



# CONVERSATION ABOUT REFUGEES IN POLAND

Two lesson set scenario

## SHORT DESCRIPTION OF CLASSES:

**This set includes two lessons:**

1. Lesson no 1 is supposed to enable students to acquire crucial information regarding civic attitudes crisis associated with the influx of refugees to Europe.
2. Lesson no 2 is dedicated to elaboration of rules/principles which will help students in leading discussion on difficult, controversial topics that arouse emotions. Principles that will support them in particular in having discussion on refugees in Poland.

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**Duration time:** 2 x 45 minuts

**Teacher's objectives – proposals:**

- ➔ Students will learn key information about the current refugee crisis.
- ➔ Students will work out rules to help them lead the conversation on a difficult, controversial topic in a way that allows mutual understanding of their views.
- ➔ Students will present values important for them and share concerns about the issue of refugees' presence in Poland. They will get to know values and concerns of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

**Pupil's objectives - proposals:**

- ➔ I'll get to know the most important information and opinions about the refugees in Poland.
- ➔ Together with my classmates I will elaborate the principles of safe talking on difficult subject, while respecting the views of others.
- ➔ I will take part in a conversation conducted in accordance with these principles by which we'll try to understand mutual points of view on the issue of refugees.



## Supplementary materials:

Download from : <http://www.migracje.ceo.org.pl/kategorie/scenariusz-bazowy>

nr	Supplementary material	Material for lesson number	Availability
1.	Information cards. Facts on refugee crisis	1	1 card out of 5 for every student
2.	Questions for discussion on refugees in Poland	2	for every student
3.	Uchodźcy w Polsce. Więcej wiedzy, mniej strachu Maciej Czarnecki, Mariusz Jałoszewski, Tomasz Kwaśniewski (available on <a href="http://udsc.gov.pl/wiecej-wiedzy-mniej-strachu-uchodzczy-w-polsce/">http://udsc.gov.pl/wiecej-wiedzy-mniej-strachu-uchodzczy-w-polsce/</a> )	1 and 2	For every student as a supplementary web material

### Methodical tip/Methodological notice

*After reading the script, think how you can adapt it to skills and needs of your class. Check whether the proposed goals are justified in the context of young people with whom you work, and possibly change them so that your pupils and students understand them. If the youth understands goals, they will become co-responsible for the course of the lesson and become more involved in classes. Depending on the needs of the class, you can also decide in which order you want to carry out the proposed classes - first referring to facts and knowledge, and then to the principles of good conversation, or vice versa.*



# - LESSON 1 -

# FACTS ON

# THE REFUGEE CRISIS

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## Teacher's objective:

- ➔ Pupils will get to know key information regarding civic attitudes crisis associated with the influx of refugees to Europe.

## Pupil's objective:

- ➔ I will get to know important information on the issue of refugees in Poland

## INTRODUCTION

3. Explain to students the mode of work for the next two lessons. Introduce them to a set of goals and activities foreseen for the first lesson. (2 min)

## Recognition of pupils' prior knowledge about the refugees in Poland and discussion on unjust generalizations

4. Explain your pupils that firstly you will try to find out what you already know about refugees, and then you will try to complete the knowledge with the facts from supplementary materials. (1 min)
5. Ask students to give information concerning refugees that are known to them. Write down briefly the opinions quoted on the board, omitting the repeated ones. Do not comment on the information provided by students and make sure that other students won't do this as well. Do not divide answers into "stupid" and "wise". If the information given by the students are contradictory, point it out, but don't omit them. Try to encourage the largest possible number of students to speak. (6 min)

If young people have a problem with giving information, or if the information is being repeated, use leading questions:

- ➔ From where do refugees come? From which countries?
- ➔ Why did they leave their homes?
- ➔ Why do they head for Europe?
- ➔ In what way do your authorities, people that you trust, talk about refugees?

