

## **The results of the investigation carried out at the Transit Centre from the premises of E-Gros Iasi shopping complex**

The People's Advocate continued its proceedings regarding the observance of the constitutional provisions concerning foreign citizens and stateless persons, provided by Art. 18 of the Constitution, respectively the observance and monitoring of the rights of immigrants from Ukraine who were in the Transit Centre located inside the E-Gros Iasi Shopping Complex.

On March 29, 2022, the representatives of the Iași Territorial Office had a meeting with the representatives of the Iași County Committee for Emergency Situations, the representatives of the Institution of the Prefect of Iași County and with the manager of the E-Gros shopping complex.

The discussions and the visit to the Transit Centre resulted in the following conclusions:

Most of the people who passed through the Transit Centre within the shopping complex were brought to the centre from "Socola" Railway Station in Iași or from Gara Mare Railway Station in Iași, the transport from the train station to the Transit Centre being endured by the City Hall of Iași with exclusive destination transportation means – "transport for refugees".

People arriving at the E-Gros Transit Centre **do not stay more than 72 hours**, during which time they either buy their plane tickets or are provided with free train tickets to Bucharest or the west of the country. Their transport from the Transit Centre to the airport and the train station is also done with the means of transport of the Iași City Hall, accompanied by the police or gendarmerie.

Also, from the discussions with the Ukrainians in the centre, it was confirmed to us that they were going to go either by plane or by train to different destinations in the country (Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca) or abroad (Poland, Germany, Bulgaria).

From the beginning of the conflict, all Ukrainian citizens who decided to stay in Romania were transported by the representatives of the County Committee for Emergency Situations to the Iasi Immigration Service, and after the asylum application they were transported to the Regional Centre for Procedures and Accommodation of Asylum seekers - Rădăuți, which belongs to the General Inspectorate for Immigration.

Regarding the **services** offered at the transit point of the E-Gros Iași Transit Centre, we noticed the following:

- the accommodation conditions, as can be seen from the attached photos, were very good and accommodation could be provided for a number of 322 people; at the time of the visit there were only 46 people;
- immigrants are constantly assisted by representatives of NGOs or students from the Republic of Moldova speaking Russian or translators from the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations Iasi;
- they are offered meals through catering services, both cold products within their shelf life (fruit, water, tea, juices, coffee, baby food, etc.) and hot meals;
- they are provided with personal hygiene products for adults and new-borns;
- there are posters in Ukrainian with all the information they need to know about the conditions of travel in Romania, emergency numbers for people from Ukraine, numbers that can also be accessed on Whatsapp or Telegram, the conditions under which they can stay on the territory of Romania, as well as the fact that they can apply for asylum in Romania;
- there are dining areas, a medical point where there is always a doctor and 2 nurses, a playground for children, as well as space for personal hygiene.

At the level of Iași County, the management of the situation of Ukrainian immigrants is the responsibility of the County Centre for Leading and Coordinating the Intervention, an inter-institutional structure, under the direct coordination of the Prefect of Iași County.

Also, there were no cases of unaccompanied minors from Ukraine transiting the E-Gros Centre, and at the time of the investigation we were informed that the number of immigrants

from Ukraine was visibly decreasing. For example, from the information transmitted in real time by the representative of the County Committee for Emergency Situations, only 38 people entered through the Sculeni customs in Iași, with their personal cars and without requesting the support of the customs authorities, which leads to the conclusion that they were transiting Romania, already having a precise destination to which they were heading.

In the context of the above, in order to have a complete overview of the observance of the rights of Ukrainian immigrants, the following steps will be taken:

- a visit will be carried out to the **Albița Customs in Vaslui County** after the prior notification of the Territorial Inspectorate of the Iași Border Police, under whose subordination the Territorial Service of the Vaslui Border Police operates;
- as we didn't receive any answers to the letters sent to the Institution of the Prefect of Iași County, the Institution of the Prefect of Vaslui County and the Immigration Service of Iași, a separate note will be formulated to assess the observance of the rights of Ukrainian immigrants in the counties of Iași and Vaslui.