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## **Polish Cities and Their Experience in Integration Activities – The Case of Warsaw**

### **Abstract**

In recent years, the issues of integration – related on the one hand to people referred to as foreigners, immigrants, newcomers, etc. – and on the other hand to host societies – have been gaining importance in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, including Poland. Before the political and socio-economic transformation at the turn of the 1980s and the 1990s, it was a country relatively closed to international migration. Only in the early 1990s did it open up to migration flows. That was also the time when the state's policy in this area had been gradually emerging. The preparations for EU membership enforced the process of developing a national migration policy. Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 and to the Schengen zone in 2007 saw its full involvement in EU migration governance in terms of internal and external policies, and thus the further Europeanisation of national law, public policy, and practices in the field of migration management. Recent years have seen a change in Poland's migration status, which has now become an emigration-immigration state, and the near future may bring about its transition into a new immigration state, especially in connection with the influx of large numbers of forced migrants from Ukraine since the end of February 2022. At the time of writing, that is mid-2022, Poland does not have a formalised integration policy at the central level. National law provides integration measures only for beneficiaries of international protection (persons with refugee status and subsidiary protection), which concerns a very small group of foreigners. However, the last two decades have seen increased involvement at the local government level (especially in cit-

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ies) in integration. This is a process taking place in local communities with the support of other actors such as NGOs, informal associations, or universities. One such example is Warsaw, the capital of Poland, where the largest number of migrants, both voluntary and forced, live. This paper aims to explore the selected practices undertaken by some of Warsaw's municipal institutions and offices, which can be treated as an important part of the local integration policy and which could be a role model for other cities less experienced in immigrant integration.

**Keywords:** Migration, Integration, Mainstreaming, Migration Policy, Integration Policy, Warsaw, Poland, Ukraine, Warsaw City Hall

## Introduction

Poland, until recently, had been a typical emigration country. This trend was even strengthened after it acceded to the European Union in 2004, when Poles were given unrestricted access to some of the Member States' labour markets. In the last decade, and from 2014 in particular, major changes in the migration character of the country can be observed. Thanks to the significant and steadily increasing immigration of foreigners mainly from Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries obtaining a job in Poland, the country's migration status changed to that of an emigration-immigration country. However, it will likely become a new immigration country in the near future due to changes taking place on the map of international migrations in Europe and its neighbourhood (Duszczek et al., 2018, p. 130; Okólski, Wach, 2020, p. 146). Additionally, since February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, the massive influx of Ukrainian citizens escaping war in their country has sped up this process. It is also important to mention that most immigrants – seeking work, education, or a safe place to reside because of the situation in their country – mostly choose large cities, among which Warsaw was and still is the leader. The capital of Poland not only attracts the biggest number of foreigners but is also home to the most diverse population, comprising Ukrainians, the Vietnamese, Chinese and citizens of EU countries (Górny et al., 2018, pp. 22–23). Moreover, it is often a new home for a relatively large number of forced migrants compared with other Polish cities.

Despite rapid changes in the migration character of the country, Poland has no general migration strategy. The most recent document on the subject from 2012, entitled *Migration Policy of Poland: Its Present State of Play and Proposed Activities*, was annulled in autumn 2016. Additionally, an official strategy of migrant integration was never implemented after 1989. This

situation is one of the reasons why Polish cities started to develop their own, local approaches in order to be up to the new task of accommodating and integrating their new members of society. It also fits in with the trend of the “local turn”, where the role of local actors is strengthened, and often local governments play a leading and most important role in shaping integration policy (Dekker et al., 2015, pp. 633–634; Scholten, Penninx, 2016, p. 91; Penninx, Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p. 156). The most visible, and often mentioned, examples of local integration policies can be found in Gdansk, Cracow, and Wrocław – cities that decided to implement their local strategic documents in multiculturalism and immigrant integration. Nonetheless, with its mainstreaming approach and intentional lack of a specific, separate policy toward foreigners living in the city, Warsaw is often treated as a municipality with the longest, in post-communist times, history of significant immigration to the city and various examples of good practices in the integration field. It is also a place where the biggest number of local institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operate to support multiculturalism and the integration of foreigners (Szostakowska, 2017, p. 140). However, many separate initiatives undertaken by various state and non-state actors make it challenging to track Warsaw’s scattered local integration policy of Warsaw and cause difficulties in assessing this policy.

