

***The conclusions of the investigation carried out at the North Train Station
on 17 March 2022 on the situation of refugees from Ukraine***

On 17.03.2022, an investigation was carried out at the North Train Station (*Gara de Nord*), attended by representatives of the People's Advocate Institution, from the Department on **human rights, equal opportunities between men and women, religious cults and national minorities**, respectively from the Department on **defence, protection and the promotion of children's rights**.

The object of the investigation was the observance of the rights of Ukrainian refugees by the Romanian authorities.

During the investigation, we talked to the Chief of the North Train Station Infrastructure, who provided us with the first information about refugees.

Refugees from Ukraine arrive at the North Station by train from the northern part of Moldova region (Suceava), and in recent days there have been around 150-200 people, mostly women and children. At the beginning of the period, there were days when several hundred refugees arrived, which were guided with the help of translators, as appropriate, to specially arranged areas.

With the help of volunteers who know the mother tongue of the refugees, they are asked where they want to go and, depending on the answer, they are directed either to the areas where they receive information from representatives of State institutions or to one of the transit waiting rooms, if they are to continue their journey to other destinations or wait for people to pick them up from the station.

We noticed that orange tents equipped with beds, chairs and air heater were installed in the station, of which only one was occupied.

Most of the Ukrainian citizens who come to the North Station, transit Romania, on their way to Hungary and Poland or Germany.

Around 3 transports arrive daily, of 40/50 people each. They are provided with 4 waiting rooms, class II and class I, as well as the orange tents. Refugees receive free transport to final destinations.

At the *Springtime* restaurant on the premises of the North Station are served 2 hot meals a day. They also receive breakfast, cold food, sandwiches, water, sweets, fruit.

One of the problems identified concerns the food delivered by the City Hall, the packaging of which were not labelled with the date of manufacture and the expiration date of that food.

In one of the waiting rooms there were 3 doctors from France, the United States and one from Romania, volunteers, who offered medication to people in need.

Representatives from the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and Police did not want to talk to us, as they had no spokespersons.

No human trafficking problems were identified. At the scene we could see some crews of police, gendarmerie, firefighters, ambulance.

The representative of the Gendarmerie from North Station informed us that the Romanian State does not have the competence to issue identity documents to the citizens of another state, but if they lack an identity document or passport to identify the person's identity, the refugees are redirected at the headquarters of the Embassy of Ukraine, and there, through the Diplomatic Mission, these documents are issued to them.

They have the opportunity to travel to the Embassy headquarters, in a larger group, accompanied by volunteers, in an organized manner, avoiding any possible inconveniences (such as having to pay for transport, to be kidnapped, to be victims of crime, etc.) but if they want to travel alone, they are not restricted, by virtue of the right to free movement.

There are people who request accommodation, who want to stay in Romania, others who go to Hungary, Poland, Germany. Among those who arrived, there were also Indians, Pakistanis, etc.

There is both a nominal and a numerical record of the persons taken over by the authorities, which are handled by the law enforcement staff from the specially designated locations throughout the capital, some of them being set up in sports halls. One of them is in the sports hall located in Garofițelor street no. 9 from Otopeni, where, among the volunteers are also staff members of the central administration.

Every day efforts are being made to get accommodation for refugees. This number is changing depending on the influx of refugees, as many of them come and go.

As their exact number is not known, such data will be centralized in their respective locations. Refugees arriving in Romania also benefit from legal advice, on request, with the help of volunteers.

The waiting rooms and the "*Mother and baby*" room were visited. They were equipped with the necessary objects for the primary needs of the mother and child. Many items and food were received from volunteers and companies.

Mothers accompanied by minors, who need a waiting time in the North Station, are directed to one of the **two halls** set up for them, where they can rest (both on chairs and on a few makeshift beds and mattresses), receive food and hygiene products, as well as products for children (diapers, powdered milk, wet wipes, disinfectant, etc.), being arranged toilets for the exclusive use of these persons; also, on request, they can benefit from clothing or other necessary products, obtained from donations / sponsorships.

Mothers with babies are housed in a separate room with their own bathroom, where they have everything they need for proper hygiene and care of young children (baby baths, baby soap / shampoo, creams and powders, diapers), various types and sizes, wet and dry wipes, tampons, etc.). The room is equipped with 4 beds and baby cots, baby changing tables and the temperature is suitable for the care of young children, ensuring adequate comfort.

Preschoolers and small children can play in the two rooms, under the supervision of volunteers from NGOs / associations (e.g. *Save the Children, Terre des Hommes*), and adults can chat through voluntary translators and can receive advice from the representatives of the Capital City Hall, the General Directorate of Social Assistance Bucharest, the Police Inspectorate, the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, as the case may be.

According to the information received from the CFR representatives, **the refugees do not stay more than 12 hours in the transit areas arranged for this purpose**, depending on the case.

There have been **no cases of unaccompanied minors** from Ukraine transiting the North Railway Station and there is no evidence of the number of refugees currently transiting.

The People's Advocate Institution will continue its efforts regarding the identified issues, following the investigation.