REFUGEE EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR (RETS)
MEETING MINUTES

Ukraine Situation

RETS MOLDOVA

Coordination Call #4

31 Mar 2022

Agenda

1. UNHCR: Situation overview
2. RETS Update from Moldova
3. Field partner updates
4. Global RETS Update

Participants

Alexander Thomas, RETS Moldova Lead	Iulia Iordachi, FAO
Andrew Linehan, UNDOS/OICT	Jean Luc Abiyou, UNHCR
Anthony Kimani, World Vision International	Jeya Kumar, UNICEF
Antonios Martalis, UNHCR	Joe Simmons, Geeks without Frontiers
BP Panwar, UNICEF	John Warnes, UNHCR
Chloé MANDELBAUM, ACTED	Jose Toscano, Intelsat
Dagbjartur Brynjarsson, NetHope	Kevin Scwartz
Daniel Ciobotaru, UNICEF	Lars Ruediger, Ericsson
David Hartshorn, Geeks without Frontiers	Ludmila Nepotu, Moldtelecom
Dorian Gorea, UNICEF	Mara Deckard, USAID
Edisher Giorgadze, WFP	Mark Hawkins, Save the Children
Elie Ayoub, UNHCR	Meghann Rhynard-Geil, Internews
Erin Bown-Anderson	Nizar Zeidan, UNHCR
Ezzeddin Hassoumeh, Save the Children	Oisin Walton, Vodafone Foundation
Harry Papastavrou, World Vision International	
Hem Bohora, UNICEF	
Hung Tran, SES Networks	
Igor Condrat, UNFPA	
Isaac Kwamy, GSMA	

Situation Overview

Since the escalation of conflict in Ukraine on 24 February, over 3.5 million people have been forced to flee to neighbouring countries. As of 30 March, **388,837** people from Ukraine have been displaced to Moldova. The number is expected to increase over the incoming weeks. The total displacement across Europe surpassed 4 million on 29 March 2022.

As the situation evolves, more humanitarians are reaching Moldova and consequently, the needs of both people forced to flee and humanitarians delivering critical protection and programme activities in the country is increasing.

Rami Shakra, Global RETS Coordinator is supporting the RETS response in the neighbouring countries, working closely with the partners. He is currently on mission in Slovakia and Hungary assessing the needs for connectivity in partner sites, including the Blue Dots and Help Points.

Global RETS Update

- UNHCR is working with UNICEF to establish Children and Family Protection Support Hubs (Blue Dot Hubs) across the region. Whilst the exact locations and numbers of the Blue Dots are still being discussed, an estimated 25 locations will be established across the region, providing protection services to children and families.
- UNICEF are still planning the locations of the Blue Dots in Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary. In Romani 8 locations have been identified. UNHCR is working with UNICEF to establish a sustainable connectivity solution in these 8 sites. 7 emergency kits from Cisco have been deployed to Romania in support of this endeavour.
- For Hungary and Slovakia, Rami Shakra is still undertaking his assessment for the Blue Dots.
- UNHCR acknowledges the support of its partners in its past and future actions. Donations from Ericsson Response to equipment to Cisco's Crisis Kits and the Vodafone Foundations' charging stations are proving invaluable support in connecting humanitarians for coordination purposes and enabling refugees in accessing reliable, secure and fast internet connection across the country.

RETS Update from Moldova

Alexander Thomas is leading coordination in Moldova. RETS continues to coordinate all IT assessments and service delivery for the humanitarian response community in Moldova. In this regard, partners are encouraged to support the 5W data collection activities in Moldova to capture the

services provided by different actors (link). Partners who have problems accessing the 5W can reach out to mdachim@unhcr.org.

Coordination and Connectivity

- Akinalp Orhan has joined Alexander Thomas in Moldova, supporting the data collection and information sharing activities within Moldova and across the region. Yulia Federenko from UNHCR will also join the team to enhance communication about the RETS activities.
- Two volunteers from Ericsson Response have arrived in the country and supporting the assessment.
- The three active Blue Dots in the country namely,
  o Otaci Blue Dot in the north,
  o Palanca Blue Dot in the south and
  o MoldExpo Blue Dot in Chisinau

  Have been connected through the RETS services.
- The priorities of the Government of Moldova and UNHCR are
  o Enabling connectivity in the cash assistance centres,
  o Refugee accommodation centres
  o Protection on the move.
- Another key operational site is the train station in the city of Causeni, which serves as one of the main transits centres for refugees arriving from Ukraine and passing by train to Romania has been connected to the internet. This brings the total RETS connectivity sites in Moldova to 6 as of 29 March 2022.
- In collaboration with Moldtelecom, a point-to-point extension of the connectivity to cover the whole western part of Palanca, where the Blue Dot containers and other humanitarian service tents are located is established.
- Local partners are encouraged to share their connectivity needs with RETS Coordinator, Alexander Thomas thomas@unhcr.org and submit their assessments to the RETS Ukraine Situation team via this link or via email rets.europe@unhcr.org.

Security Communications

- A joint assessment of VHF network in Chisinau alongside with UNDSS, covering all UN agencies in the country.
- An extension and renewal of this network to the border areas is planned.

Field Partner Updates

GEEKS WITHOUT BORDERS

- Geeks without Borders are working on the delivery of the first batch of the 10 containers, which are equipped with all the needs for the personnel and can be modified based on the individual needs of the partners.
- Partners are encouraged to reach out to Joe Simmons (joe@geekswf.org) to get more information, modification and delivery of these containers.

Global Partner Updates

NETHOPE

- NetHope conducted assessment in Moldova, Hungary and Poland and shared the preliminary results with RETS. The preliminary results show that in many of the sites, connectivity is provided on an ad-hoc basis with temporary solutions and a greater coordination is needed.
- Especially in the bordering areas of Ukraine, secure connectivity is essential. NetHope will deploy equipment and personnel to remedy the cybersecurity needs in incoming days.

GEEKS WITHOUT FRONTIERS

- An initial assessment for the need and modification of the tin containers is still on-going. Currently, a number of containers are in Krakow. Geeks without Frontiers are willing to distribute the kitted containers to Romania, Moldova and Ukraine if needed.
- A number of government and international agencies have already requested the shipment of the containers.

VODAFONE FOUNDATION

- RETS is pleased to receive the 10 instant charging stations that the Vodafone Foundation has donated. The charging stations will be deployed to the key operational sites in the Blue Dots and enrolment centres, enabling refugees to keep their phones charged up. The first charging stations have been deployed to the MoldExpo Enrolment Centre and Palanca Blue Dot. The remaining stations will be deployed throughout the country in the incoming weeks.

Action Points	Responsible	Deadline
1. The next RETS Coordination Meeting for Moldova will take place on 07 April, meeting invitation will be sent to all	UNHCR	Immediate
2. Partners and colleagues are encouraged to upload their assessment reports, maps and other information and data	All partners present in Moldova	ASAP
3. Partners are encouraged to submit their activities to the 5W Moldova.	All partners delivering services in Moldova	ASAP