

**Child Protection Sub-Working Group**  
**05.10.2023 Minutes of Meeting**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 05 October 2023 at 10.00-12.00 a.m., via Webex</b>	
<b>Participants:</b>	General Secretariat for the Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVP)/MoMA, RIS/MoMA, Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family (UAM Unit and GS for Equality and Human Rights), EC – DG Home, UNHCR CO, UNHCR FO Thessaloniki, UNHCR FU Athens, UNHCR FO Kos, SRSV Violence against Children office, IOM, EUAA, METAdrasi, IRC Hellas, Solidarity Now, GCR, ICSD (Ioannina, Igoumenitsa, SIL Athens), MdM Athens, TdH Hellas, CRS, A21, Iliachtida, ELIL, ARSIS, SAMS Hellas, HIAS Greece, MSF, NCR, DCI Greece, The Smile of the Child, ELIX, IFRC, KMOP, Hellenic Red Cross, INTERSOS Hellas, PRAKSIS, The Home Project, Diotima	
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>UNHCR: Theodora D. Tsovili (<a href="mailto:tsovili@unhcr.org">tsovili@unhcr.org</a>)</b>	
<b>Agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and institutional Protection - <b>Mr Heracles Moskoff, Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons (SGVP)</b>,</li> <li>• Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures for refugee and migrant children in Greece (<b>GSVP</b>)</li> <li>• Introducing <b>Francisco Quesney</b> from the Office Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children (<b>UNHCR</b>)</li> <li>• Update on the situation of children in the islands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>IOM for the Safe Areas</b></li> <li>- <b>UNHCR for children in families/ accompanied</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Update on the situation of children in the mainland (<b>UNHCR</b>)</li> </ul>	
<b>The new General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection – Mr. Heracles Moskoff, Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons (SGVP),</b>	<p>The General Secretary, Mr. Heracles Moskoff, was invited to CPsWG to present the extended mandate of the new General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVP) including children at risk and vulnerable persons.</p> <p>The organogram is pending, awaiting approval to reflect the structure of new departments and units. The draft has been submitted to the Minister and is undergoing consultation for a final conclusion.</p> <p><b>The GS Mr. Moskoff, announced that the new GSVP will support RIS in the design of referral pathways, procedures and provision of services for vulnerable persons; will design policies and interventions with a specific focus on survivors of THB, GBV and other forms of violence or exploitation; will develop specific projects for vulnerable persons with increased reception needs.</b></p>	<b>Action Points:</b> n/a

<p><b>Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures for refugee and migrant children in Greece (GSVP)</b></p>	<p>The General Secretariat of Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection presented the project "<b>Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures</b>" implemented by GSVP in collaboration with UNHCR and EUAA since November 2022.</p> <p>The project aims to achieve several key goals including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a new <b>Best Interests Procedures (BIP) Toolkit</b></li> <li>• Launch of the <b>pilot implementation</b> of the new BIP Toolkit</li> <li>• Delivery of <b>Trainings of Trainers (ToTs) on BIP</b></li> <li>• Delivery of secondary trainings to the professionals conducting best interests assessments in the field</li> <li>• Finalisation of the BIP Toolkit and harmonisation of the procedure throughout Greece</li> <li>• <b>Certification</b> of the trained Trainers and the professionals in the field trained by the trained Trainers.</li> </ul> <p>Since its implementation the project yields impactful results: firstly, the <b>development of the BIP Toolkit</b> designed to be used on a national level ensuring a harmonised approach for conducting the child’s best interests assessments. Secondly, <b>establishes the BIA as a standard process</b> in child protection case management. Finally, aims the BIAs to be ultimately conducted only by <b>certified</b> child protection professionals in BIP, thereby ensuring the highest standards in safeguarding children's welfare.</p> <p>As of August 2, 2023, the project has entered its Pilot Implementation Phase, marking a crucial milestone. Monthly progress reports are being generated to track progress, alongside the ongoing collection of sample Best Interest Assessment (BIA) data monthly. Regular focus group discussions involving focal points are taking place to gather insights and ensure continuous improvement. Additionally, an Online Feedback Form has been launched to gather valuable input on the effectiveness of the BIP Toolbox.</p> <p>A Train of Trainers (ToT) is scheduled by the end of 2023, lasting for 5 days, and targeting a maximum of 15 child protection professionals to be trained as trainers. Further details about the ToT’s content are available in the attached presentation. Following this initial phase, a second round of trainings are planned to take place, facilitated by the professionals who will have completed the ToT.</p> <p>For more comprehensive details on the project’s implementation, please refer to the attached presentation. For any additional inquiries, you may contact the Institutional Protection Unit at the following:</p> <p>Telephone: 213-212-8390  Email: <a href="mailto:sg.vp.guardianship@migration.gov.gr">sg.vp.guardianship@migration.gov.gr</a>, <a href="mailto:a.moustaka@migration.gov.gr">a.moustaka@migration.gov.gr</a>, <a href="mailto:o.ziori@migration.gov.gr">o.ziori@migration.gov.gr</a>.</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b> n/a</p>
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<p><b>Introducing Francisco Quesney from the Office Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children (UNHCR)</b></p>	<p>Introducing Francisco Quesney from the Office Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, who has been deployed on a short-term mission to Greece for the month of October. His role during this one-month mission to Greece is to support the work of UNHCR and the Greek Government concerning the protective measures for preventing violence against “children on the move”, including migrants and other children in vulnerable situations. The short-term mission will provide important input and valuable insights for the forthcoming Annual Report to the Human Rights Council in 2024 - its theme will focus on addressing violence against children on the move.</p> <p>Additionally, a meeting with civil society on child participation was introduced which will take place in the coming weeks. Stay tuned for further details to be shared soon.</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b> n/a</p>
<p><b>Update on the situation of children in the islands:</b> - <b>IOM for the Safe Areas</b>  - <b>UNHCR for children in families/ accompanied</b></p>	<p><b>IOM for the Safe Areas:</b> IOM observed an increase in the arrivals of UAC as a result of the increased arrivals of the general population since the previous months. For instance, at the start of September, Samos reported no Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UAC) in the Safe Area, whereas there are now approximately 130. Similarly, Chios has 130, Leros 100, Kos 65, and Lesvos 55 UAC – an escalation compared to the numbers from March 2023, when IOM assumed management of the Safe Areas within the CCACs. IOM also mentioned a shift in the UAC population's nationalities, with recent increases predominantly involving UAC from Somalia and Palestine.</p> <p>IOM's staff presence remains limited in the Safe Areas, collaborative efforts with partner organization Zeuxis across four islands are underway to increase the teams in response to the heightened current needs. The project MERIMNA II will be running until December 2023, and discussions are ongoing between IOM and Greek authorities regarding plans for 2025.</p> <p><b>UNHCR for children in families/ accompanied:</b> UNHCR estimates indicate a total of 417 unaccompanied and separated children residing in the CCACs and Fylakio RIC as of October 1<sup>st</sup> (388 on the islands and 29 in Fylakio RIC).</p> <p>Almost the 20% of the general population in the CCACs is children (UNHCR estimation – 1 October 2023). Among these children, the age breakdown is as follows: 32% are aged between 0 and 5, 38% fall within the 6 to 12 age range, and the remaining 30% are aged between 13 and 17. Furthermore, in terms of gender, the breakdown indicates 45% are girls and 55% are boys.</p> <p>Among the challenges observed for the children accompanied with their families accommodated in the CCAC according to UNHCR’s observations are: living conditions (inappropriate accommodation and insufficient lighting or in some occasions absence of necessary facilities (i.e. lack of A/Cs), inadequate quantity and food quality, lack of clothes and shoes for the newly arrived, limited availability of medical and mental health staffing (some occasions no presences of psychologist and social workers or doctors), lack of re-creational and educational activities narrowing down for children the sense of normality and their welfare.</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b> n/a</p>