### Methodological notice

*If the subject do raise a lot of emotions in the class so it will be difficult to continue classes, ask students to name their emotions. Write them on the board and talk to the class about them. This will help students to take the problem with a pinch of salt, find the reason for and the source of the emotions and consider what consequences they bring for the course of conversation and mutual understanding.*



6. Explain it to students that in case of refugees, as in case of any other complex, controversial subject, there are many statements, which are not always confirmed by the facts. Sometimes opinions are formulated on the basis of individual situations unconfirmed by reliable research (eg. The claim that most Muslims support terrorism, although studies deny it). (2 min)
7. Ask students to look at the information written on the board. Ask them which of them are generalizations (statements, that an opinion or a fact considering individual member of the group apply to entire community). If students themselves do not find generalizations, and you can see them among quotations on the board – point them out. Emphasize general terms like “everyone”, “every”. Ask students to highlight indicated generalizations with the question marks, and then to explain why the given opinion is a generalization (we can never judge all members of the group by the knowledge we have of individuals). (4 min)
8. At this point, tell the class that such generalizations, as these marked on the board, are stereotypes. Ask the class if they are now able to give examples of when/how stereotypes are created – basing on the earlier discussion and information about refugees written on the board. Ask if pupils and students are able to cite similar generalizations–stereotypes about Poles. If not, you can cite one or two (eg. Poles do not smile and walk sad). Explain this example, why it is inappropriate to describe the entire social group on the basis of individual cases. (2 min)

### Methodological notice

A more in-depth work on stereotypical views requires more time. During these classes we have to limit ourselves to signalize the problem. It would be a success if you encourage students to critical look at some repeated opinions and information. Nevertheless, it is worth coming back to the topic of stereotypes on the next lesson. We encourage you to reach for the following scenarios: „Kolorowe jarmarki”? Stereotypy, Romowie i poezja Papuszy, Jak mówić o Afryce? O wrażliwości kulturowej i językowej published in „W świat z klasą. Edukacja globalna na zajęciach języka polskiego w gimnazjum” (CCE, 2015) as well as the exercise titled Co o Afryce mówią nam maski i dzidy published in „W świat z klasą. Edukacja globalna na plastyce i zajęciach artystycznych w gimnazjum” (CCE, 2015).

## MAIN PART

### Presentations on the facts referring to refugees

9. Divide the class into five groups and give each of them information card with the supplementary material No. 1 (according to the group number). Each card contains brief information on the topic and the characteristics of the person that students will represent. Ask the teams to read the information given to them and to choose the facts that they will present to others. Inform them that their task is to provide the class with the information that in their opinion is the most substantial. (8 min)

### Supplementary material 1. Information Cards. Facts on refugees.

Group number	The scope of information
1	What is the contemporary migration crisis?
2	Organizing concepts. Who is a refugee?
3	What are the reasons for migration and asylum seeking?
4	What is the process for granting refugee status in Poland?
5	What are the challenges associated with migration and refugees?



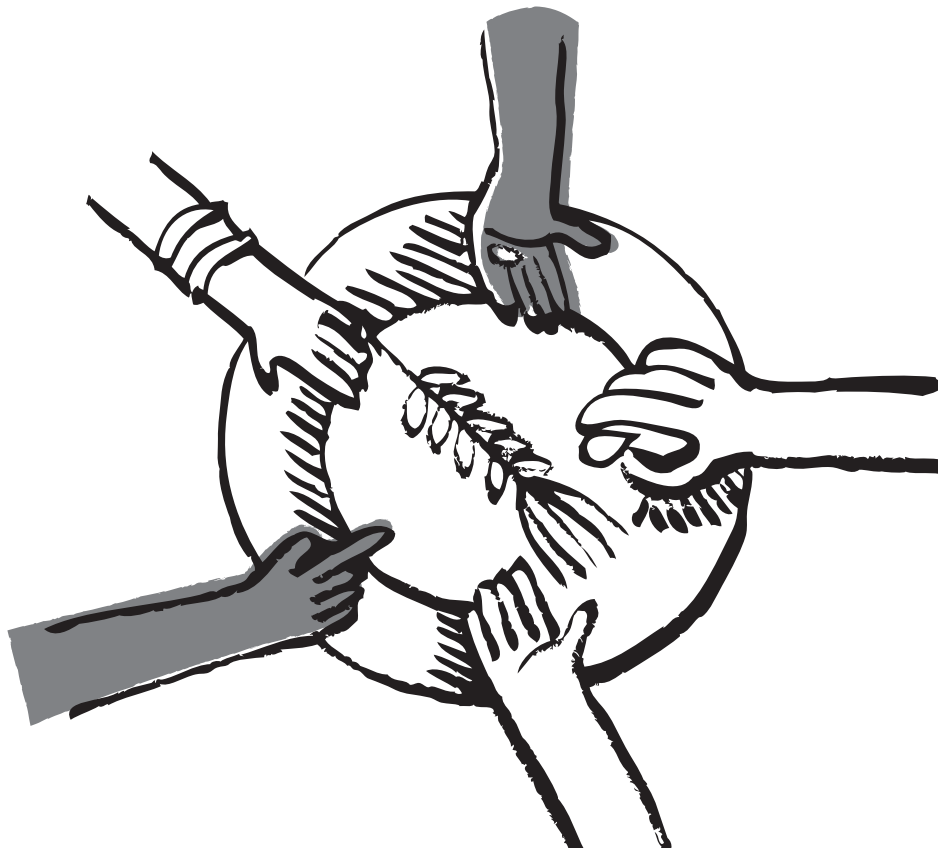
10. Ask each team to present a few chosen facts to the rest of the students (2 min per group). (14 min)
11. Thank students for all their statements. Appreciate the amount of information they managed to pass despite the short time for preparation and presentation. (1 min)

