



Protection Working Group

Meeting Details	
Date	<i>26 April 2023 - Next meeting 24 May</i>
Time	<i>10.00 am – 12.00 am</i>
Chair	<i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator; Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugee Rights, Ombudsperson Office, Co-Chair</i>
Reporting	<i>Sean Sager, Protection Officer, UNHCR</i>
Email	painter@unhcr.org , carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md , sager@unhcr.org
Agenda	



Welcome & Review of Agenda (10:00-10:05)

- Situational update (10:05-10:20) (CDA and INTERSOS)

- Presentations and updates (10:20-11:00)
 - PWG Advocacy Strategy Concept Note (OHCHR)

 - PWG Training Calendar (HelpAge/UNHCR)

 - Mobile protection services (UNHCR)

- Temporary Protection (11:00-12:00) (CDA)

- Contingency Planning (11:20-12:00) (UNHCR)



Participants			
Andrew Painter, UNHCR	Constanta Cravet, Concordia Social	Merik Balkanli, PIN	Svetlana Jioara, CDA
Sean Sager, UNHCR	Project	Nataliya Yakubovska, NRC	Cristina Ceclu, PIN
Carolina Cazaciuc,	Alberto Tonon, UNHCR/OHCHR	Viorica Culeac, UN Women	Veronika Kovalchuk, IsraAID
Ombudsperson Office	Ersilia Apreda, IOM	Tatiana Zaloj, Tdh NL	Dmitri Surovtov, IsraAID
Dina Zamfirova,	Corina Bargan, Reach	Ina Rusu, ADRA	Oleg Palii, CDA
UNHCR	Cristina Baroni, INTERSOS	Natalia Sorbala, Dorcas	Cristina Triboi, Terre des hommes
Daniele Pedretti, HelpAge	Gianna Zoukidou, OHCHR	Moldova	Moldova
Sabina Sandu, UNHCR	Martina Bogdeva, UNHCR	Karima, DG ECHO	Andrea Ballan, DON BOSCO
Marina Bozkurt, UNHCR	Alison Bottomley, NRC	Diana Alexei	Eliana Irato, ECHO
Fatima Wahaidy, UNFPA	Bianca Miccione, ACTED	Samuel Fensterheim, ICRC	Yui Hirade, AAR Japan
Martina Gastaldello, OHCHR		Krasimir Yankov, OHCHR	



Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p>Agenda Point 1</p> <p>Welcome & Review of Agenda</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>The PWG co-chair welcomed participants, thanked them for their presence, and encouraged them to attend in person for future meetings, in order to have more engaging discussions. He presented the agenda, and no objections were raised.</p> <p>If any modifications are necessary to minutes of the PWG, please contact: sivkovas@unhcr.org</p>	<p>Agenda presented and agreed</p>



<p>Agenda Point 2</p> <p>Situational Updates</p> <p><i>Svetlana Jioara</i> CDA/LCA svetlana.jioara@cda.md</p> <p><i>Cristina Baroni</i> INTERSOS protection.moldova@intersos.org</p>	<p>CDA Provided Updates from the Border</p> <p>During the last four weeks at Palanca BCP, there were 28 asylum seekers, 15 of whom were men crossing the green line illegally (they were brought to Palanca BCP to be documented and claim asylum). The car flow was medium to high in both directions. Regular buses with Moldovan licenses were observed, and five (5) humanitarian buses were provided by Gloria. However, there was a remaining issue with a long waiting period for verification to grant access to Moldova, and in some cases, access was denied. Some unofficial sources noted a rumour that Ukrainian men with three or more children were denied leaving UA.</p> <p>There were 15 accompanied children with incomplete documentation; however, the guardian authority intervened and issued the necessary documentation for them to enter Moldova. Additionally, there were two cases of unaccompanied children who returned to Odesa to re-join their parents. Most people crossing to Moldova were Ukrainian refugees who were transiting Moldova to Romania and other EU countries. Refugees going to Ukraine were mostly from the Odesa region returning to check their belongings or visit relatives. Most of the refugees claimed to know about Temporary Protection in Moldova and said they would consider registering for it.</p> <p>As for the Otaci BCP, there was only one (1) asylum seeker. There was a small flow of cars entering MD and a medium flow to UA. There is a medium flow of pedestrians who were going for shipping to UA. There was one case of an unaccompanied girl traveling by train by herself, brought to Otaci (guardianship authorities contacted her parents and returned her to UA). Most refugees</p>	
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transit MD to RO, ISR, or DEU. The refugees returning to UA mostly intended to visit relatives.

INTERSOS Provided Additional Updates

Over the past month, arrivals to Palanca Bus Station were mostly low in number. In March, there were only 14 people (40-60 y.o.) who were transported by Gloria humanitarian buses. Most of the refugees were Ukrainians and a few country nationals from Azerbaijan, mostly women and children, a few persons with disabilities, and elderly persons. The majority of arriving people come from Odesa (now more stable), Mykolaiv, Kherson, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhian regions and use Moldova as a transit country to the EU. The refugees were aware of the Temporary Protection; however, their main concerns were the 45-day limit, access to cash assistance, and healthcare.

Comments & Discussions

The UNHCR co-chair informed participants that during the last month, there was an increased departure of refugees to Ukraine and decreased entrance to Moldova. Nonetheless, in the past two weeks, the trend reversed due to the holiday season. He encouraged participants to follow the UNHCR data website.

