



# REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES

## Poland



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Report

Young Refugees: opening doors for their future  
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## Table of Contents

REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES IN POLAND .....	4
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Legal system to protect refugees.....	4
3. The links between the government and civil society for the reception and integration of refugees.....	5
4. Latest data on the reception and integration of refugees. ....	7
5. Needs, interests and expectations of refugees.....	8
6. Challenges for the reception and integration of refugees .....	11
7. Conclusions.....	14
8. Bibliography.....	16

# REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES IN POLAND

## 1. Introduction

After the World War II, Poland became a communist country, and was a major refugee destination. The communist government allowed refugees only from countries affected by "class struggle" such as Greece, Chile or Vietnam. The exact numbers it is difficult to know but it is estimated that the total number of refugees and asylum seekers who came to Poland in the period 1945–1989 was around 20,000–30,000 individuals.

Following the fall of communism in 1989, Poland became a more appealing destination following its liberalization and a transition towards capitalistic and democratic society. UNHCR opened an office in Poland in 1992, following Poland's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol.

Among others, Poland became one of the destinations of refugees from former Soviet Union from countries like Chechnya, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

The number of refugees coming to Poland was still tiny compared to that coming to Western European countries; around 1,500 each year in the early 1990s. That number roughly doubled by late 1990s, and Polish government passed new laws as part of preparation for Poland's accession to the European Union.

By early 2000s the number of people applying for refugee and asylum in Poland rose to 7,000. From 2010 the number has been oscillating at around 6–7,000 to 15,000: 10,000 in 2010 and 2012, 15,000 in 2013, 6,500 in 2014 and 12,000 in 2015.

Only about 1–2% of the applications are approved. In 2012 Refugee status was granted to 106, while 477 received complementary protection. In 2013 208 people received the refugee status, and 550 or complementary protection or "tolerated stay" category. About 85% of the individuals who apply for refugee status or asylum leave Poland, travelling to Western Europe, before the Polish agency makes a ruling, leading to their request being cancelled.

## 2. Legal system to protect refugees

**The Geneva Convention (concerning the status of refugees from 1951) is the most important act of international law regarding refugees. It contains a definition of the term "refugee" and an indication of what actions should be taken and which can not be taken by the States Parties to the Convention.** The most important rules regarding the treatment of refugees, as set out in the convention, are primarily the order to treat recognized refugees in the same way as the citizens of the host country regarding access to the social assistance system. The second important principle is the prohibition of punishing refugees for being forced to cross the border illegally on their way to the host country. The convention in its original version referred to the problem of refugees in Europe after the Second World War.

**The New York Protocol (concerning the status of refugees from 1967) in 1967, the States Parties to the Convention have decided to lift geographical and temporal restrictions, and assume that henceforth the refugee status will be available to any person who left their country for fear of persecution, regardless of when this situation occurred.**

Poland joined the Geneva Convention and the New York Protocol in 1991.

**Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 where it is advisable (Article 56) that foreigners fleeing persecution may apply for granting refugee status.** The Constitution refers to the law and international agreements (Geneva Convention) that regulate the procedure for granting international protection.

**Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 No 604/2013 on the establishment of criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person.** This regulation is known as the Dublin III Regulation. Thanks to its principles, we can determine which EU country should consider the foreigner's application and, if necessary, provide him with international protection.

**Act of June 13, 2003 on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Poland.** This is undoubtedly the most important and the most detailed legal act regarding refugees. The Act on granting protection to foreigners indicates the conditions for granting refugee status and granting subsidiary protection, implementing and specifying in this respect the Geneva Convention and EU asylum directives. The Act also describes the principles and course of proceedings in the matter of granting international protection, indicates the administrative authorities competent for this category of matters and the types of decisions that may be taken in such proceedings. In addition, the Act regulates the form and mode of granting social assistance, provided for persons applying for international protection, as well as the premises and rules for applying detentions to applicants, i.e. forced placement in a closed facility.

**Act of December 12, 2013 on foreigners** is important for applicants for international protection due to the fact that it is its regulations that impose an obligation to leave Poland for applicants who have been refused protection. Also in this Act were determined the grounds for granting consent for stay for humanitarian reasons - Polish national form of protection, the obtaining of which means the right of an unrecognized refugee to stay in our country (no deportation decision is issued then).

**Regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of 19 February 2016 on the amount of assistance for foreigners applying for international protection.** This regulation regulates the issues of social assistance for foreigners awaiting a decision on granting international protection: its form, amount, and procedure for granting.