## CONCLUSION

12. Ask students to give one sentence in writing answering to the question: What interesting things did I learn about refugees during these classes? Collect cards with the answers. Remind students that their comments will be used during the next lesson. (5 min)

### Methodological notice

*After classes read students' responses. Summarize them so you could briefly present them on the next lesson. You can quote a few of them, while keeping the authors anonymous.*



## – LESSON 2 –

# GOOD CONVERSATION ON REFUGEES IN POLAND

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### Teacher's objectives:

- ➔ Pupils will work out rules allowing a conversation on a difficult and controversial subject, which will result in a mutual understanding of their views.
- ➔ Pupils will express values important for them and share concerns about the arrival of refugees to Poland and learn about values and concerns of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

### Pupil's objectives:

- ➔ Together with my classmates I will elaborate the principles of safe talking on difficult subject, respecting the views of others.
- ➔ I will take part in a conversation conducted in accordance with these principles by which we'll try to understand mutual points of view on the issue of immigrants.

## INTRODUCTION

**Pupils, working in groups, make a list of good conversation's principles, to help them during the second part of the lesson.**

13. Present the lesson objectives to your pupils (1 min)
14. Ask pupils to recall a successful conversation they once performed or witnessed (conducted with respect, when everyone could freely express their opinion). It can be a conversation with their peers or a family discussion. It can also be the good one seen or heard in the media. Ask them to consider in pairs, what factors allowed the interlocutors to communicate with each other. In case the class has difficulty in recalling these conversations, ask why. For what reason they are unable to remember them? It may be so that pupils had no chance to participate in such a conversation, and this is an important information for the course of the lesson. In such a case, later, in step 4, it's worth supporting the teams in developing the principles of good conversation. (3 min)
15. Let a few pupils talk, asking them not to cite the names of interlocutors, and to describe modes of action that enabled agreement. You can save the highlights summing up their statements on the board. (2 min)
16. Explain it to your pupils, that they will now work in 4-person groups to describe the good conversation principles. Devide your class into teams. (2 min)

### Methodological notice

*We recommend random division into teams, as conversation with people with whom we rarely interact on regular basis is valuable in itself – it lets people know themselves better, which results in a greater involvement of students and more accurate analysis of the topic.*



17. Ask groups to work out and note down rules that help to build a conversation and mutual understanding between interlocutors. You can suggest young people to first reflect on behavior that helps to talk, and then to move to principles. Recalling observations from the previous exercise may be helpful. Ask pupils working in a team to make sure that each person had an opportunity to speak. (5 min)
18. Ask all the teams to present subsequently the rules they formulated. Write them on the board. Every next team complements the list of those that have not been yet spoken. At the end complete the list of rules with these that have not been reported by students, and you consider important (you may find helpful the principles in the frame below). By submitting them to the end, you do not deprive students of their initiative, what's more, you show them that the topic is also important to you and that you care that the key principles are included in the list. (8 min)

