

At the grass-roots: Refugee integration at the Romanian-Ukrainian border

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Abstract: This paper provides a critical overview of the actors involved in the Ukrainian refugee integration process in Romania between 2022-2023. In doing so, it discusses the uncertainty and unpredictability of the politico-administrative context in Central and Eastern Europe (Pollitt, 2013; Perry and Christiansen, 2015; Zielonka, 2015) and its impact on the successful integration of refugees. Building on arguments provided by, inter alia, Misztal (2000), Squire (2009), Giordano and Hayoz (2013), and Darling (2017), the paper analyses the intricacies of drafting individual action plans for refugees, focusing on the capacity of central administration to anticipate solutions and innovate, whilst balancing formality and informality. Data used in this paper was collected using semi-structured interviews with state employees of the General Inspectorate for Immigration, Regional centres for Asylum Seekers, local government representatives and NGOs directly involved in providing refugees with services for facilitating integration.

Keywords: integration of refugees, administrative capacity, innovative solutions

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