### 3. [The links between the government and civil society for the reception and integration of refugees](#)

Confusion of concepts can cause confusion and confusion because of the size of the various terms used to describe foreigners coming to our country. Quite often, mainly in media coverage, but also in the words of politicians, refugees are confused with immigrants. By definition, a refugee is a person who, because of justified fear of persecution because of his race, religion, nationality, political beliefs or belonging to a particular social group, was forced to leave the country of origin. Such a person is given a special refugee status and social protection in Poland - benefits, housing, etc.

On the other hand, an immigrant is considered a person who comes to another country to settle there, mainly for economic reasons. Most often, however, even in the statements of politicians, the term immigrant or emigrant covers all foreigners who want to live in Poland - whether temporarily or permanently. To get an idea of how to deal with arrivals in our country, it is best to analyze official government websites, where you can find interesting information and figures - both archival and current.

Immigrants most often use the help of local self-governments and non-governmental organizations. "Projects and activities are needed for migrants to feel responsible for the place, for the space where they live" - believes Tetyana Lewińska from the "Our Choice" foundation. As she explained, it goes, among others for neighborhood initiatives that involve all residents, because it supports the sense of community.

The role of local governments and the local community in the adaptation of foreigners was discussed by experts during the conference, which took place on March 13, 2018 in the Representation of the European Commission in Poland. According to the participants of the debate, regardless of the state or EU strategies, the success of integration of foreigners with the local community ultimately depends on the involvement of local institutions and residents. Director of the European Commission Representation in Poland Marek Prawda emphasized that the EC office supports projects that increase social awareness regarding migration, financing training, including local government and teachers. He admitted that the problems associated with refugees cause great anxiety and are a source of dissatisfaction, although - according to him - the scale of "exaggerated reactions" is unjustified. "The problem of migrating through its visibility has created the possibility of politicizing the public's fears and prejudices, an action that deviates from the European Union's approach, which wants to emphasize everything that unites us and what differs - perceptions in the right proportions" - he said.

Paulina Babis from the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy [MRPiPS] pointed out that integration is a bilateral process, which should lead above all to the harmonious functioning of foreigners and local communities. In her opinion, local governments play a key role in this process. Babis said that the Department of Aid and Social Integration collects from local governments information on the possibilities of integration of foreigners, and experts who work with MRPiPS go to other EU countries to see how integration works. MRPiPS representative announced that voivodship offices will implement comprehensive projects, and part of them will be adaptation courses for foreigners.

Another proposal, which Babis mentioned, is to facilitate foreign children to function in schools. On the basis of her own experience, she assessed that a school with good organization can create good conditions for the integration of Polish children with newcomers, and the success of this process depends most on the management and teachers.

Tetyana Lewińska from the "Our Choice" foundation pointed out that at the beginning of her stay in a foreign country she is accompanied by fear, resulting mainly from concern for legalization of stay and finding a job.

"When these needs are assured, stress goes away and then the person can be the recipient of integration activities," she said. "Later, immigrants are wondering how to bring a family, want to know something about schools, kindergartens. Then, after a few years, they ask about the purchase of real estate in Poland, they are also interested in the urban and cultural offer" - she described.

The meeting took place within the framework of the National Coalition of the Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM). This venture of the Institute of Public Affairs is to help exchange experiences related to the presence of foreigners in Poland between representatives of public administration and experts, practitioners and migrants themselves. (Source: Daily Information Service PAP)

During the Brussels conference on the situation in Syria, Poland declared 48 million zlotys for humanitarian aid for the citizens of this country. In addition, our country will allocate 12.5 million euros to refugees already in Turkey - said Minister for Humanitarian Aid Beata Kempa. "We have declared, in terms of strictly humanitarian aid, an amount of approximately PLN 48 million. This is an amount higher than last year. We hope that we will manage to allocate this amount without major difficulties, although we know that there is already a big problem with entering Syria for our and not only our organizations "- said Minister for Humanitarian Aid Beata Kempa Polish Press Agency.

In addition, Beata Kempa referred 12,5 million euro to refugees in Turkey. As she admitted, this amount was required by the EU.

The Minister of Humanitarian Aid also pointed out that aid to Syria would be channelled through humanitarian organizations.

#### 4. Latest data on the reception and integration of refugees.

The data of the Office for Foreigners show that Poland receives more and more refugees from year to year. In 2016, 108 people received this status - 40 Syrian citizens, 16 foreigners from Ukraine, 10 Chechens - citizens of the Russian Federation, 20 people from Turkmenistan and 6 from Tajikistan. However, as early as 2017, as many as 150 people were recognized as refugees (an increase of 39 percent). 56 Ukrainians, 17 Syrians, 14 Chechens - citizens of the Russian Federation and 13 Iraqis. As you can see, many of them are Muslims, or representatives of a very distant civilization circle. Not infrequently, it causes social conflicts.

