

<b>Date</b>	23 January 2023	<b>Location</b>	Hybrid - UNHCR office, online on MS TEAMS
<b>Chair</b>	UNHCR	<b>Note taking / minutes</b>	UNHCR
<b>Participants</b>	<p><b>Agency for Social Assistance</b> (Blago Dimitrov, Irina Ognyanova); <b>Bulgarian Council for Refugees and Migrants</b> (Vladimir Milev), <b>Bulgarian Helsinki Committee</b> (Iliana Savova), <b>Bulgarian Association of Social Workers</b> (Angela Antonova), <b>Foundation for Access to Rights</b> (Valeria Ilareva); <b>EU FRA</b> (Martina Huber); <b>Humans in the Loop</b> (Hester Gartrell); <b>IOM</b> (Annie Raykov); <b>NRG</b> ( Galya Georgieva, Nevyana Fileva, Ruzha Doncheva); <b>Pituitary Foundation</b> (Vania Dobрева); <b>Situation Centre Open Doors</b> (Ioana Bestiuc, Fanny Atanasova, Radina Dimitrova); <b>State Agency for Refugees</b> (Elena Zaharieva); <b>UNHCR</b> (Bulent Peker, Ekaterina Dimitrova, Hannah Waisman Motta Da Silva, Hayoung Kim, Nicolas Rodriguez Serna, Petya Karayaneva, Rukiya Abdul Aziz, Silvia Desheva), <b>UNICEF</b> (Lora Voynova); <b>WHO</b> (Nela Vamporova).</p>		
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms of Reference</li> <li>2. Work Plan</li> <li>3. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presentation on 'Fleeing Ukraine: Implementation Temporary Protection at local levels' <a href="#">report</a></li> <li>4. Integration Manifesto</li> <li>5. AOB</li> </ol>		
<b>Agenda Point</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Agreed Decisions / Follow-Up Actions</b>	
<b>Terms of Reference and Work Plan</b>	<p>The Terms of Reference draft was presented. It is to be distributed among the participants for feedback, as well as the draft Work Plan. The focus of the working group will be both protection and inclusion. Suggested to alternate the topics of the meetings between Protection and Inclusion. Within inclusion the topics are to entail different areas covering essential services for refugees and asylum seekers and their access to rights (e.g “protection”: GBV, access to territory; “inclusion” – social protection, disabilities, employment).</p> <p>Participants who do not wish to endorse the TORs will be welcomed to still participate in the meetings of the WG, but members (endorsed the TORs) will have decision-making rights. Government counterparts do not need to be members, but they can provide updates and answer questions. The State Agency for Refugees have agreed to regularly participate.</p> <p>The Working Group aims at providing a platform for the Government entities, international organisations and civil society, as partners in support of Bulgaria’s response to Ukraine refugee situation under the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) and its provision of protection and solutions to forcibly displaced populations, to</p>	<p>UNHCR to send the TORs and the Work plan for participants to provide feedback with a view of finalising them by the next session.</p> <p>The documents will also be included later in shared folder with access to the members.</p>	



	<p>exchange information and identify areas of collaboration. The Working Group may decide to develop positions, including findings and recommendations, in areas of common interest, such as child protection, accommodation, employment, and rights of displaced people with disabilities. The Working Group may invite EU institutions and representatives from other countries with similar experiences, including to present examples of promising practices regarding refugee protection and solutions.</p> <p>Next meeting (20 February) is to be on “inclusion” – labour inclusion, suggested that may have a presentation from the Council of Europe.</p>	
<b>EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presentation on ‘Fleeing Ukraine: Implementation Temporary Protection at local levels’</b>	<p>EU Agency of Fundamental Rights (FRA) presented their findings from a recent survey on <a href="#">local protection of refugees from Ukraine</a> under TP published in December 2023. It examines how authorities responded to the first-ever activation of the EU’s Temporary Protection Directive. It identifies good practices and suggests how authorities can tackle the many shared challenges they face.</p> <p>FRA emphasised that longer-term plans, better information and administrative flexibility would support local authorities providing people who fled the war in Ukraine improved access to housing, education, jobs and healthcare in the EU.</p> <p>Main challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TP nature of the protection status – issues in housing, employment, healthcare</li><li>• Lack of local level data</li></ul> <p>Moving on within the EU or between the EU countries and Ukraine – issues accessing rights due to movement.</p> <p>Education issues: online learning is not effective and does not replace schooling; teenagers started working and dropped out of school.</p>	<p>UNHCR to launch area-based assessment on refugee rights (TP, and IP) based on localities (to be launched in March). It will be a continuous survey of access to rights at national and local levels and socio-economic and social inclusion.</p> <p>FRA will be invited to present findings and good practices on protection of unaccompanied and separated children in the EU in the session child protection session once scheduled.</p>
<b>Integration Manifesto</b>	<p>Available <a href="#">here</a>. The document is focused on down-top approach, a.k.a localisation of the integration measures.</p> <p>Suggestions for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need of having coordination unit responsible for implementing the integration measures.</li><li>• Involving municipalities</li><li>• Short-term (SAR)/long-term integration (national integration programme)</li></ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• InfoPack for local authorities</li><li>• Focus on local authorities.</li><li>• Need to focus on funding for integration activities on local level. Currently, municipalities do not have access to funding.</li></ul> Reluctance of governmental bodies to take responsibility for integration.	
<b>Amendments to the Law on Asylum and Refugees</b>	There was a discussion on the public consultation process on the proposed amendments to the Law on Asylum and Refugees: <a href="https://www.strategy.bg/publicconsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&amp;Id=8070">https://www.strategy.bg/publicconsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&amp;Id=8070</a>  BHC has submitted comments on the law; UNHCR will submit its comments on various provisions by the 5 February deadline.	
<b>AOB</b>	The <a href="#">judgment</a> of the Court in Case C-621/21 Court of Justice of the European Union is an essential step for the protection of women against gender-based violence in the European Union. The case was represented by FAR. The CJEU found that women, as a whole, may be regarded as belonging to a particular social group under the refugee definition, within the meaning of <a href="#">Directive 2011/95</a> , and qualify for refugee status if the conditions laid down by that directive are satisfied.	
<b>Next Meetings</b>	<b>Protection and Inclusion Working Group – focus on Protection sector</b> <b>Date:</b> 20 February 2024 <b>Time:</b> 10.00-11.30am <b>Location:</b> Hybrid –UNHCR office (2 Pozitano Square, Sofia / fourth floor conference room) / Online on MS TEAMS (link here: <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a> )  <b>Protection and Inclusion Working Group – focus on Livelihoods and Socio-economic Inclusion</b> <b>Date:</b> 27 February 2024 <b>Time:</b> 10.00-11.30am <b>Location:</b> Hybrid –UNHCR office (2 Pozitano Square, Sofia / fourth floor conference room) / Online on MS TEAMS (link here: <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a> )	