CDA informed about cases of Ukrainians (men of military conscription age and women 18-35 y.o) being denied entry to the Transnistria region from the Right Bank of the Dniestr. CDA staff learned that the Transnistrian authorities were not allowing Ukrainian men (between 18-60 y.o) and women of similar age to the Transnistria region if they cannot confirm having relatives residing there. PWG members noted that this situation could result in significant protection risks, including separation of families, as the free movement of persons was restricted.

NRC asked about the criminal record of people entering Moldova illegally, and whether they are being identified when leaving Moldova for the EU. CDA



	<p>replied that this occurrence is not rare even prior to the refugee crisis. Most of the illegally entering refugees enter through the Transnistrian region, and while these people are recorded, they are fully allowed to exit Moldova. Similarly, there are no penalties for individuals entering illegally to claim asylum.</p>	
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<p>Agenda Point 3</p> <p>Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- PWG Advocacy Strategy- PWG Training Calendar- Mobile Protection services <p><i>Martina Gastaldello, OHCHR</i> martina.gastaldello@un.org</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i> painter@unhcr.org</p> <p><i>Sean Sager, Protection Officer, UNHCR</i> sager@unhcr.org</p> <p><i>Daniele Pedretti, Humanitarian Programme Manager HelpAge International</i> daniele.pedretti@helpage.org</p>	<p>The OHCHR representative provided information on the PWG Advocacy Strategy Concept Note in Moldova. The concept note defines advocacy as a comprehensive term in communication to achieve change and persuade changes in behavior by all duty bearers, to ensure the protection of persons of concern. The advocacy should be based on existing data to identify all stakeholders and produce a strategy. For the advocacy in Moldova, key topics are Temporary Protection, data disaggregation, advocacy for persons with disabilities, and special needs. The PWG members are encouraged to propose other topics for advocacy. The priority is to engage more stakeholders, identify the objectives and produce a comprehensive strategy for advocacy.</p> <p>The UNHCR representative provided an update on the PWG Training development and informed about the first PWG training session with CDA on forms of protection in Moldova. The calendar is shared through other sectors; however, it is primarily for PWG members' training. The PWG Training Calendar informs about available training available in May. All PWG members are encouraged to engage in training, and if they are interested, they can provide training for other members of the group with assistance from UNHCR.</p> <p>UNHCR provided information about the mapping of the mobile protection services of all partners. A questionnaire will be used to map service providers, locations, and collaboration. The intent is to avoid duplicity and ensure smart allocation of resources.</p> <p>UNHCR shared an update on the referral pathways, which are currently under update. Other organizations are reminded to be included in the process and provide feedback. There is also an ongoing process of preparing local referral pathways in Cahul, followed by Balti and other regions, including Transnistria.</p>	<p>OHCHR will distribute the Concept Note after updating it.</p> <p>UNHCR will share link to PWG Training Calendar for all PWG members.</p> <p>UNHCR will share the notes from the PWG training on all Forms of protection in Moldova with PWG members.</p> <p>UNHCR will send questionnaire for partners to assess the Mobile Protection Services availability.</p>
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	<p>The main challenge is to keep the referral pathways up to date, and the final version will be shared with the entire PWG network.</p>	
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<p>Agenda Point 4 Temporary Protection <i>Oleg Palii, Executive Director, CDA</i> oleg.palii@cda.md</p>	<p>CDA provided an update on the low number of registered refugees and the measures taken by the General Inspectorate for Migration to implement TP. HelpAge clarified that proof of residence does not appear to be a problem in accredited RACs visited by HelpAge a couple of weeks ago. UNHCR shared important information about the extension of the emergency law and the new monitoring tool for TP based on the one created by the National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova. ADRA raised a query on the cash assistance being conditioned by TP and UNHCR clarified that it is not a requirement at this time. IOM asked about the mobile registration team for people with disability and CDA informed that the mobile teams will be launched soon. NRC asked about the possibility for people who enter illegally to MD to register for TP, and CDA confirmed that they should still be able to apply for TP.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 5 Contingency Planning <i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i> painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>The PWG co-chair delivered a presentation on Contingency Planning 2023 for the Protection Sector. The objective of the contingency planning is to revise the EPU Concept Note and Protection Sector Specific Contingency Plan. The Protection Sector Specific Contingency Plan includes an overview of the planning scenario, immediate activities, short-term activities, and gaps and preparedness. The sector leads were tasked with preparing responses for an influx of 500,000 refugees over a 10-day period, as well as activities during the first three months of such an event. The key steps to consider are to identify priority protection services and locations, assess the capacity of protection actors in each location, and establish a coordination structure. The potential capacity for immediate accommodation services in RACs, tent camps, and local communities includes around 65 existing RACs, 86 contingency RACs, and 10 tented areas (Palanca; Otaci 6). It is essential to assess the capacity of protection actors, both current and in the case of an influx, for each location and protection sector. The contingency planning also includes planning for the</p>	<p>UNHCR will distribute the updated version of the Contingency Planning for further discussion.</p>



	<p>Transnistria region to assess what services and actors can step in. The next steps are to draft the PWG Contingency Plan by April 30, continue planning (review of resources and details), have an ICSG meeting to ensure coordination among sectors and discuss with the government. During the discussion, the OHCHR representative, Martina Gastaldello, pointed out that the flow of refugees might increase in connection to the planned Ukrainian counter-offensive, emphasizing the importance of proceeding with contingency planning.</p>	
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Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Information collection and relevant links

Moldova operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe: The Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive - Six Months On (October 2022)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/unhcr-regional-bureau-europe-implementation-temporary-protection-directive-six-months-october-2022>

If necessary, feel free to add extra rows in the matrix above.