In 2017, according to data provided by the Office for Foreigners, over 5,000 people applied for the refugee status in Poland. In 2017, 2 226 applications for international protection were filed, with 5,078 persons. This number is almost 2.5 times lower than in 2016, when 12,321 people applied for protection (4 502 applications). The application for international protection was submitted by 671 citizens of Ukraine, 3550 people from the territory of the Russian Federation (including 3291 from Chechnya), 154 citizens of Tajikistan, 40 from Armenia, 44 citizens of Syria, 56 people from Turkey, 28 from Pakistan, 12 from Libya, 41 from Iraq, 16 from Iran, 25 from Afghanistan, 14 from Egypt, 11 from Algeria.

The head of the Office for Foreigners granted refugee status to 150 foreigners, including 17 Syrians, 56 Ukrainians, 14 citizens of the Russian Federation and 13 people from Iran. For comparison, in 2016 this form of protection covered 108 people (40 Syrian citizens, 16 foreigners from Ukraine, 10 citizens of the Russian Federation, 20 people from Turkmenistan and 6 foreigners from Tajikistan). This means that the number of people granted refugee status in 2017 increased by 39% compared to 2016. 2,091 people received negative decisions on the granting of refugee status. This number is comparable to 2016 (then 2 188 people received negative decisions).

In the first half of 2018 (data of the Office for Foreigners), Poland has already accepted 3,009 immigrants from Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Tunisia, Libya and Syria. Most of them have been granted a temporary residence permit. 163 immigrants got a permanent residence permit

from this number. Therefore, it is more people than in the whole 2017 year considered as refugees (150 people), although they come from virtually the same "troubled" countries. What are the criteria for this? In 2018, over 100 people were recognized as refugees. The number of foreigners applying for various forms of stay in our country is constantly growing. It includes for permanent residence, temporary residence or long-term resident's stay in the EU. According to data created in 2017, the government portal [migracje.gov.pl](http://migracje.gov.pl), in the first half of 2018 such applications were already submitted in the voivodship offices of the whole country over 70,000. Most applications were submitted to the Mazowieckie Voivodship Office - over 22 thousand. This is a huge increase in the interest of foreigners to stay in Mazowieckie, especially considering that in 2014 such applications were just over 4,000.

Throughout the country from the beginning of January to the end of June, more than 6,000 foreigners have already applied for permanent residence and 4 800 requests have been. In turn, for this period, as many as 69,000 people applied for temporary stay, of which over 37 thousand people received a positive decision. Most of the people applying for various forms of stay in Poland are between the ages of 20 and 39. Half of them are men. In contrast to previous years, many applications for residence in Poland are now made by women. The vast majority of people wanting to obtain a permit to stay in Poland in 2018 are citizens of Ukraine.

Currently, according to the data of the portal [migracje.gov.pl](http://migracje.gov.pl), it is about 45,000 people. There is also a growing number of Belarussian citizens interested in staying in Poland. By the beginning of May, there were approximately 4,000 applications submitted by them for stay, mostly temporary. The official government portal [migracje.gov.pl](http://migracje.gov.pl), publishing the number of over 15,000 applicants for a residence permit in Poland in the first half of 2018, enigmatically identifies the nationality of these people with the common denominator "other countries". As we have determined, there are many Muslim countries among them, in which terrorist organizations lead their active activity, including ISIS - it is about Pakistan (523 applications), Egypt (288 applications) Turkmenistan (34 applications), Afghanistan (54 applications). The interest in staying in our country among the citizens of Russia, which are mainly Chechens, is not diminishing. By June 2018, 2.4 thousand. such persons apply for the right to live in Poland, often with the refugee status.

It turns out that only 344 920 immigrants came to Poland this year. Most of them were registered by the voivode of Mazovia, as many as 111 133 people (including: 62 875 - temporary residence, 22 169 - permanent stay, 16 959 - registration of EU stay, 7125 - long-term resident's residence in the EU, 2005 - others). Probably the vast majority of them were in Warsaw. The smallest number went to the Świętokrzyskie province, as only 4,152 people. Most immigrants are in western and southern voivodships, although there are also many in Lublin (15 827 people).

Detailed statistics from the above page show that these are mainly young people. There is also over-representation of men over women (214,308 to 130,612).

