

Podkarpackie Coordination Group (PCG)

Date: Friday 3rd March 2023

Time: 11:00am – 1:00pm

Venue: Governor's Office in Rzeszów

General Discussion Highlights:

Opening Remarks by Representative of the Voivode of Podkarpackie	
<p>Bogdan Mazur, Director Department of Security and Crisis Management – Podkarpackie Voivodeship There were no significant changes on refugee situation since last PCG meeting in January. Average daily border crossings not exceeding 30,000. Today, by the time of the meeting, 12,000 people had entered from Ukraine, 13,000 had left. movements related to the fulfillment of daily life tasks (trade, travel to family) and estimate 3% are fleeing conflict. The only reception point financed by the Voivode and managed by authorities is the Przemyśl Train Station; it's dedicated to people affected by the war effort and coming to Poland for the first time, with a specialized area for women, children and persons with disabilities. The main challenge at moment is assistance to refugees from the Roma community, e.g. repeatedly return to reception point, go to Hanover and return, change decision on onwards travel and sometime decline assistance. Challenging for authorities to help Roma community as they prefer to constantly move, thus UN and NGOs may be in better position to aid on site/address immediate needs.</p> <p>Paulina Piórkowska, Towards Dialogue: We need a strategic long-term approach and tools to helping the Roma community. Many challenges as up to 80% of Roma are affected by poverty, 50% have no experience with education and historical marginalization. Towards Dialogue is cooperating with Roma from Transcarpathia in Warsaw and very promising. Possible that Towards Dialogue can support authorities by providing analysis and technical assistance – would be interested to help.</p>	<p>UNHCR – to link Towards Dialogue with Director of Crisis Management with aim to jointly identify how Towards Dialogue may operationally support the voivode with assistance to Romani community.</p>
Presentation and discussion on economic inclusion	Action Points
<p>Amadeusz Marzec, UNHCR Livelihoods & Economic Inclusion Associate – UNHCR Overview of employment situation of refugees in Poland and UNHCR strategy. Presented statistics from variable sources and data about social insurance benefits offered to refugees in Poland and indicated that less than 50 percent of refugees aged 18-65 are employed. Highlights included: factors that support/encourage employment, key barriers for economic inclusion (including language and hesitation of employers to offer full/complete contract) and opportunities for humanitarian community to support.</p> <p>Comment #1: Magdalena Śmieszek, UNICEF: One of the most significant barriers for women is childcare. Limited number of state-supported daycare schemes and availability is mostly in private facilities that refugees can't afford.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

<p>Comment #2: Ewelina Bosak, CORE: We also observe big problems with the availability of housing for refugees in Polish cities.</p> <p>Response This problem also affects Polish citizens. Refugees largely want to choose locations in city centers, where housing accessibility is low. Good conditions are also found in suburbs and smaller towns – but lack of information, knowledge of these areas and commuting costs are barriers. Also barriers related to discrimination remains – landlords may not want to rent to UKR as concern that cannot sue (evict) refugee.</p>	
<p>Update on the Amendment to Special Act</p>	<p>Action Points</p>
<p>Jose Luis Hernandez, Protection Officer - UNHCR Overview on Amendment to the Act on Assistance to Citizen of Ukraine in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine. Main changes were described according to major categories such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for PESEL number – must register within 30 days • Funding of social assistance – key component that requires refugees to being partial payment of daily fees if reside in government owned shelter for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After 120 days: payment of 50%, no more than 40 PLN/day ○ After 180 days: payment of 75%, no more than 60 PLN/day ○ Noting exemption criteria • Employment – to register within 14 days at labor office if employed • Unaccompanied children – in general to not enter into Polish child protection system • Residence Permits for UKR - extended till 24 August 2023 • No Return proceedings – until 24 August 2023 • COVID – all provisions for legal stay in relation to COVID repealed <p>Note Bryant, UNHCR: The identification of persons requested to pay or meeting exemption criteria started in Krosno Shelter, led by municipal authorities. At time of PCG meeting, with information available, no other locations have started applying payment requirements or identifying exemptions. UNHCR to follow up with authorities to clarify.</p>	<p>UNHCR – to engage with authorities to clarify if (and where) the partial payment scheme is being implemented in communal shelters.</p>
<p>Legal work in Poland – IOM’s web portal on legal assistance and employment</p>	<p>Action Points</p>
<p>Milena Bergius, IOM IOM presented their web portal “legalnapraca.info.pl”. It is an information portal maintained containing practical information about the job search process, creating a resume and the legal aspects of taking up employment in Poland and starting one's own business. The site is aimed at people who have come to Poland from Ukraine and employers interested in hiring them. Also highlighted IOM’s seven (7) integration centers across Poland that also support with information provision on finding employment and entrepreneurialism, CV prep, job counseling and matching, and child friendly spaces.</p>	<p>Partners – can access the website at: Legal work in Poland IOM Poland; can inform and provide link to UKR refugees needing support with employment.</p>

