

Bulgaria Inter-Agency Meeting Minutes

Date	10 January 2022	Location	Hybrid – in person at UNHCR premises and online on Teams
Chair & Co chair	UNHCR	Note taking / minutes	Aleksandra -UNHCR
Participating organizations and members	UNHCR (Hayoung Kim, Mariya Shisheva, Petya Karayaneva, Shoira Ruzybaeva, Rukiya Abdel Aziz); UNICEF (Carole Vignaud, Elena Atanassova, Nina Sorokopud); WHO (Dr. Michail Okoliyski, Andrea Paiato); IOM (Maria Samuilova); BRC (Dr. Sofia Stoimenova, Nela Vamporova); Za dobroto (Nadejda Rangelova); FAR (Rositsa Atanasova), Caritas (Konstantin Ivanov); USRF (Natalia Ellis); Reachout Foundation (Kristina Gologanova); Pituary Foundation (Vania Dobрева); Situation Centre Open Doors (Joana Bestuic); AKNO (Johannes Muller); Aid for Ukraine (Julianna Kyulukina);		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Operational Updates 2. Key findings of the TPD implementation analysis (regional protection monitoring) 3. PSEA Network 4. AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi-Sector Needs Assessment update 		
Agenda Point	Description of Activities/Challenge	Agreed Decisions / Follow-Up Actions	
Introduction of new participants	The <u>Inter-Agency Coordination Officer</u> introduced a new participant of the IACWG, Ms. Rukiya Abdel Aziz, UNHCR Protection Officer covering communication with communities who has recently arrived to Bulgaria.		
Operational updates	<p>The <u>Refugee Coordinator and UNHCR Representative</u>, Ms. Seda Kuzucu opened the meeting, expressing her best wishes to the participants for the New 2023 Year. She stressed on the importance of the RRP 2023 Chapter for Bulgaria, to be launched together with the Bulgarian authorities with RRP partners <i>[update: the planned launch of the regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation on 20 January in Moldova, during the visit of the UNHCR High Commissioner has been postponed to early February 2023, to align with the launch of the Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan. Accordingly, in-country launch of the RRP in Bulgaria will be scheduled for 16 February 2023]</i>. Going forward, the participation and co-chair of the Government of the inter-agency coordination forum and its various working groups/task forces will be of vital importance. On contingency planning, UNHCR and partners will also have a joint meeting with the Government and work together on the contingency planning and preparedness. The coordination mechanisms that bring together each organisation’s expertise is very important and should be brought to the donors’ attention, not only in terms of refugees’ response but also for the host community and stateless people.</p> <p>2023 RRP updates: The Inter-Agency Coordination Officer explained that the Bulgarian chapter of RRP is being finalised as the final comments from the regional Refugee Coordination Forum and its various thematic working</p>		

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groups are being addressed, after which it will be sent for Bulgarian translation. The monitoring framework is being developed, incorporating all the feedback received from RRP partners – and the final proposed indicators will be shared back for the participants' final verification. The next step will be to create an Activity Info database and a training on the Activity Info database is planned within January.

- On 5W service mapping, follow up is ongoing with the seven remaining organisations who have not yet provided the information – after which the dashboard will be shared with all inter-agency participants.

UNICEF/Carole briefed that UNICEF has circulated **UNICEF's operational update for 2022 activities**. In 2023 the expansion of UNICEF partnerships will be to support systems strengthening particularly in child protection, education, early childhood development, and engagement with adolescents. UNICEF has signed a **five-year plan of action** with the Bulgarian Government, which describes the collaboration and cooperation framework. As regards the UKR situation, UNICEF's Level 2 emergency has been extended till March 2023 and UNICEF continues coordination with neighbouring countries and Ukraine and maintains preparedness. In this regard, UNICEF welcomes the coordination led by UNHCR on the contingency planning and stands ready to contribute.

- Pituary Foundation/Vanya inquired on UNICEF activities in the hotels (setting up childcare centres) versus supporting Ukrainians who are not in hotels. Za Dobroto/Nadya added that day care centres should be free of charge for use for a certain time, so that the mothers should be stimulated to find jobs in this time period. UNICEF/Carole will be in touch bilaterally to continue the discussion.

BRC/Dr. Sofia updated on recent BRC activities: **6,000 food parcels** were delivered through BRC branches in the regions with big concentration of UKR. Catering is also continuing in two places in Varna. At the Blue Dots, a number of activities for children have been organized. In relation to **cash assistance**, together with IFRC, 27,132 people and more than 14,000 households have been assisted to date. Cross-checking of duplication is ongoing including at regional level. Post distribution monitoring has been completed and information is currently being analysed. A second grant will be provided in January and February to all people that are not being removed from the list after the duplication cross check. For winter support, 3,000 vulnerable Bulgarians have also been assisted and some 1,500 people in government and detention centres will receive winter clothing and 3,000 blankets.