## 5. Needs, interests and expectations of refugees

Social assistance is available to every foreigner who has submitted an application for international protection in Poland, except for situations specified in the Act on granting protection to foreigners - exceptions. Within two days after submitting the application, you should register for registration to one of the two reception centers of the Department of Social Assistance: to the reception center in Biała Podlaska, or to the center in Podkowa Leśna -

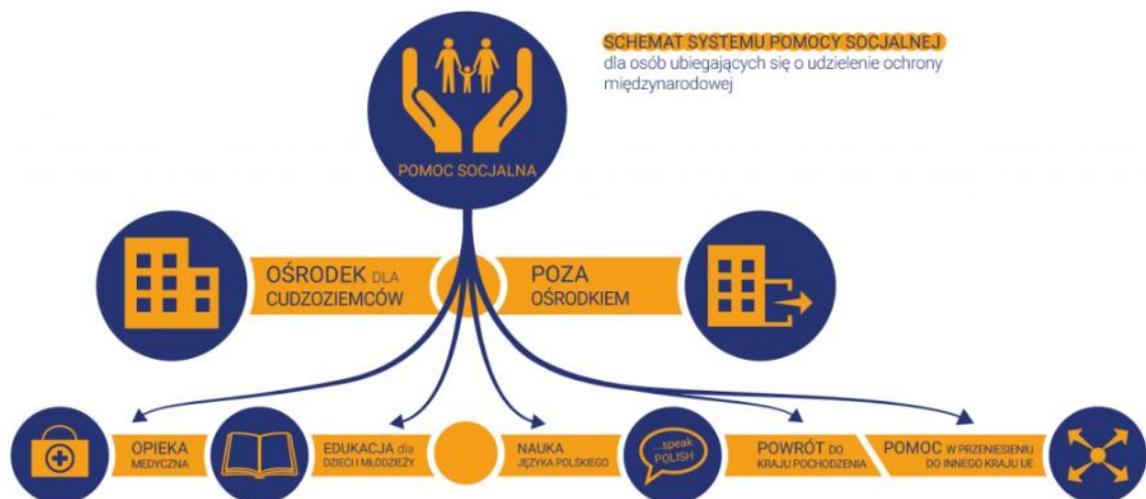
Dębak. If the foreigner did not report to the reception center within two days, the procedure for granting international protection will be discontinued. Cudzoziemiec w ośrodku otrzymuje:

- Accommodation;
- Food;
- Reimbursement of travel costs in public transport in specific cases, i.e. related to the proceedings for granting the refugee status, taking part in medical examinations or vaccinations or in other justified cases;
- Permanent financial aid for the purchase of personal hygiene products - PLN 20 per month and so-called "Pocket money" - PLN 50 per month;
- Providing one-time cash assistance for the purchase of clothing and footwear - PLN 140;
- Providing cash equivalent in exchange for meals for children up to 6 years of age and children fulfilling schooling obligations - PLN 9 per day.

A foreigner receives: A cash benefit to cover the costs of staying on the territory of Poland.

This form of assistance may be granted if the organizational reasons require it or it results from other provisions of the Act - the provisions of the Act

## Rodzaje przyznawanej pomocy



The period of providing social assistance ends after receiving the final decision in the procedure for granting the refugee status within the time limits specified in the Act. Foreigners who receive a positive decision within 60 days can submit an application for an Individual Integration Program implemented by poviats family assistance units based on the Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance (more information on the website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy).

Refugees staying in Poland usually live in special centers. The Chechens are the most there. The main centers of this type are located in the Podlasie Voivodship - in Białystok and Czerwoný Bór near Łomża. Although the Chechens are not a group that creates problems for us that are bigger than other guests, there are criminal incidents involving them. The case of beating the guard and the Vietnamese in the guarded center for foreigners at ul. Bema in Białystok. The prosecutor's office and the police also investigated the beating of a Pole who

was attacked by three Chechens in Lomza. In Białystok, the high-profile trial of their compatriots, accused inter alia for help to the ISIS fighter and purchase of weapons for this terrorist organization.

In cities where refugee centers are located, usually a social protest is born, related to the behavior of foreigners living in the centers. This is, among others in Góra Kalwaria. Currently, members of one of the social organizations are preparing a request to the Office for Foreigners and the Ministry of the Interior for the transfer of the Białystok refugee center to Warsaw. - In no way do refugees assimilate. They move in tight groups, often in the evening hours, they are armed, what is not said, but who knows, knows. Residents are afraid to discuss the topic related to this center for fear of their health and life - says Marcin Sawicki from the "Kocham Białystok" Association.

