

CWC NATIONAL WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Subject	Communication With Communities National Working Group Meeting
Date, Time & place of meeting	21/06/2017, 14.00, UNHCR Athens Office
Meeting Chair	Rachel Maher (UNHCR CWC Coordinator)
Minutes/notes prepared by	Alexandra Zavvos (Solidarity Now, CWC WG Co-chair)
Present organizations	IFRC, HRC, IRC, SRC, Save The Children, Advocates Abroad, UNHCR, Solidarity Now, MercyCorps, IOM

1. Review of previous meetings/matters arising

Point/details	Details/Going forward	Suggested Actions
	The Chair asked the attendees to provide their comments with respect to the minutes of the previous meeting. No comments were made. The minutes were approved.	

2. Transition from asylum seeker to recipient of international protection

	<p><u>Information on transition from asylum seekers to refugees</u></p> <p>Due to the interest shown by CwC actors regarding the transition from asylum seeker status to recipients of international protection / recognized refugees, the UNHCR focal point for integration and durable solutions presented background information and answered questions regarding their rights, entitlements and benefits in Greece.</p> <p><u>Legal Background</u></p> <p>After PoCs acquire refugee status they are no longer entitled to some benefits including accommodation and cash support. The main reasons for this relates to the legal basis for funding regulated by instruments linked to the asylum procedures that govern the humanitarian assistance asylum seekers receive. Recognised refugees on the other hand are subject to EU minimum standards for refugees, which are implemented differently in all EU member states.</p> <p><u>Access to Benefits in Practice</u></p> <p>Recognised refugees are eligible to enter the various available national schemes for social welfare, benefits, employment and unemployment such as the Social Solidarity Income (SSI) in the same way as other citizens. Although the 'safety net' exists, a weakness lies in how to effectively access support and entitlements; there is very little knowledge about the rights and entitlements of recognised refugees across Greece and 'affirmative action' strategies are still underdeveloped.</p> <p>Two key documents frame the national strategy and available funds. These are 'the national social integration strategy 2014' and the 'national strategy for (the integration of) third country nationals (2013)'.</p> <p><u>The transition in practice/as it stands now</u></p> <p>In view of the difficulties facing recognized refugees, there is an understanding that an abrupt termination of support such as</p>	<p><u>Action points</u></p> <p>Mentioned documents available upon request(in Greek)</p>
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accommodation and cash, is not fair; the donor (EU) and implementers (UNHCR and partners), have agreed to ensure a smoother transition period of up to 6 months incl provision of accommodation and cash installments - subject to an assessment of needs. The implementing partner in the UNHCR accommodation scheme, will ensure the PoC is prepared to access fiscal registration, application for SSI, be registered at OAED before access to accommodation is terminated. If all solutions are exhausted PoC can apply to the national scheme for the homeless, 'housing and reintegration', refugees out of accommodation meet criteria of homeless people.

Cash eligibility in relation to social solidarity income ("SSI") reciprocity is still being discussed, cash benefits stop 6 months after becoming recognized. Opening and running businesses include the same prerequisites that Greeks have to meet.

3. Cash update

Cash update

The Greece Cash Alliance coordinator presented brief update on cash situation

The total number of beneficiaries of cash cards is 34 000.

There are 2 current transitions :

- 1) partial to full MEB across sites in Greece (apart from islands, only NGO managed accommodations). This transition is to end by early July; there are still 3 or 4 transitioning sites. Some sites including Ktima Iraklis, Eleonas and Lavrio are not transitioning this month and transition will be postponed.
- 2) 7 cash agencies will be working together as one cash card provider this month. Physical presence of other cash agencies will continue in sites, but one common card will replace agency cards by July.

Update: Missed, delayed or wrong payments in sites and UNHCR accommodation have mostly been resolved. A large programme benefiting 34,000 PoC is not able to guarantee 100% accuracy, gaps and glitches are unfortunately unavoidable. A prevalent issue is that even when cards are updated, the information does not reach the beneficiary. Soon all partners will have real time access to the cash payment details of the financial providers, which will significantly minimize the gaps.

A feedback mechanism will be incorporated with a tracking capacity, to monitor performance in the cash programme, card or cash issues. A question was raised related to the treatment of broader protection issues questions related to cash; we need to provide another channel through referrals to the protection table or staff. It will take the shape of a platform/managed database directing questions and queries, from helpdesks or beneficiaries which will refer to specific focal points/services.

It was reinstated that PoC sensitive data, will not be widely available and only available to cash actors.

CwC Cash

Different ways of communicating cash installment delays or glitches were explored:

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	<p>-Greek Cash Alliance,(GCA) Q and A (on frequently asked questions) is being finalized</p> <p>-Another document explaining: context, situation and reason for delays and skipped payments and apologizing for any harm caused was suggested to address and mitigate the confusion and unrest in sites.</p> <p>- Chair suggested expanding existing Whatsapp group (used for registration/asylum questions) as a spontaneous and responsive way of answering questions about cash issues.</p> <p>- GbV issue raised by MC related to women expressing concern over a perception that men receive more cash than women. The registered 'head of household' receives the cash on behalf of the family and is usually the man; information should indicate and communicate with PoC that it is the head of household and not necessarily the man who receives the cash. MercyCorps suggests changing phrasing; instead of asking who is the head of household, asking 'who wants to be the card holder?'. </p> <p>-Spontaneous arrivals in camps(examples from Serbia): were are asked to prove they are processing their asylum application in order to be included in the cash programme.</p>	<p>Action point – MercyCorps to liaise with IRC to add gender balance segment to GCA Q and A</p>
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4. Other Updates

	<p>CwC Handbook to be finalized and shared on an agreed date in English.</p> <p>Rumours that allocating places in sites is no longer through KEPOM anymore but through site managers.</p>	<p>Action point – CwC handbook first draft to be shared asap</p> <p>Action point – Find out whether KEPOM is no longer accommodation authority</p>
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