

Child Protection Sub-Working Group
30.01.2024 Minutes of Meeting

Date:	Tuesday, 30 January 2024 at 10.00-12.00 a.m., via Webex	
Participants:	EC – DG Home, UNHCR CO, UNHCR FUA, UNHCR SOL, UNHCR FOT, UNICEF, IOM, EUAA, METAdrasi, IRC Hellas, Solidarity Now, GCR, TdH Hellas, ARSIS, NCR, ICRC Athens, Hellenic Red Cross, The Home Project, Faros, Zeuxis, ELIL, EPAPSY, DCI Greece, Prolepsis Institute	
Chair:	UNHCR: Theodora D. Tsovili (tsovili@unhcr.org)	
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the guardianship system (METAdrasi & PRAKSIS) • Situation in the safe areas for UAC on the islands (IOM) • Updates on the situation of refugees on the islands, the Evros region, the urban context of Athens, and mainland (UNHCR) 	
Implementation of the guardianship system (METAdrasi & PRAKSIS)	<p>METAdrasi provided a brief update on the ongoing implementation of the National Guardianship System, initiated on January 1st, 2024. The National Guardianship system was launched with the deployment of 60 Guardianship Mandated Persons (45 from METAdrasi and 15 from PRAKSIS) and 8 Coordinators (6 from METAdrasi and 2 from PRAKSIS). Currently, the Guardianship Mandated Persons are operational across various locations, including Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos, Leros, Orestiada, Alexandroupolis, Serres, Drama, Kavala, Thessaloniki, Polykastro, Alexandria, Veria, Ioannina, Attica, Oinofyta, Thiva, Ritsona.</p> <p>In December 2023, all newly recruited Guardianship Mandated Persons and Coordinators completed a comprehensive five-day training organized by METAdrasi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.</p> <p>Until the full recruitment is completed, priority has been given to unaccompanied children under 15, girls of all ages, and particularly vulnerable children. Aligned with the GSVP Institutional Protection Unit's instructions, the Guardianship Mandated Persons assigned in RICs and CCACs are present during the registration procedures for unaccompanied children under 15 years old, ensuring a safeguarded process.</p> <p>The second phase of staff expansion is set to start in the beginning of March, with the appointment of 60 more Guardianship Mandated Persons (35 from METAdrasi and 25 from PRAKSIS). This newly recruited staff will undergo the same trainings.</p> <p>The newly recruited staff will strengthen the existing teams and will be deployed in new locations such as Leros, Patras, Kalavrita, Kalamata, Kozani, Epirus, Makrinitza, Larissa, Halkidiki, Crete, Thebes, Oinofita, Ritsona.</p> <p>For more detailed information, please refer to the attached presentation provided by METAdrasi in English.</p>	Action Points: n/a

<p>Situation in the safe areas for UAC on the islands (IOM)</p>	<p>In 2024, IOM will continue with the Merimna III project, ensuring the management of the Safe Area on Lesbos with a continuous 24/7 operation throughout the year 2024. Additionally, IOM is extending the provision of CP services inside the RIC in Fylakio in collaboration with its implementing partner Arsis, for the initial three months of 2024 (January to March). The continuation of this service relies on the availability of funds. Services continued in the Safe Areas of the CCACs on Chios, Samos, Kos, and Leros until the end of January 2024. Starting from February 1st, Zeuxis will take over full responsibility for the Safe Areas for UAC in these locations.</p> <p>IOM reported an increase in the population of UAC on Leros and Kos, reflecting similar demographic trends observed on the other islands, particularly with Arabic and Somali-speaking children. A notable increase in UAC from Egypt has also been recorded. Concerns persist regarding the conditions for UAC in the Safe Areas in the CCACs, specifically in terms of the adequacy of food quality and portions. IOM continues to provide Non-Food Items (NFIs), clothing, and snacks to the UAC.</p> <p>Starting February 2024, the Zeuxis' teams will adopt a multifunctional approach with psychologists, social workers, and interpreters, ensuring a 24/7 presence. The project agreement is anticipated to be signed with the Ministry of Migration Asylum and the provision of services will remain consistent, including also the provision of legal aid and legal support to UAC.</p>	<p>Action Points: n/a</p>
<p>Updates on the situation of refugees on the islands, the Evros region, the urban context of Athens, and mainland (UNHCR)</p>	<p>➤ Updates on the situation of refugees on the islands</p> <p>In 2023, the Aegean islands experienced an increase in the sea arrivals compared to previous years. In total, 41.561 arrived in 2023 in comparison to the 12.758 recorded 2022. Out of the sea arrivals in 2023, 35% were children either with their families or unaccompanied.</p> <p>The challenges for children on the islands include concerns on the limited NFIs and the food distribution (quality of food and portions relatively small), the overcrowded conditions, shelter allocation, winterization efforts, and limited safe spaces in CCACs and urban areas. Additionally, challenges have been observed in the registration of refugee children for formal education, attributed to a high turnover of the population and limited places. For example, on Chios the available places for refugee children in schools cover only 50% of the total children population. Similarly, on Lesbos, out of over 1000 school-aged refugee children, registrations have been completed for just over 300.</p> <p>For detailed information, please refer to the attached presentation.</p>	