In 2017, the then director of Caritas Polska, father Marian Subocz came out with the proposal to create the so-called humanitarian corridors. They would consist in accepting in Poland for specialized treatment of small, selected groups of victims of armed conflicts. This idea was supported by the Polish Episcopate. Ks. Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, metropolitan of Warsaw, began, even in his archdiocese, to prepare for the admission of refugees who had to come to Poland in humanitarian corridors. However, it has not occurred, as it has been so far, until their creation, because the government has taken a negative view of it, standing in the position that help - including medical assistance - must be given to victims of conflicts on the spot, in their home countries.

The government has not officially created any humanitarian corridors so far. Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz, asked several times by the media in this matter, replies that these issues are dealt with by Beata Kempa, coordinator of humanitarian aid for refugees. On the other hand, she recently took the floor on the humanitarian corridors and said that she understood this term as the help Poland has given to victims of wars and conflicts for a long time. - How to name what our non-governmental organizations do? This is a humanitarian aid corridor that is flowing in a wide stream, with the support of our government - said Beata Kempa during the summary of the organization's activities: "Help to the Church in Need".

Over the past few decades, many Poles emigrated abroad seeking better jobs. This has been cited as one of the reasons Poles in 2000 have had the most pro-immigration, pro-refugee and pro-asylum-seekers views in Europe.

This attitude started to change around 2015, following the onset of the European migrant crisis. Polish governments have not been supportive of the EU plans to distribute refugees throughout Europe, including Poland. Attitudes towards refugees have worsened.

A nationwide poll from December 2016 showed that 52% do not wish for any refugees to arrive in Poland, 40% approve only of temporary resettlement, and only 4% approve of permanent resettlement.

More Polish people were favourable of refugees from Ukraine than from Middle East.

Polish companies have specialized in deceiving immigrants. Providing legal assistance to workers from the east, Dr. Piotr Sabat claims that a large group of Polish entrepreneurs specialized in cheating Ukrainians. Most often, they employ them in black, and then refuse to pay part of the remuneration for their work. Reprimanding some employers of similar practices usually ends with threats on their part and the announcement of prosecuting prosecution to the prosecutor's office.

The lawyer in a conversation with Forsal.pl portal presents several cases which he has already dealt with, and most often they concern frauds related to non-payment of remuneration or deduction of serious amounts from him. Many Ukrainians are working in Poland in black, that is, they do not pay contributions to the Social Insurance Institution, because, contrary to the announcements, employers do not report them at the relevant offices. Job placement agencies are also doing their job, which very often, especially after the immigrants get out of work, do not pay their last salary. Very often, employers do not know about it at all, and agencies have made it their own business idea. At the same time, Sabat admits that wine often lies on both sides, because Ukrainian workers are not able to get down to work and suddenly disappear. However, this does not change the fact that employers who cheat Ukrainians very often remain unpunished. Most often, they are angry, stop taking calls, or threaten the prosecution with persistent stalking. Some entrepreneurs admit, however, to blame and then decide to pay the outstanding money.

## 6. Challenges for the reception and integration of refugees

Poland, along with Hungary, has refused to take in any refugees under a 2015 deal that was supposed to allocate 160,000 people among EU member countries in order to take the load off Greece and Italy. Both Schetyna and former Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz, who agreed to the EU deal, say that Poland won't accept any EU-mandated top-down allocation of refugees, and that countries have to be in full control over who they accept.

Poland is one of the most homogenous countries in Europe — overwhelmingly Polish and Roman Catholic. That wasn't the case until the Second World War. Before 1939, about 10 percent of the population was Jewish, and there were large Ukrainian, Belarusian, German and other minorities — ethnic Poles only made up two-thirds of the country.

The blood-drenched harrowing of the war, followed by post-war border shifts and ethnic cleansing, created a racially pure Poland for the first time in history — fulfilling the dreams of earlier generations of extreme nationalists. Despite being in the EU, there's little appetite in Poland to create a West-European style multi-ethnic society.

That creates a conundrum for the opposition, which wants to stake out a more strongly pro-EU position than the government in a bid to appeal to the country's more liberal urban electorate, but doesn't want to offend traditionalists.

Almost 46% of all immigrants are Ukrainians (as many as 158 432 people), 21 681 people are German citizens, 12 451 are Vietnamese, 17,099 are Belarusians, 11 692 are Russians. Of course, there are no data on how many of them adhere to Islam, although this should be basic information. However, on the basis of the analysis, give a similar number of Muslims who came to Poland. First of all, it should be noted that among German citizens there may be many immigrants from Arab countries, who for various reasons decided to move here. Similarly, Russia is a great country in which Muslims also live, many of whom can migrate.

