingency planning mechanisms partners may be aware of. • Understanding Foundation shared that the organization had received international funding to provide empowerment workshops for refugees and those individuals working with refugees. The project aims to target 13,500 refugees. A kickoff meeting will take place in Krakow in December.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status (as of)
1.				
2				
3.				
4.				