This paper aims to explore the selected practices undertaken by some of Warsaw’s municipal institutions and offices, which can be treated as an important part of the local integration policy and could be a role model for other cities less experienced in the field of immigrant integration. Programs and actions undertaken by NGOs, but not in cooperation with the city (financially or organisationally), will not be treated as a part of the city’s initiatives and, for this reason, will not be described, even though the importance of this core component of the integration system is unquestionable. The paper is based on desk research including local, often unpublished documents and notes, individual in-depth interviews with representatives of local institutions and NGOs involved in supporting migrants residing in Warsaw, involvement in many local bodies dealing with the multiculturalism and integration and participant observation in the realisation of projects and programs aimed at foreigners and their integration.

## **Local Integration Policy or Mainstreaming Approach**

Examples from those EU countries with a long immigration history prove that the “local turn” in integration policy is fact. Recently, a similar situation can be observed in Poland, wherein cities more and more often adopt a proactive attitude and, in the light of the lack of a central

policy, decide to build their own integration solutions and activities. Some, like Gdansk, Cracow or Wroclaw, decided to implement policies aimed at multiculturalism and foreigners, others, like Warsaw decided to move towards more generic and broad-based policies concerning all city residents, which can be described as a mainstreaming approach. It is important to remember that mainstreaming does not mean abandoning and not recognising the diversity of groups and individuals making up the local community. This approach assumes considering their interests in various general policies such as social, labour market, education, health or housing policy. Another critical element of mainstreaming is effective coordination between individual sectors so as not to overlook these interests (Collett, Petrovic, 2014, p. 11; Benton et al., 2015, pp. 3–5; Scholten et al., 2016, pp. 284, 286–287, 299; Scholten, van Breugel, 2018, pp. 4, 6, 15). It is fair to say that the examples known from the Polish cities prove that, apart from a few exceptions, adequate preparation of the institutions and their staff is still lacking. Moreover, especially before the last massive influx of Ukrainians in early 2022, some of the local decision-makers did not take into account the issues related to the presence of the foreigners in the cities as being the most urgent and important, despite declaring that their cities are inclusive and open to everyone. That approach can be called “mainstreaming by accident” (Józwiak et al., 2018, pp. 47, 67).

In Warsaw’s case, the substantial manifestation of the mainstreaming approach is visible in local programs and strategies, and can be found in the opinion of representatives of municipal institutions. As early as 2005, Warsaw wanted to be perceived as an inclusive, open European metropolis, where all inhabitants, despite their background, education, faith or nationality could feel at home, which was reflected in the *Development Strategy of the Capital City of Warsaw until 2020* (Warsaw City Hall, 2005). Additionally, in *The Social Strategy of Warsaw. A Strategy for Solving Social Problems for 2009–2020*, implemented in 2008, an increasing number of diverse foreigners living in Warsaw was mentioned and shown as a potential threat to social cohesion if the insufficient mechanisms of social dialogue and integration activities, lack of synergy, and dispersion of individual activities undertaken by different local institutions were not addressed and fixed (Warsaw City Hall, 2008). *The Social Strategy of Warsaw* set a goal of strengthening the sense of community of the inhabitants of Warsaw and also promoting the idea of “the citizen of Warsaw”, understood as an inclusive term for all people living, working or studying in the metropolitan area (Warsaw City Hall, 2008, pp. 22, 24, 54, 64). That kind of approach can be understood as an attempt to face the reality of Poland’s largest city with the most significant number of diverse foreigners but also a hub for the largest number

of entities i.e., institutions, NGOs or informal associations, operating in the broadly understood field of multiculturalism and the integration of foreigners (Szostakowska, 2017, p. 140). Moreover, Warsaw can be also characterised as a home for the largest number of beneficiaries of international protection (forced migrants granted refugee status or subsidiary protection) in Poland. This group (although relatively small compared to all foreigners living in Warsaw), due to its status, particular needs, and potential exposure to social exclusion, requires a specific approach which is reflected in the activities undertaken by a number of local institutions.