- On the provision of food in governmental facilities, raised by Pituary Foundation/Vanya, BRC/Dr. Sophia explained that BRC is relying on their own resources not support from the Government.

RRP partners who have not yet provided feedback to share inputs for the 5W service mapping.

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WHO/Dr. Michail updated that WHO will continue projects with BRC and Aid for Ukraine, and funding from the Government of Norway has been received. In 2023, WHO will continue to provide medicines and advocate for access to medical care.

- WHO also requested participants to nominate colleagues for the **upcoming MHPSS training** that is being planned by the National Centre of Public Health and Analyses for frontline staff. WHO will also contact the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) to participate in the MHPSS training.
 - Situation Center Open Doors/Joana and Pituary Foundation/Vanya asked for Ukrainian/Russian intpretation of the MHPSS training, so that their Ukrainian staff could also participate and benefit. UNHCR offered support for arranging interpretation.

USRF/Natalia updated on the start of their **project for training of teachers in schools attended by UKR children**, which will be organized with the participation of psychologists. Municipal psychologists will also work with UKR children in kindergartens. USRF also mentioned that they are planning to meet with the Ministry of Education to discuss integration of refugee university students.

FAR/Rositsa updated on the **2022 decision from the Administrative Court in Sofia - first instance**, according to which now Ukrainian refugees have access to international protection procedures at any time, regardless of whether the temporary protection is expired or not. FAR also mentioned the **Supreme Administrative Court decision** which overruled the decision of the Council of Ministers on the provision of food for Ukrainian refugees and said that the government's food provision in hotels should resume. As far as FAR is aware, the authorities have appealed; however, the appeal does not stop the implementation of the Court decision.

Za Dobroto/Nadya updated that in 2023 their organization will focus on the **integration of children**. They are currently refurbishing a space that has been provided by the Sofia municipality, to be used as children day care centre. There is a need for more day care centers, currently Za Dobroto is taking care of 70 kids and they cannot be accommodated in one centre. Za Dobroto is establishing an academy and learning hub (new initiative from November 2022) that supports the education of UKR children.

On **new arrival children in Ribaritzia**, BRC/Dr. Sofia commented that the children have been supported by BRC branches in Russe and Lovech. Based on the needs, BRC will provide psychosocial support. Za Dobroto/Nadya asked for cooperation and joint efforts on this issue. USRF/ Natalia commented that there are two groups of children – one in need for support and the other who came on vacation and are not in need of support. *Child Protection concerns/issues will also be discussed in more detail during the inter-agency sectoral discussion on Child Protection.*

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Key findings of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) implementation analysis (regional protection monitoring)	<p>The presentation was delivered by Shoira Ruzybaeva, UNHCR Protection Officer, summarizing UNHCR Regional overview on Intention surveys, protection profiling and monitoring, TPD implementation analysis.</p> <p><i>Presentation is attached to the email for dissemination of minutes.</i></p>	
PSEA Network	<p>UNHCR/Rukiya stated that UNICEF and UNHCR agreed that they will be co-leading the inter-agency PSEA network and will start with the development of a PSEA strategy for the network, look at complaint mechanisms, awareness and response mechanisms in relation to PSEA. <i>A meeting to discuss details further will be scheduled by the co-chairs.</i></p>	
AOB -Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSNA: The presentation was delivered by UNHCR Information Management/Anastasia, summarizing preliminary inter-agency MSNA findings. The MSNA is ongoing and once the data collection is complete, the key findings and analysis will be presented in more detail in the inter-agency meeting. - MHPSS technical WG will take place on Thursday, 12 January. WHO/Andrea will send the invitation. - Research: <u>Situation Center Open Doors/Joana</u> will share written invitation for a presentation of survey /research results on several topics including attitudes of Bulgarian host community towards refugees. - The IACWG will be held on a bi-weekly basis with sectoral discussions to be held every other week during 2023 Q1. 	<p>Inter-Agency team will create a shared folder for participants where materials can be saved and shared.</p>
Next Meeting	<p>Date: 17 January 2023 – sectoral discussion Location: UNHCR Office 1st floor conference room and online on teams – hybrid Time: 10.00-11.00 hrs.</p> <p>Date: 24 January 2023 – inter-agency meeting Location: UNHCR Office 1st floor conference room and online on teams – hybrid Time: 10.00-11.00 hrs.</p>	