### Good conversation and mutual listening principles

*The following rules will help to talk in an atmosphere of security and make it easier to get to know our points of view. This is particularly important when the topics discussed are personal, difficult or controversial. Adoption of these rules helps in sharing values that are important to us and in revealing our needs. It facilitates mutual understanding. If students have not mentioned them by themselves, you can propose adding them to the list. Encourage young people to formulate rules in a positive way, eg. instead of saying „Do not interrupt one another” say „Listen to each other.”*

- ➔ *We treat each other with respect - even if we have different views and disagree with each other.*
- ➔ *We look at the person who speaks.*
- ➔ *We listen to each other. We do not interrupt other speakers.*
- ➔ *We make sure that everyone has equal time to speak.*
- ➔ *We respect the views of others, even if they are in complete contradiction with ours.*
- ➔ *When we do not agree with the interlocutor we try to understand his / her point of view, but did not comment on it.*

## MAIN PART

### Talking about values in the context of refugees

#### Methodological notice

*The formula of conversation proposed here is not a debate, but rather a space for presenting students' views regarding values important to them and their concerns. It is crucial that each student had the space to speak. Within this formula of conversation pupils do not comment on their statements but prove their respect by listening to each other.*

19. Presentation of the summary regarding students' answers given during the previous classes to the following question: What did I find interesting in / what did I learn from the lesson about the refugees? (3 min)
20. Divide pupils in the 4-person groups. Apply division method that works best in your class. (2 min)
21. When students sit in groups, give each of them a card with leading questions to individual statements (supplementary material no. 2). Remind students that each of them can choose questions that she/he will be answering during the conversation (if he/she wants to, and fits in time - can answer more than one question). Recall the principles developed during the previous exercise and ways of action allowing mutual listening. (4 min)

## Supplementary material No. 2. Leading questions for conversation on refugees in Poland

- ➔ What values are important to you, when you think about receiving refugees in Poland? Give a few, even if you think they will be difficult to meet (eg. solidarity with people in need, security of Polish citizens, sympathy for war victims, national homogeneity of Polish citizens).
- ➔ What are your concerns and what are the chances for meeting values important to you in regard to the perspective of refugees coming to live in Poland?
- ➔ How do you want people to be treated when they leave with their families their homes and homeland trying to save their lives? In what way would you like to be treated if you were forced to flee from the areas affected by war?

22. Ask students in a 4-person groups to answer questions chosen from the list. Forewarn them that each member of the group will have two minutes to speak. Control the time. (10 min)

### Variation

Ask each member of the group to finish the sentence: „In what you said, I liked ...” after each of the classmates’ speech. Remind them that even if they do not agree with the statements expressed by their fellow speakers they are invited to treat all people with respect. The discussion should address the views, not the people. (3 min)

## SUMMARY

23. Ask students to signal by raising their hands, whether in their opinion they managed to comply with predetermined rules. (1 min)
24. Ask each student to select one of the principles of good conversation, which in their opinion, turned out to be the most important in course of the conversation. Select subsequent rules on the board, asking each time, who found them to be most important. Take part in the vote yourself. This part will let students learn their colleagues’ opinions. (3 min)
25. Thank students for the fruitful lesson and encourage them to thank each other for their cooperation. Appreciate their efforts and openness and compliance with the rules. Tell them what you liked most in their statements (without reference to specific individuals). (1 min)





## Methodological notice

After the lesson, consider the following questions:

- ➔ How did I feel conducting this type of classes?
- ➔ What could you improve in the way the lesson was led?
- ➔ Do you believe that the principles of good conversation were observed by pupils?
- ➔ What could you do better to ensure that these principles are respected?
- ➔ Was the class ready for such a form of conversation? Or would additional preparation be needed next time?
- ➔ What new things did you learned on the basis of this conversation about the pupils, about yourself, about the subject of conversation?