The mainstreaming approach and lack of specific strategy toward foreigners who are treated as “the citizens of Warsaw” and not mentioned as a particular target group, can also be observed in subsequent local documents, including *#Warsaw2030. Strategy* (Warsaw City Hall, 2018a). Nonetheless, the extensive city administration and the multitude of entities whose competences may overlay one another can be factors hindering the coordination and yet ensuring the coherence of the tasks related to foreigners and their integration.

### **Local Integration Policy in Warsaw – Many Pieces Make a Whole**

Considering Polish reality, a relatively large diversity of foreigners living in Warsaw can be seen as one of the reasons why it is not easy to adopt uniform programs answering all the needs of these groups as is done in other cities in Poland. It can lead to independent actions undertaken by individual entities specialised in their field of activity (e.g., culture, education or social policy), including anti-discrimination training sessions, multicultural workshops or through the financing various projects related to the broadly-understood integration of foreigners and short initiatives implemented by NGOs, such as cultural events or festivals.

Despite some obstacles with the coordination of activities in the field of foreigner integration, Warsaw could become a role model for other municipalities where various initiatives are undertaken to build the local systems of the foreigner integration. An important example of efforts to prepare space for cross-sector partnership and cooperation and also to involve representatives of foreigners living in Warsaw and hear their voice (e.g., NGOs supporting foreigners or run by the foreigners themselves) is the Sectoral Social Dialogue Commission for Foreigners (Warsaw City Hall, 2022) established in 2012. As an initiative and advisory body, it can consult and co-create urban solutions in the fields related to foreigners and their integration. It aims to increase the effectiveness of initiatives

undertaken by local institutions, along with communication between them and NGOs or informal associations. However, despite the fact that its effectiveness is often questioned by some of its members, the idea of cross-sectoral cooperation and consultation is highly valuable and worth replicating in other cities (Winiarska, Wojno, 2018, p. 359; Gulińska, Małyugina, 2015, pp. 77–78).

Another important and interesting initiative realised in Warsaw is the Multicultural Center, established in 2014, when Warsaw City Hall made its premises available for the Center and co-financed the project of a partnership of NGOs which run it. The Multicultural Center's main goal is to support intercultural dialogue and integration of the local community (including foreigners, ethnic minorities etc.), as well as to strengthen the image of Warsaw as a multicultural city, open to all residents. Moreover, it is a place where different actors, formal and informal, can use the space for their projects related to multiculturalism and integration (Fundacja Stocznia, 2021, p. 5; Duszczyk et al., 2018, p. 137; Okólski, Wach, 2020, p. 164). Over the years, different NGOs have offered different activities and forms of help, including cultural events, info points for foreigners, access to legal and labour market advisors, anti-discrimination, psychological, and educational counselling/seminars, and Polish language courses (Winiarska, Wojno, 2018, p. 360).

The Multicultural Center is not the only place in Warsaw where foreigners can access free counselling; a steadily increasing number of foreigners residing in the city, along with an evermore obvious need of additional, sustainable actions, caused Warsaw City Hall – under one of the calls for offers – to finance a number of projects run by NGOs between 2018–2021. Four organisations selected in the competition were obliged to provide specialist counselling for foreigners in their field of expertise (e.g., legal counselling, health issues, labour market activation, social matters, and intercultural mentoring). Moreover, in order to increase the effectiveness of these actions and improve cooperation between institutions and NGOs, all partners were obliged to coordinate their actions during regularly scheduled meetings (Warsaw City Hall, 2018b).