While the definition of how many of them are in these groups is impossible on the basis of the residual data that is officially presented, then certainly countries can be pointed out, from which certainly Muslims come from. In 2018, it was mainly Turkey (4153) but also Syria (1065 people), Iraq (1183), Bangladesh (1070), Uzbekistan (1800), Pakistan (1429), Azerbaijan (878), Tunisia (871), Arabia Saudi (835), Algeria (748), Morocco (543), Libya (442), Iran (395) or Lebanon (305). It can be said with caution that in the first five months of

2018 only a dozen or so thousand Muslims came to Poland, and only according to official data. We do not know how many people there are in Poland illegally.

It all starts with the refugee's arrival in Poland and starts proceedings in the matter of granting him international protection. During this process, a refugee has two choices: he / she can live in a refugee center or apply to the Head of the Office for Foreigners (hereinafter: the Head of the UCS) for granting so-called "out-of-center benefits", and therefore small financial resources for independent living outside the center.

Regardless of the decision he makes, it involves serious challenges for him. According to the refugees themselves, the first days or weeks spent in the center are indeed a time of respite and peace after escaping the threat of life, as well as rest after an exhausting journey. However, it is quick - especially if the procedure of granting international protection is prolonged - fear, uncertainty, helplessness, alienation and isolation appear anew in their lives.

There is no way to avoid this - the reasons for this should be sought in the infrastructure of the centers. These are places where you can only count on the minimum of privacy. Families are quartered in separate rooms, but most often do not have a separate bathroom or kitchen. The feeling of isolation is also affected by the lack - or at least an insufficient number - of integration activities and activating refugees. As a result, they often wait idly for a verdict about their future. A verdict whose content is not obvious at all, which also increases the psychological difficulty of their situation. The location of centers on the outskirts of cities or in the forest not only affects the lack of security among refugees, but also separates them from local communities.

Consequently, they have no chance to practice language or build relationships with their neighbors. This results not only in a sense of alienation, but also greater difficulties in entering the local labor market. Finally - what is particularly important - it does not allow mutual learning, getting accustomed to the culture and customs of both guests and hosts, and breaking down barriers. All this together makes the integration process extremely difficult, reflecting both on refugees who are condemned to idleness and learned helplessness, as well as Poles who do not have the opportunity to learn more about their new neighbors. It results in the intensification of stereotypical images and fears, which very often result from the usual ignorance and lack of contact. You can read more about the stay in the centers in the chapter "Refugee procedure" and in the reports on the policy of choosing and locating centers and the presence of refugees in small municipalities.

No wonder that some refugees decide to look for a roof over their heads outside the center. If they decide to take such a step, they have the right to apply to the Chief of UdsC for a cash benefit to cover the costs of staying on the territory of Poland (the so-called. "Extra-medial benefit"). However, one must realize that we are talking about very small money - for a single person, the said benefit is PLN 750 per month, for a double-person household - PLN 600 per person, and for a four-person family - PLN 375 per person. It should also be stressed that foreigners are not allowed to work legally for at least the first six months of the proceedings for granting international protection, and often even during the whole period of the refugee procedure.

For a foreigner who does not have a family in Poland or anyone who can support him materially, who does not know the language, often has a traumatic past behind and requires treatment or psychotherapy, survival - and thus renting a flat on the open market and maintaining - it is, in principle, unfeasible for the amount offered by the State. Reality, therefore, forces refugees to look for jobs in the gray zone or to live in low-standard premises. This particularly applies to people who need professional psychological help, which is also

missing. Among the refugees there are people who require special treatment during the procedure of granting international protection. It is easy to understand that the situation of a man who is a victim of a special trauma and therefore has unique needs is even more difficult.

Both the municipalities, as the governing bodies of the schools, are to ultimately decide whether the children of foreigners will be able to study in the centers where they are staying. The Ministry of the Interior and Administration [MSWiA] has forwarded to the inter-ministerial consultations a corrected justification for the novels regarding school activities for foreigners' children, stipulating that they could study in the centers where they are staying. Previously the resort justified the draft changes, including the risk of influx of foreigners and the emerging negative attitude of local communities. As emphasized in the Monday statement, the assumption of the Ministry of Interior and Administration is not to exclude the children of foreigners from the Polish education system, but only to provide support during the preparatory phase of education before going to school. The resort argues that according to the proposed regulations, such a solution gives municipalities only the opportunity to organize learning in centers. "This is not an imposed duty. The final decision belongs only to the municipality, as the governing body of the school" - it was underlined.