The two lesson set scenario titled “Conversation about refugees in Poland” was developed by: Jacek Strzemieczny (originator of the scenario), Malina Baranowska-Janusz, Dominika Cieślukowska, Julia Godorowska, Elżbieta Kie-lak, Elżbieta Krawczyk, Tomasz Kołodziejczyk, Danuta Sterna, Antoni Strzemieczny, Michał Szczepanik and Jędrzej Witkowski

CCE’s team of trainers and teachers, who prepared the above classes scenarios asks teachers who will use them in their work for feedback. We know that conducting classes on the proposed topic is not easy. We would like to take advantage of your experience in the improvement of our educational materials, including the above scenarios. Thank you in advance for your comments and opinions. We also encourage you to send a relation from your classes to the following email address: [migracje@ceo.org.pl](mailto:migracje@ceo.org.pl). We will post them on the CCE website. Please be assured it will be helpful and valuable inspiration for other teachers.



## Supplementary material No. 1

### GROUP 1: WHAT IS THE CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION CRISIS?

**Currently, 65.3 million people in the world were forced to leave their homes and became refugees or internally displaced persons. On the basis of the following information please explain what the contemporary migration crisis is and in what way the EU countries are trying to resolve it.**

Although the media and public discourse often arises the concept of “migration crisis” or “refugee crisis”, it is worth noting that it is imprecise. It is in fact more **a crisis of migration policies** – lack of comprehensive solutions, at both the international and national levels, which would give refugees and migrants appropriate protection and decent living conditions, while ensuring order and security in the countries hosting refugees and migrants. Using the term “crisis” in this context, you can also talk about the crisis of civic attitude in relation to refugees, as support for assisting them and willingness to give them shelter have been markedly reduced since 2015, which calls into question understanding of the concept of solidarity among European societies.

In 2015 and 2016 to the EU came the largest number of refugees since the Second World War (2015 was the record year of 1.2 million applications for asylum, mostly from Syria, Eritrea, Somalia and Afghanistan). EU countries are the most desired directions of migration – both because of their economic status, as well as the freedom of movement of persons. The EU countries are also signatories to the Geneva Convention, which imposes the obligation to provide shelter to persons applying for the refugee status. Thus, Europe has become the main direction of migration for citizens of North and East Africa, the Middle East (including Syria), as well as Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, fleeing war or persecution.

Years of negligence on the side of the EU countries concerning the preparation of the relevant procedures for the reception of refugees resulted in the situation when, starting from 2015, we could witness the chaos on the migration routes leading to Western Europe (including the Balkans) and in the countries on the border of the EU, which is among others in Greece or Italy. Both countries, as well as non-EU Turkey, are the most disadvantaged as they struggle with the highest number of refugees and in accordance with the Dublin Conventions they are obliged to accept applications for refugee status and grant the international protection. To relieve these countries and jointly share responsibility for the fate of refugees, the EU proposed **quota system** consisting of refugees’ distribution in different EU countries, not just in those on its borders. Under this system, Poland declared to accept approx. 7,000 refugees.

**Lack of comprehensive solutions** led to the fact that individual EU countries, rather than jointly engage in finding solutions, began to distance themselves from the policies of the EU, and Europe has become a “fortress”, closing borders to refugees.

In the face of these challenges, the EU decided to reduce the influx of refugees to Europe by increasing the financial support for Syria’s neighbors – Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (where most of the refugees stay) and the fight against smugglers organizing transports across the Mediterranean. In the first half of 2016 the **EU has negotiated an agreement with Turkey**: for every Syrian redirected from Greece to Turkey, EU resettle one of the Syrians currently staying in the Turkish camp to one of the EU member countries. In addition, Turkey will receive from the EU 6 billion euros in order to improve conditions in the camps situated in its territory. International non-governmental organizations have criticized the agreement, arguing that it is incompatible with international law prohibiting deportation of asylum seekers without an individual examination of their applications. The EU declares however, that the proposals will be considered individually, but, in connection with the recognition of Turkey as a safe country (this is currently particularly controversial), most migrants can find there shelter (uchodzczy.info).

#### Resources:

„Obecny kryzys migracyjny”: <http://uchodzczy.info/infos/obecny-kryzys-migracyjny/>.

„Współczesny kryzys uchodźczy w świetle badań Amnesty International”: [http://bit.ly/AI\\_Wspolczesny\\_kryzys\\_uchodzczy](http://bit.ly/AI_Wspolczesny_kryzys_uchodzczy).