It is important to highlight those selected initiatives described above are only an example, and play only a small part of the approach based on mainstreaming, which Warsaw City Hall has adopted. It can be seen as a will to build a relatively stable and sustainable structure of various actions, implemented by various actors – with the important role of NGOs – which all together constitute local integration policy. Despite some ups and downs and many shortcomings, especially in the field of communica-

tion and cooperation between the local institutions themselves, the institutions and NGOs, Warsaw as a city has at least some core elements of integration policy that could be developed relatively easily.

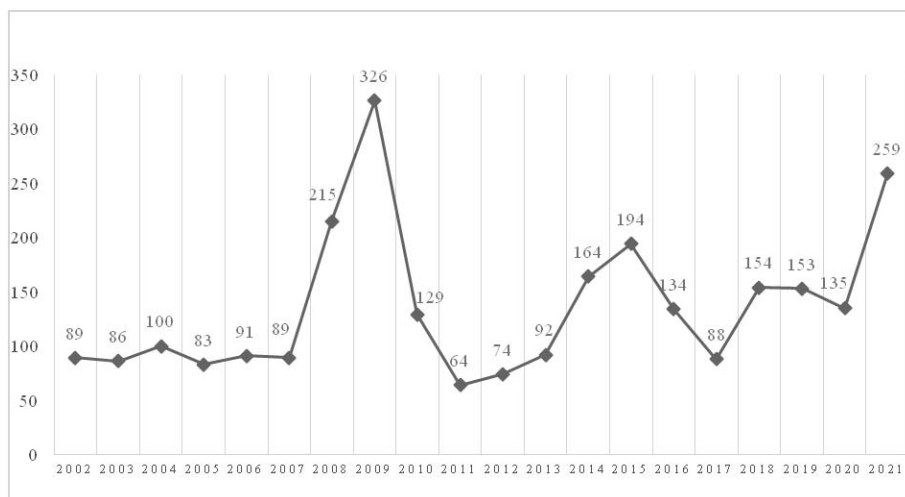
### **Experiences With the Integration of Refugees – The Case of the Warsaw Family Support Centre**

As previously mentioned, Warsaw is home to the largest number of beneficiaries of international protection (people with refugee status or subsidiary protection) living in Poland. Despite the fact that refugees are relatively a small group compared to the number of other foreigners living in Warsaw, their specific status and the fact that they are prone to social exclusion make the task of their integration an important one. Therefore, apart from the elements of the local integration policy mentioned above which are focused on a wide range of foreigners and not only to forced migrants, Warsaw has developed solutions and structures specialising in supporting the latter over the years.

The main actor in this field in Warsaw is the Warsaw Family Support Center, a municipal institution (at the ‘poviat’ level; the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier of local administration) responsible for integrating the beneficiaries of international protection (Wach, Pachocka, 2021). Since 2000, and after an amendment to the *Law on social assistance* (2003), Family Support Centers have been responsible for implementing individual integration programs (IIPs). The IIP, the only stable element of central integration policy, is a form of integration support provided to the narrow group of foreigners who have been granted refugee status and subsidiary protection and which is also provided to their family members who come to Poland on the basis of the family reunification and who have received temporary residency status. The program, lasting for a maximum of 12 months, includes a financial benefit for subsistence costs and to cover Polish-language-course costs, specialised social counselling and the covering of health insurance costs if needed (Wach, Pachocka, op.cit.; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 25–31, Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2021, pp. 280–282). Moreover, a social worker who works with refugees in the frame of IIP should provide any and all necessary information and support them in establishing and maintaining contact with other institutions and NGOs, as well as conduct other activities supporting the integration process (Duszczuk et al., 2018, p. 135; Okólski, Wach, 2020, p. 160). The standard of the support offered in the integration program should be the same in all municipalities in Poland. Nonetheless, Warsaw is the unquestionable leader in this field, consistently implementing the biggest



number of IIPs annually<sup>1</sup> (see Figure 1), and is the city which hosts the most diverse group of foreigners from over 40 countries and territories. Moreover, realising that the timeframe of the integration program is insufficient for most refugees and in order to expand the integration offer, the Warsaw Family Support Center decided, back in the early 2000s, to implement additional elements which, with some exceptions, cannot be obtained in other cities.