The Ministry assures in the communication that "children of foreigners learn and will continue to learn in Polish public schools". "Thanks to the new regulations, teachers would have the possibility of long-term admission to the center for foreigners to conduct classes for children staying there - so far, teachers have not had such a possibility" - added. According to the applicable regulations, as a rule, entry to the center for foreigners of non-residents or employees of the Office for Foreigners requires the consent of this office each time. Long-term consent to enter the center have, among others teachers who conduct individual education classes with the child or attend the individual obligation of one-year pre-school preparation.

At present, in Poland, minor foreigners applying for international protection attend schools in which Polish children learn. The purpose of the draft amendment on the regulations regarding stay in centers for foreigners is to enable teachers to conduct compulsory educational activities at the center for foreigners. As it was pointed out that such a solution would be possible, the ministry wants to introduce the possibility of long-term consent by UdSC to enter the area of the teachers' center. The Ministry of Interior and Administration indicated that the proposed changes will help teachers to conduct compulsory educational activities for foreigners' children in the center, if the commune decides to conduct such classes for refugee children outside the school's premises. "The commune, as the school's governing body, knows the social and educational conditions in its territory to the greatest extent and can assess the need to conduct educational classes in the center for foreigners located in its area, and also has the potential and knowledge in the organization and functioning of the system education" - we read in the revised explanation.

According to the Ministry of Interior and Administration, the municipality, in consultation with the head of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, has the option of making decisions about conducting educational activities at a center for foreigners. In the original version of the justification of the ministry, the proposed changes were also justified by the risk of inflow of foreigners and the appearing reluctance of local communities to them. "The potential risk of a mass influx of foreigners, in particular a significant increase in the number of school-age children, as well as the emerging negative attitude of the local community to foreigners applying for international protection, result in the need to seek solutions that will facilitate and improve the way children are taught foreigners in Poland" - indicate in the previous explanatory justification. As it was written, the lack of knowledge of the Polish

language, especially in the initial period of school attendance, and cultural differences between minor foreigners and Polish children may lead to delay in the implementation of the school curriculum and conflicts resulting from cultural differences. "The Office for Foreigners during many years of cooperation with educational institutions gathered information illustrating challenges in the field of education of minor foreigners, which shows that the attendance of foreign children to schools together with Polish children can often discourage foreigners from learning.

It happens that some foreign children, although going to school, do not learn, if only because of delays in the implementation of the school program in relation to Polish peers and difficulties in catching up with the required material "- the previous justification to the amendment - "at the same time, the abovementioned circumstances negatively and demobilizingly affect not only foreign children who are reluctant to go to school, but also to Polish children". In the opinion of the Ministry of Interior and Administration, the proposed solution may help to relieve the local school network and "also ensure the possibility of preparing foreign children to include in the Polish education system not from the first day of arrival to Poland, but after the time necessary to allow them to adapt in a Polish school and the implementation of science ". The deadline for the entry into force of the amendment from 7 to 14 from the day of announcement was also changed in the project.

**Three basic goals of IPI** assume that the foreigner becomes economically self-reliant (and thus takes up employment), learns the Polish language and integrates with Polish society. The program sets out the rights and obligations of both the foreigner and the social worker who looks after him. A person covered by international protection should regularly attend a Polish language course, register at the Poviast Labor Office, actively seek employment and regularly meet with a social worker. In practice, however, it turns out that the assumptions of IPI are too ambitious as to the scope and time of the support offered. As a result, this program has no chance to function effectively. A year is definitely too short a time to introduce a foreigner into Polish - very often completely foreign to him - reality. For comparison: in the Scandinavian countries analogous integration programs are carried out for three years. However, the problem is not only the short duration of the program.

In fact, they are suffering from the same diseases as the rest of the Polish social welfare system. According to the name, IPI should be run in an individualized way, which is adapted to the needs and competences of a specific foreigner. It is very difficult to achieve this goal with far too few social workers employed in PCPR and MOPR. Lack of solid social work results in the fact that the implementation of the program often comes down only to payment of benefits to refugees. As mentioned above: small benefits. For a single person running a household, the aid amounts to 1335 zlotys a month for the first half of the year, and then a maximum of 1200 zlotys. Trying to maintain for such money along with renting even a room and paying for a Polish language course is a real challenge. An important role in this area is played by non-governmental organizations that often offer free language courses. It is much harder to find them in smaller towns than in larger centers.