## GROUP 2: ORGANIZING CONCEPTS. WHO IS A REFUGEE?

**Speaking on migration and asylum requires knowledge of the basic concepts. On the basis of the following information please explain who a refugee is and what is the difference between a refugee and a migrant.**

### Who is a refugee?

According to the Geneva Convention of 1951, the refugee is a person who “due to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is not able or unwilling, owing to such fear, to enjoy the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and found as a result of such events, being outside the country of his former habitual residence, can’t or do not want to return to it because of these fears.

“The aforementioned Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, signed in Geneva in 1951, is the most important international document guaranteeing refugees protection under the law. Poland has also signed the Convention, pledging thereby to assist refugees and to protect them, as well to provide them with shelter. The case of every person applying for a refugee status is dealt with individually. Dedicated offices check the refugees’ situation in the country of their origin and examine reasons why they are threatened with persecution or danger to life. Such a person can’t be denied assistance. It happens that people entitled to receive refugee status (because other reasons than war) come from the so-called “safe countries” that at the moment are not engaged in any armed conflict.

An agency of the United Nations dealing with refugees is called UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UNHCR coordinates activities on behalf of refugees, the protection of their rights and providing them with living conditions, representing in this respect the international community.

It is worth remembering that in different periods of the history Poles were also refugees – eg. during World War II (Poles have found shelter among many in Iran, India and Portugal). There were as well those who were forced to leave the country under martial law when they were threatened with imprisonment for oppositionist activities.

### Who is a migrant (economic)?

Migrant is a person who arrives to a country other than their country of origin, whose motivations may be different - for example, can look for a better job, access to education, health and social care. There is another term applied in this context, which is “economic migrant”, meaning a person who migrates to improve living conditions and economic status. Economic migrants are today, for example Poles in Great Britain or Ireland. This concept, unjustly, appears in opposition to the concept of “refugee” in order to emphasize the fact that refugees should be under international protection from certain conditions and economic migrants - if their lives are not threatened, should not be allowed to migrate and settle. Such a differentiation rises, however, a serious moral dilemma: who can / should decide who and where in the world can move? Do any of us has the right to judge decisions of these people and whether we would like someone else to judge whether we have the right to emigrate to another country? Therefore the term “economic migrant” is getting out of use and the tendency is not to put refugees and migrants in opposition. Each case is individual and based on individual situation, therefore should not be generalized.

### Resources:

UNHCR website : <http://www.unhcr.org>; [www.unhcr.pl](http://www.unhcr.pl).

Article explaining the genesis and importance of the Convention relating to the Refugee Status: <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/pl/materialy/konwencje/konwencja-dotyczaca-statusu-uchodzcow-z-1951-r.html>.

Selected acts and regulations in the field of refugee protection: <http://uchodzczy.info/infos/akty-i-regulacje-prawne/>.

Concepts and definitions related to the topic of migration and refugees: <http://uchodzczy.info/infos/pojecia-i-definicje/>.



### **GROUP 3: WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR MIGRATION AND ASYLUM SEEKING?**

**According to UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of people forcibly displaced reached in 2015 the level of 65.3 million, of which nearly 21.3 million are refugees. Many people applying for refugee status currently in Europe have been forced to leave their country of origin due to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion - reasons justifying granting them of refugee status. Some of these people come from Syria and Eritrea. On the basis of the following information please explain the reasons why they leave their homeland.**

#### **What are the reasons why people migrate from Syria?**

Winter 2010 and Spring 2011 passed in Syria under the sign of the mass protests of young people demanding decisive political change, democratization of the country and granting civil liberties. Protests against corruption and nepotism in public institutions, against police brutality in defense of dignity of the individual, equal opportunities and the rule of law. The inspiration for protests in Syria were revolutions in other Arab countries, including Tunisia and Egypt (the so-called Arab Spring), aimed at overthrowing dictators ruling the countries over the years.

The civil war that broke out in Syria in the aftermath of these protests, claimed hundreds of thousands of victims (according to the SOHR, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, data from September 2016 there may be approx. 422,000 of them) and led to the complete destruction of Syrian cities, many monuments and collapse of the country's economics. Syrian dictator, Bashar al-Assad, who is the president since 2000, suppresses the activity of the opposition.