**Figure 1. Number of IIPs Implemented by the Warsaw Family Support Center Between 2002 and 2021**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the Warsaw Family Support Center's Annual Reports.

One of the additional forms of support for beneficiaries of international protection provided by the Warsaw Family Support Center is housing support. Besides the possibility of applying for a social or communal flat from the districts on a general basis, foreigners enrolled in integration programs and requiring special housing support may also apply for a right

<sup>1</sup> Annually, between 2002 and 2004 and also between 2014 and 2016, over 55% of all IIPs in Poland were implemented by the Warsaw Family Support Center. Since 2018, the data collected by the Voivodeship Offices and the Ministry of Family and Social Policy has made it impossible to compare the number of IIPs implemented, but the high number of IIPs implemented only in Warsaw compared to relatively low number of decisions granting international protection in Poland suggest that this percentage could be at a similar or even higher level.

to live in a “protected flat” run by the Centre since 2011.<sup>2</sup> The period of stay in that kind of flat should coincide with the period of implementing IIP and should not exceed 12 months. Nevertheless, in particular cases, this stay may be extended (e.g., in the case of serious illness or during a period of time when a foreigner is waiting for a flat from the city’s housing stock). The purpose of this kind of housing support is, in particular:

- to ensure appropriate living conditions, enabling one to run an independent household,
- to provide assistance in integration with the local community, especially in the case of potential cultural differences,
- to create opportunities for acquiring an independent apartment, increase competencies related to the knowledge of the Polish language and culture, acquire or increase professional qualifications, and to seek employment,
- to create the possibility of the independent solving of life-based, emotional, and family difficulties – with appropriate specialist support (e.g., social workers and psychologists),
- to enable the development and consolidation of a sense of responsibility for one’s own life.

Another form of housing support for beneficiaries of international protection, which is specific to Warsaw, is the so-called “housing contest” (Warszawskie Centrum Pomocy Rodzinie, 2022), also organised by the Warsaw Family Support Center in cooperation with Warsaw City Hall’s Housing Office and Assistance and Social Projects Office. Foreigners who complete an IIP and do not succeed in obtaining a social or communal flat in the general procedure can participate in a contest to receive a recommendation to obtain a communal flat (since 2021, the Center can issue up to 20 recommendations per year). Annually, a special qualification commission, which consists of five representatives (two from the Warsaw Family Support Center, one each from the Housing Office, Assistance and Social Projects Office, and one from NGOs operating in the capital) evaluates applications, taking into consideration criteria such as:

- one’s family situation,
- housing situation,
- health situation,
- financial situation,
- level of integration.

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<sup>2</sup> From 2011 to 2018, thirteen families and six independent people – a total of 51 people, including 29 children – took advantage of the “protected flat” housing support.

The procedure is not only to support foreigners who are in a unfavourable housing situation, but also to promote those who were distinguished by their involvement in the implementation of the integration programs. It is also important to mention that besides Warsaw, there are cities such as Gdansk and Lublin have some kind of special housing support programs or solutions dedicated to foreigners, but Warsaw's offer is definitely the most generous, despite still not meeting all inherent needs.