Discussion – Challenges to Longer Term Independence from Communal Shelters	Action Points
<p>Comments from various partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement Fatigue - Psychological impact of refugees moving/relocating again after settling in communal shelter is significant and should be taken into consideration; consider addressing this need if encouraging persons to leave from communal shelter under Amendment to Special Act. • Relocating to smaller towns – risk of losing established access to services in current, larger urban area (children already going to school, etc.). • Vulnerable Profiles and Risks - Most populations that continue to reside in communal shelters have specific or special needs (may have disabilities and with children), many are vulnerable and consider that results of analysis of recent trends – increase in suicidal thoughts and self-harm. Moving out of communal shelters towards independent living may increase risks. • Dependencies and PSS - some persons residing in shelter since conflict started (1yr+) may have developed dependencies (mental, habitual) thus important to develop plan to activate and support them in transition; may feel vulnerable and not motivated. • Barriers to private market including discrimination – low stock and high demand of housing, high rental price, reluctance of landlords to rent to women with children or foreigners, exclusionary forms of rental agreements, etc. • Subsidized shelter alternatives - limited number of communal or social housing alternatives. 	<p>UNHCR – to include these points in presentation at ISCG Warsaw scheduled for 07 March; COMPLETED</p>
Update on Przemyśl Area Coordination and Shelter Needs	Action Points
<p>Bryant Castro, UNHCR Inter-Agency Coordination Officer Bilana Shelter is not operational yet despite completion of rehabilitations, awaiting final authorizations from City of Przemyśl. Partners finalizing presence and service to be made available – with emphasis on site management, PSS (individual and group counselling) and basic information provision. Due to the limited physical space in Bilana, the City of Przemyśl requests a minimal humanitarian presence within the facility – not to replicate the model used in TESCO Humanitarian Center – and instead try to bolster services the Przemyśl Train Station Reception Point. CORE has delivered an external half container to yard of Bilana that will serve as a communications and internet space for refugees to access computers, and planning to deliver a second container (estimated arrival mid April) that will support key humanitarian activities, including: PSS, case management, information provision and coordination meetings. Polish Red Cross aims to downside TESCO by end of March and close the facilities by end of April, once Bilana is fully operational with a capacity of 120 ppl. Partner coordination remains ongoing with the regular Przemyśl Coordination meetings co-facilitated by the City and UNHCR at the Mayor’s Office.</p> <p>Needs NFI/Furniture/Equipment for Shelters: Bilana and also POSiR Sports Hall shelter in Przemyśl area still require additional furniture and equipment, an excel list of needs has been prepared and can share with partners. CORE is focal point for resource mobilization.</p>	<p>UNHCR – upload the needs listing for Bilana and POSiR on Sharefile, COMPLETED</p> <p>All PARTNERS - please indicate in Sharefile excel if you can procure or donate items. Decision to be finalized by City of Przemyśl and CORE. File available on Sharefile for persons with existing approved access: Inter-Agency Public</p>