The conflict in Syria remains the most serious humanitarian crisis since World War II. Since 2011, Syria fled over 4.8 million people (UNHCR data, August 2016), seeking safety in other countries. Most refugees from that country have sought refuge in neighboring countries: Turkey (2.7 million, till March 2016.), in Lebanon (a little over a million, till January 2016.) And Jordan (more than 600 thousand, till April 2016). Some of them decided to leave the overcrowded camps, where there are very difficult living conditions and to reach Europe by selecting a trail through the Mediterranean Sea. More than 7,6 million people are called "internally displaced persons", persons who have migrated within the country's borders.

#### **What are the reasons why people migrate from Eritrea?**

The state of Eritrea was founded as a result of the ongoing liberation war with Ethiopia, which ended in 1991 after 30 years of fighting. Since that time, the head of state is continuously President Isaias Afewerki. He created a one-party dictatorship that brutally eliminates the opposition, limits the freedom of citizens and supports regional terrorist groups. The United Nations (UN) committee dealing with human rights in Eritrea reports that the country is a totalitarian state based on the total control of citizens by the security apparatus at all levels of society. The country's mass human rights violations, use of torture, imprisonment without a warrant or court order. Government programs assume forced labor for an indefinite period of time and the duty of national military service for all citizens aged 18-40. According to UNHCR, every month about 5,000 people run from Eritrea, mainly to Ethiopia and Sudan.

#### **Resources:**

„Syria i Erytrea – wskaźniki migracyjne”, Office for Foreigners, July 2015: <http://udsc.gov.pl/syria-erytrea-wskazniki-migracyjne/>.

„Figures at a Glance”, UNHCR, 2015 : <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

„Główne kraje pochodzenia”: <http://uchodzczy.info/infos/glowne-kraje-pochodzenia/>.



## **GROUP 4: WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF GRANTING REFUGEE STATUS IN POLAND LIKE?**

**On the basis of the following information, prepare a statement on the procedure for granting refugee status in Poland and the support foreigners applying for the status receive.**

### **How is the refugee status granted?**

A person seeking international protection at the border of the safe country is lodging the application on the border during border control to the Border Guard authority responsible for granting the refugee status. Border guards carry a brief interview with the applicant in a language the foreigner can understand, among others, on the reasons for leaving the country of origin, checking their identity, take fingerprints. Further investigation is led by the Head of the Office For Foreigners who is in charge to issue a decision on granting a refugee status.

After lodging an application for international protection a foreigner is directed to a reception center falling directly to the Office for Foreigners. There the applicant is subjected to medical examination and may apply for social assistance for the duration of the procedure and wait for a referral to a foreigner facility. A person who has been granted a refugee status, should leave the center at the latest after 3 months; after which the applicant is granted the right to stay in Poland, the right to work and other benefits – the same as Polish citizens.

In 2015, 12 325 people applied for the refugee status in Poland, of whom 348 successfully. The largest group among applicants for the refugee status were citizens of the Russian Federation: 7 989 people. The second largest group of foreigners were citizens of Ukraine 2 305 people.

### **Stay at the center for foreigners**

After leaving the reception center a foreigner has a possibility to live in center for foreigners. In the center he/she receives accommodation, food, medical care, reimbursement of the public transport fares (in certain cases), 20 zł per month for the purchase of personal hygiene products, 50 zł pocket money and a one-time cash assistance of 140 zł for the purchase of clothing and footwear. The level and quality of service varies considerably between centers. According to the Act on the Education, children and adolescents from 7 up to 18 year old residing in the center for foreigners are subject to compulsory schooling. The waiting period for a decision issuing and the stay at the resort is difficult for refugees – even though they are in a safe country, they do not know whether they will be granted a residence permit.

### **Stay outside the center**

If the foreigner does not choose to live in the center for foreigners, he/she can apply to the Head of the Office for Foreigners on funds for self-maintenance outside the center. In this case, the amount of benefits to cover costs of their stay in Poland is 20 zł per day per person in a family of two, 12.5 zł per day per person in a family of four. For this amount rent an a foreigner must pay an apartment, pay the bills, buy food, tickets for communication and incur other costs of living.