As was mentioned before, Warsaw City Hall is now recognising the need for additional support beside individual integration programs, especially for those who are particularly at risk of social exclusion. That is why, since 2008, the Warsaw Family Support Center, as a unit specialised in the integration of foreigners with international protection status, has been obtaining funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) to run additional projects in the field of refugee integration. The free offer available as part of projects including "Integration for Independence" (2008–2015), "Welcome to Warsaw" (2016–2017), "Support-Activation-Inclusion" (2017–2018) and "Support for Social and Employment Activation" (2020–2022) slightly differ from each other but the core elements, diagnosed as being the most important in the integration process, remain unchanged. It includes activities like:

- social work,
- consultations with family assistants,
- specialist counselling (e.g., with nurses, psychologists, and career counsellors),
- vocational training,
- Polish language courses (group or individual, and provided by professional teachers) etc.

All the abovementioned projects are not only a helpful tool for social workers implementing IIPs, but also provide necessary support to foreigners when their IIPs end. The projects run by the Warsaw Family Support Center, together with IIPs and housing support, have become a part of the systemic and holistic approach to the task of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in Warsaw. That makes the city the leader in this field, despite still-visible problems with the coordination and appropriate use of available resources.

## **Preparing for the (Un)expected – The Importance of Local Pilot Integration Programs**

An essential component of local integration activities are certain pilot programs that allow the city to test and check the effectiveness of the new potential institutional solutions that can be ultimately transformed into systemic and regular municipal activities. An example of this is a project entitled “Warsaw Test Project of the Integration of Foreigners with Regard to the Needs of the Labour Market” (WITEK) implemented between 2017–2019 (Gać, Pachocka, *op.cit.*; Wach, Pachocka, 2021; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 33–34). It was coordinated by Warsaw City Hall’s Assistance and Social Projects Office in close cooperation with the Warsaw Family Support Centre and other state and non-state actors. The abovementioned public administration institutions were supported by another local government body, namely the Labour Office of the Capital City of Warsaw. Other partners included NGOs and the private sector (the Human Capital Assessment Foundation, the Ocalenie Foundation, the Sustinae Foundation, and the Foreign Education Centre), along with higher education institution representatives as individual, expert researchers from the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. This was a truly multi-stakeholder and cross-sector project assuming the quick integration of selected foreigners – specifically the beneficiaries of international protection through their vocational activation on the local labour market. The project’s main objective was to test the local integration model focused on inclusion in Warsaw’s labour market targeted at foreigners with refugee status or subsidiary protection in Poland, all while considering their needs and socio-economics profiles. Ultimately, this pilot group included ten people living in Warsaw involved in IIPs. In addition, the city’s goal was to determine to what extent the proposed model could be used in practice on a larger scale in the future (Gać, Pachocka, *op.cit.*). Despite the main emphasis on ensuring the independent socio-economic functioning of the project participants after its completion, the project activities were highly comprehensive. They covered a diagnosis of language proficiency, socio-occupational diagnosis/professional (vocational) potential diagnosis, Polish language courses, social work and assistance, specialist support (e.g., that of the psychological, psychiatric, medical, etc.), housing support, support in the field of social functioning, and strengthening professional competences/vocational activation (Gać, Pachocka, *op.cit.*, Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 33–34). The entire project was monitored on a regular basis, both in terms of the participants’ progress and cooperation between the partners. An eventual assessment showed that a particularly important

component of the program was free housing support during the duration of the project, which gave foreigners a sense of stability and allowed them to focus on other aspects of integration, including education, Polish language courses, and the labour market (Gać, Pachocka, op.cit.). The good practices and the lessons learned from such programs may be helpful today, given that Poland is becoming a new immigration country.

### **Conclusions: When the (Un)expected Comes**

Late February 2022 and the subsequent weeks brought sudden changes in the forced migration flows in the CEE due to another, most-brutal-to-date aggression brought by Russia against Ukraine.

It does not and will not remain without impact on the system of forced migration management in the discussed region and its countries, such as Poland (Jaroszewicz et al., 2022). It also impacts the broadly understood system of humanitarian aid, as well as reception and integration support in Poland.