Other Partner Updates	Action Points
<p>Lisa Ranzenigo, Soleterre Presentation on the Soleterre’s activities and concerning <u>trends on GBV and self-harm & suicide</u>.</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect identification of GBV survivors, referrals, and case management <p>Trends in GBV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From November 2022 to Jan 2023 – seen increase in # of identified GBV survivors • Reasons for increase #, potentially improved outreach, awareness raising, effective referral, etc. <p>Highlighted numerous difficulties and gaps that affect survivor’s capacity to access GBV services, with consequences being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See old (discharged) patients returning for more support, survivors choosing to return to UKR for services, neglecting of refusing assistance, survivors becoming socio-economically isolated, increase in risk (chance) of health and psychological issues. <p>Significant increase in number of suicidal behaviors and self-harm identified since early January, often in communal shelters. Reasons are numerous, related to life conditions outside of UKR, resurgent trauma, discontinuation of support in POL that was previously provided in URK, isolation and lack of knowledge on access to services.</p>	<p>For information and/or sharing other PSS/GBV concerns affecting refugees or host community in Podkarpackie, contact: lisa.ranzenigo@soleterre.org (ENG) or information.pl@soleterre.org (UKR)</p>
<p>Ks. Paweł Konieczny, Caritas Przemysł A presentation of Caritas Przemysl's activities. Key highlights include (1) provision of support at border crossing during influx period, (2) <u>ongoing</u> donation collection centers, (3) <u>ongoing</u> support at the Przemysl Caritas Help Center for Migrants and Refugees – PSS, information provision, legal counselling, employment support, child friendly activities and after school care, and the mother and child home – (4) <u>ongoing</u> restaurant at Przemysł Train Station and mother/child rest area; (5) <u>ongoing</u> accommodation at Mother and Children’s shelter in Przemysl, (6) <u>ongoing</u> cross-border transfer of donations to Ukraine.</p>	<p>See presentation in POL for details.</p>
<p>Alex Wojtowicz, Medair: Announcement of the end of Medair’s mission in Podkarpackie by 31 March and expression of gratitude for cooperation to date. Medair will continue to support the response within Ukraine.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Jo Darouiche, Voice Amplified: Presentation on the new Voice’s policy brief based on interviews with 32 representatives from local organizations and reflect on the first 6 months of response to the Ukraine crisis in Poland, entitled: <i>Funding Needs for Polish Women’s Rights and Women-Led Organizations (WRO/WLO) Responding to the War in Ukraine</i></p> <p>Key Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WRO/WLO, along with LNGOs, are leading the response with limited support and burning out. 2. Sustainability of WRO/WLOs is impacted by lack of long-term, flexible funding. <p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>Further information contact: Jo@voiceamplified.org</p> <p>UNHCR – to share copy of policy brief with PCG members attached to email with MoM; COMPLETED</p>

1. Donors should provide core, long-term, and flexible funds that account for realistic operational costs and changing circumstances in an emergency.
2. Donors should remove the overly bureaucratic funding requirements on WROs/WLOs.
3. Donors should fund programs that focus on quality, need-based responses over output-driven indicators, particularly balancing the needs of Ukrainian female refugees and the needs of women and girls in the local population.
4. The international community must find ways of collaborating and sharing information that relieves the pressure on WROs/WLOs to be on-call, unpaid consultants to the international humanitarian system and other international donors.

Participants:

Organization	Name	Surname	Organization	Name	Surname
ACF	Lucia	Ferri	Project Hope	Natra	Deisadze
ACF	Jelena	Krivcevic	Project Hope	Lucia	Uscategui
Caritas Przemyśl	Małgorzata	Sielska	PSAR	Ewelina	Podoba
Caritas Przemyśl	Ks. Paweł	Konieczny	PSAR	Jan	Marković
Caritas Rzeszów	Krystian	Snopkowski	Scouts (ZHP)	Mariusz	Bezdietny
Caritas Rzeszów	Valentyna	Movchan	Soleterre	Lisa	Ranzenigo
CORE	Ewelina	Bosak	Soleterre	Anna	Kyriienko
CORE	Jack	Haffner	Ukrainian House	Tatiana	Harasym
Fundacja w Stronę Dialogu	Paulina	Piórkowska	UNHCR	Jose Luis	Hernandez
IOM	Milena	Bergius	UNHCR	Adriana	Negry
IOM	Oleksandra	Dermanska	UNHCR	Tomasz	Pajda
Medair	Alexandra	Wojtowicz	UNICEF	Magdalena	Śmieszek
Pro-Fil	Karolina	Pondo	UNICEF	Jakub	Buż
Pro-Fil	Monika	Malisiewicz	UNITATEM	Claudia	Ostafijczuk- Wydrzynska
			UNITATEM	Katarzyna	Kubas
			Voice Amplified	Joullanar	Daruoiche
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Contact: Bryant Castro, UNHCR Inter-Agency Coordination Officer, castro@unhcr.org

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