### **Decision of granting a refugee status**

According to regulations, the procedure for international protection should last up to 6 months. According to a study of the Supreme Chamber of Control average waiting time for a decision is up to 14.5 months. A foreigner for the first 6 months of the procedure has no right to take up work. Only if the procedure is prolonged over six months and it is not due to the fault of the foreigner he/she obtains the right to work.

If the Head of the Office for Foreigners refuses to grant applicant with the international protection, within 14 days after receiving the decision, the foreigner may appeal to the Refugee Board. If the Board also denies him a refugee status and grant him subsidiary protection he/she should leave Poland within 30 days from the date of receipt of such a decision.

### **Resources:**

Office for Foreigners : [www.udsc.gov.pl](http://www.udsc.gov.pl).

Article on refugee procedure in Poland: <http://uchodzcy.info/infos/glowne-kraje-pochodzenia/>.



## GROUP 5: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH MIGRATION AND REFUGEES?

**On the basis of the following information please explain what the challenges faced by refugees after arriving in the host country are and how the state can facilitate their integration into society.**

Often when dealing with a meeting at the crossroads of cultures, there are concerns on both sides due to ignorance of the norms and values of the other part, stereotypes about the functioning of the group or myths spread by the media. Different strategies can be associated with the intake of refugees and migrants – you can pretend they do not exist or their presence requires no preparation (eg. in education system and on the labor market); You can try to assimilate them, by adapting them to the norms and values of the new culture while uprooting their own culture at the same time, or you can try to integrate with them by combining the two cultures in the process of adoption the new culture and maintaining the origin culture at the same time. From the psychological point of view, cross-cultural integration strategy brings many benefits to both parties, but it requires effort from both sides.

### **What helps and what hinders integration?**

The experience of countries with a longer history of immigration shows that learning the language, cultural preparation and adaptation to the labor market is crucial for successful integration in the case of adults and preparation to the education system in case of children. The current system of refugee and migrant integration in Poland is more than imperfect.

Polish language classes in the centers are not adapted to the individual needs of learners and they are too few to learn to communicate with it and start working after a one year time (and this is how long the ongoing integration program in Poland takes). Many refugees from Syria are educated. Their social integration and adaptation to the labor market would be much faster, if they had the opportunity to work in the profession. That would be possible if the procedure for the recognition of diplomas issued in countries of origin was a bit easier (now it takes several to several dozen months). Without diplomas they are often forced to seek work in the grey zone or significantly below their qualifications.

Children and young people, in turn, have difficulties in finding themselves in a new school reality and to keep up with the curriculum with their peers because of the language barriers and differences in the curricula. Schools increasingly employ Cultural Assistants who support students in learning, while helping teachers within the understanding of the children's needs by explaining language and cultural circumstances (explaining cultural differences – their origins and how to respond to them).

At the same time it is worth remembering that refugees are often people subjected to large stress and heavily experienced, eg. with the loss of their beloved ones, which results in the lack of security. This situation requires providing refugees with psychological support, as soon as possible, to make them able to recover and join in the social life. Integration of refugees and migrants in Poland is difficult not only because of the lack of comprehensive support in this regard, but also because of the frequent isolation, to which they are subjected. Many refugee centers in Poland are located on the city outskirts or in the woods – in remote places, where there are no opportunities to build relationships with neighbors, practice the language, learn a new culture, or take other activities. As a result, they often expect idly on the decision to grant refugee status, slipping into apathy. This makes the integration process difficult, reflecting both on refugees, condemned somehow on the inaction and learned helplessness, and on Poles, who do not have the ability to better get to know their new neighbors. That is how the stereotypical perceptions and fears that often arise from ignorance and lack of regular contact can intensify.

Integration requires both systemic solutions from the state, as well as the good will of each of us.

### **Resources:**

„Sytuacja uchodźców w Polsce”: <http://uchodzczy.info/infos/sytuacja-uchodzcow-w-polsce/>.

„Stosunek Polaków do uchodźców”: <http://uchodzczy.info/infos/stosunek-polakow-do-uchodzcow/>.