## 7. Conclusions

The situation in Poland fluctuate from open to refugees to closed the frontiers to refugees from East countries. Something to point out is that from the beginning of 2018, Poland has accepted 3009 immigrants from such countries as: Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, Bangladesh, Syria, and Libya. This fact shows from one side that still

a lot to do but also that the society is changing and more possibilities for refugees has been implemented by our central government.

From one side we give political asylum in Poland but most of the cases were granted only temporary residence permits, but of these countries, 163 immigrants have been granted permanent residence and only in the last four months. The data comes from the government website [migracje.gov.pl](http://migracje.gov.pl). The voivode of Masovia seems the most positive applications of immigrants.

Theoretically, many matters regarding assistance to refugees are regulated in Poland. In practice, to start a new life in our country is very difficult, and the support offered by the state is definitely insufficient. In order to better understand what problems refugees want to live in Poland, it is worth looking at this disagreement between theory and practice. It turns out that their situation is influenced not only by declarations of state administration of various levels and included in integration programs or codes of assumption. The situation of refugees in Poland is also determined by the details regarding the implementation of these assumptions, the application of specific provisions, the scope of the assistance actually offered to them, as well as the attitude of the society to their presence in Poland. Once again, it turns out that theory itself and practice itself. It is worth realizing this in order to better understand the conditions under which Polish refugees live, work and raise their children.

The situation of refugees on the Polish labor market is not at all colorful, and there are many problems. Among the refugees, there are many people who do not have any learned profession or who - for example due to prolonged armed conflict - have not worked in the profession for years. On the other hand, there are also professionals who have excellent education and extensive experience in their field, but their professions are either not useful on the Polish labor market or their implementation requires a complicated and long-lasting procedure for recognition of a foreign diploma by the Polish authorities. The latter requirement applies, for example, to doctors.

A separate issue is the situation of women refugees in the labor market. Some of them - even for cultural reasons - have never worked before, and now have to take up employment to be able to support the family. In Poland, meanwhile, there is no system to prepare migrants and refugees to enter the labor market. There is no offer of professional courses or systems of vocational activation that are tailored to their needs and possibilities. There is also no reliable research on the demand for employees in various industries, which means that no programs are developed to train and recruit a given type of employees. This is despite the fact that the Office for Foreigners has a considerable fund for providing vocational training - according to the report of the Supreme Audit Office, PLN 45.4 million is mentioned.

This is serious neglect at the level of the integration policy of the state, which unfortunately - despite the appearances created by the publication of successive program documents with an embarrassingly substantive level - it simply does not exist. It is also negligence from the level of self-government authorities, which do not seem to notice the presence of refugees living in their territories at all, let alone think about them as their inhabitants. Consequently, they do not perceive them as potential employees, so they also have no training or activation offer for them. With the candle, look for practical courses available for refugees - for example a forklift driver's or a varnishing worker's course.

A glorious exception to this rule are activating activities carried out by the Warsaw Family Aid Center or the Municipal Center for Family Assistance in Lublin. However, most of the responsibilities of central and local authorities in this area have been transferred to non-governmental organizations that conduct language courses, career counseling or legal

counseling for refugees taking up employment in Poland. Unfortunately, there is less and less funding for such activities, and access is not easy to those that are. Organizations are therefore stuck in suspension, generally not knowing how long they will be able to continue their activity. This results in a lack of continuity in conducting sensible and already verified activities.

In addition, despite the lack of formal obstacles, a number of social obstacles await refugees. Among them, it is worth mentioning discrimination or resistance of employers before employing them due to the belief that the language barrier or cultural differences can hinder the proper performance of duties. Employers before employing foreigners are also deterred by fear of ignorance of the law and possible mistakes. Unfortunately, there are no studies showing exactly what the attitude of employers to employment of refugees is. The results of research conducted in 2015 by Work Service contain a certain degree of optimism. They show that 67% of Polish employers eagerly employ people from other cultural backgrounds (the study did not take into account the division into economic refugees and migrants). In some sectors, such as construction, fruit growing, agriculture or home services, it is sometimes difficult to find Polish employees due to the inconvenience of this type of work and low wages. In this situation, employers are indeed more willing to employ foreigners.

Reality puts refugees in Poland in front of problems that many Poles have never had to deal with. Even those of Polish citizens who find it difficult to secure a flat, work or a good education for their children are better off than refugees who do not know the language or culture, face discrimination and often carry luggage of traumatic experiences. Theoretically equal access to various services, benefits and rights on the housing market, the labor market or in the education system, in their case it is not enough. The need for a more holistic idea for their integration with Polish society. So that Poland turned out to be a good place for them, and not an arena for subsequent tragedies.

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