So far, as of late May 2022, over 6.7 million people have fled from Ukraine, making their way abroad (UNHCR). Four EU Member States along with Moldova were the primary recipients. Poland was the primary host country for forced migrants from Ukraine; the UNHCR reported an influx of 3.6 million people in late May into Poland. However, this number is mostly based on data from official border crossing points and does not reflect the number of people staying in the country. Even if there are no comprehensive estimates in this regard, attempts are being made to fill this gap in order to be able to plan and implement appropriate public actions for migrants. Duszczuk and Kaczmarczyk (2022) estimated in their analysis based on available statistics from late April that around 1.55 million Ukrainians who fled have stayed in Poland and discussed three possible scenarios of future developments. The influx of such a large number of forced migrants to Poland has led to a multi-actor and multilevel humanitarian and reception response from both state and non-state actors, national and international. A unique role was played by NGOs, along with ordinary residents, and local authorities in small and large towns, including Warsaw (Jaroszewicz et al., op.cit.; Łukasiewicz et al., 2022). Based on the *Law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of the country* (2022), many Ukrainians have decided to benefit from a special form of temporary protection status in Poland, which gives them wide access to public services in the country (legal stay for 1.5 years, access to the labour market, healthcare, education, etc.). Currently, Poland is moving

from the humanitarian aid phase to the reception phase and, ultimately, integration. Still, the future will bring numerous challenges regarding the needs of migrants, the scale of the needed support, the possibility and efficiency of the Polish public service system, and the state's long-term strategy, which is not yet available (Pachocka, 2022).

The role of cities is crucial in this situation, and this applies especially to the capital and its authorities. According to data obtained from Warsaw City Hall, on May 20, 2022, the estimated number of people who "passed through" Warsaw in connection with the influx of the forced migrants from Ukraine was 768,000 (which corresponds to 43% of Warsaw's population), the estimated number of people staying in Warsaw and the metropolitan area at the peak of the crisis was 290,000 (16% of Warsaw's population), and the estimated number of new permanent residents in Warsaw was 160,000 (9% of Warsaw's population). Another important statistic includes the number of Ukrainians that applied for the so-called "UKR status" which refers to those of them that had left Ukraine due to the Russian aggression and can receive a PESEL,<sup>3</sup> as stipulated by the 2022 law. So far, the total number of applications for Poland (since 15.03.2022) was 1.1 million, and for Warsaw – 106,594 (the percentage of applications registered in Warsaw made up 10% of Poland's total applications). Since the first weeks of the war in Ukraine, Warsaw City Hall has been providing multidimensional humanitarian support in terms of basic needs, accommodation, medical care, etc., and also in education, the labour market, and/or social assistance. The current situation poses numerous questions to the city's authorities regarding the number of new residents from Ukraine that will stay longer, their demographic and socio-economic profile, their needs and expectations, and the efficiency of the public service system (Pachocka, op.cit.).

In this paper, we have discussed the selected experiences of Warsaw to date in the field of migrant integration, mainly through the prism of the activities of local authorities. As one can see, the City already has a well-functioning framework for the local integration system, albeit focused on the beneficiaries of international protection under the state's social policy (which results from national law). The City has also implemented the WITEK integration test project, which showed how the crucial issue for successful socio-economic integration at the local level – for foreigners with legal residence status – is housing security. Thus, we can conclude that the key challenge in the coming months in connection with the large number of new residents of Warsaw from Ukraine will be to provide them

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<sup>3</sup> PESEL number – Universal Electronic System for Registration of the Population is an 11-digit number that allows for the identification of a specific person.

with adequate housing conditions in the medium term. Another strategic issue will be the more profound reflection of the state (government) on the implementation of a comprehensive integration policy in legal, institutional, infrastructural, human, and financial terms. The cities themselves, even Warsaw as the capital, will soon be, to use the idiom, “driving on fumes” at the expense of their current inhabitants.

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