

The conclusions of the investigation carried out at the Refugee Reception Centre in Otopeni

On 23.03.2022, an investigation was carried out at the ***Refugee Reception Centre in Otopeni***, Garofiței Street no. 9, in which participated representatives of the People's Advocate Institution, from the Department on human rights, equal opportunities between men and women, religious cults and national minorities.

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

During the investigation, we spoke with the Mayor of Otopeni, Mr. Silviu Constantin Gheorghe, who provided us with information on refugees.

The sports hall in Otopeni was fully available to refugees and the capacity of the centre was 270 beds. It was equipped with bathrooms, toilets and beds. The mayor's office provided pillows, sheets and blankets, which were washed after the departure of the groups of refugees in transit.

The food, consisting of 3 hot meals / day, was provided by a company that collaborated with the town hall.

There were many volunteers from Otopeni who donated personal care items, clothing and footwear to the refugees.

The money for refugees was allocated from the local budget.

When they arrive at the centre, the identity papers of the refugees are checked and copies of the official documents are taken, for keeping their record. Most are in transit to Germany.

Refugees from Ukraine arrive at the Refugee Reception Centre by car or coach from Isaccea Albita and the northern part of Moldova (Suceava), and in recent days there have been around 40-60 people, mostly women and children between 0-7 years. At the beginning of the period, on 29.03.2021, students from India and Azerbaijan arrived at the centre.

At the time of the visit, there were 10 people, women and children, in the sports hall.

The translation service is provided by 2 Ukrainian-speaking volunteers, husband and wife, the husband being a doctor at the sports centre in Otopeni, as 99.9% of the refugees do not speak English.

So far, only 5 people have applied for asylum. In order to facilitate the procedure of obtaining asylum, the mayor's office contacts the General Inspectorate for Immigration (IGI).

For those who leave, minibuses are provided, free of charge, to the North Railway Station, and at the train station they benefit from free tickets to the final destinations.

For those who get sick, medicines are provided, brought from a pharmacy in the city that collaborates with the City Hall.

During the investigation, we also interviewed 2 mothers who had 2 children each. One was from Kyiv and was going to stay in the centre and apply for asylum, while the other was from Odessa and was going to get a US visa since she had relatives in Sacramento-California.

Upon departure, the refugees show their gratitude, either by applause, hugs, or words of thanks.

We did not identify any negative aspects at the refugee reception centre in Otopeni, regarding the organization and equipment of the respective centre. Although only 20 lei/day per refugee were allocated from the budget, the mayor's office was making special efforts so that the refugees do not lack anything.