➤ **Updates on the situation of refugees on Evros (Fylakio RIC)**

In 2023, the RIC in Fylakio accommodated a total population of 170 UAC (156 boys and 14 girls). The nationality breakdown among the UAC included 100 from Syria, 21 from Afghanistan, 15 from Egypt, 14 from Iraq, and 5 from Eritrea, with smaller numbers from Pakistan, Morocco, Palestine, and the Dominican Republic.

As regards the figures for January 2024, in a specific breakdown for unaccompanied children and caregivers, there were 15 unaccompanied children (11 males and 4 females), including 11 from Syria, 2 from Eritrea, and smaller numbers from Turkey and Afghanistan. Among the caregivers, there were 7 individuals (5 males and 2 females) with 5 from Syria and 2 from Palestine.

For detailed information, kindly refer to the attached presentation.

➤ **Updates on the situation of refugees in the CFTAAs on the mainland**

As of 2023, 25 facilities are operational, with some experiencing temporary closures. Koutsochero, for instance, closed due to floods but reopened for the refugee population recently after the Christmas period.

During the second half of 2023, Thermopylae, Volos, Sindiki, and Oinofyta were operational to address increased arrivals. Additionally, a mobile registration unit was established by RIS in Sindiki site, extending coverage to the undocumented Yazidi population in Serres, in addition to Diavata and Malakasa.

Throughout 2023, continuous interruptions in the provision of transportation services by RIS affected medical and asylum procedures, as well as access to any other essential services not available within the sites.

On a positive note, an increase in personnel was noted through hirings by DYPA (formerly OAED), although certain specializations are still lacking.

By December 2023, the estimated refugee population in the CFTAAs on the mainland reached approximately 17,000, marking a significant increase from the July 2023 population of less than 8,500. This notable increase indicates a doubling of the population throughout the year 2023.

	<p>➤ Updates on the situation of refugees in the urban context of Athens</p> <p>Throughout January to December 2023, the UNHCR Protection Helpdesk in Attika has been a vital resource, handling a total of 2,835 communications with the refugee population. Among these, 512 communications have been received from families. Within the scope of its operations, the Helpdesk has engaged with 31 unaccompanied children, providing crucial assistance tailored to their unique circumstances.</p> <p>Based on the communications received from refugee and asylum-seeker households, the challenges reported to the UNHCR Protection Helpdesk include a lack of accommodation, especially for parents accompanying children to hospitals for medical services. Additionally, the lack of childcare services, increased need for financial support, increased demands for food provisions and Non-Food Items (NFIs), and the absence of transition classes for refugee children all contribute to the complex urban context in Athens.</p> <p>For more detailed information, please refer to the attached presentation.</p>	
<p>AOB</p>	<p>The next CPSWG will take place in March. The date and time will be confirmed.</p>	<p>Action Points: n/a</p>