<p><b>Update on the situation of children in the mainland (UNHCR)</b></p>	<p><b>CFTAASs South of Greece:</b> According to UNHCR, the CFTAASs have experienced a notable increase in both accompanied and separated children, particularly Yazidis. This increase is attributed to various factors: the mass referrals from CCACs on the islands to the mainland, the evacuation of Koutsochero CFTAAS, transferring residents—primarily to South Greece facilities, and ongoing transfers from Malakasa RIC after the completion of the reception and identification procedures.</p> <p>Field visits conducted by UNHCR have highlighted several challenges, including instances of child neglect, inadequate daycare facilities hindering parents' ability to work, limited availability of child-friendly spaces across CFTAASs, either non-existent or insufficient activities for children, heightened needs for non-food items (especially clothing, diapers, and hygiene products), and difficulties in motivating children to engage in formal education, often due to long hours waiting for transportation.</p> <p>However, there have been best practices observed: effective collaboration with NERM/GSVP in facilitating smooth transfers UAC to appropriate accommodations in a swift manner; UNICEF's ACE program offering non-formal education activities; recruitment of nursery and kindergarten teachers; active participation of RECs in monthly ACCMR Education Committee sessions; and expedited age assessment procedures for alleged UAC in PRDCs, ensuring their separate detention from adults.</p> <p><b>Urban Population Athens:</b> The UNHCR Protection Helpdesk has recorded 48 cases of refugee and asylum-seeking households facing homelessness or imminent risk of it in Athens. Among these cases, 6% represent are Single Headed Families, while 33% are families with children. Challenges identified include lack of social housing, increased needs for financial support, increased needs for food and essential non-food items, and a lack of childcare services for working parents or those seeking employment. Additionally, there's a noted absence of transition classes in schools for refugee children.</p> <p><b>North of Greece:</b> Challenges encountered in the North of Greece, both in sites and urban settings, echo those observed in the South of Greece as mentioned above. Notably, there is a lack in specialized child protection services for both CFTAASs and the urban population. Specifically, within urban areas, there is a notable lack of specialized case management services. The lack of essential items, particularly diapers, persists despite UNHCR donations to community centers, indicating ongoing increased needs. Finding affordable accommodation poses a challenge for refugee families and former UAC who have reached adulthood due to the insufficient availability of social housing or alternative accommodation options. Additionally, the lack of daycare facilities for very young children hinders parents from working especially for single-headed families.</p>	
<p><b>AOB</b></p>	<p>The next CPsWG will take place in December 2023. The date and time will be confirmed.</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b> n/a</p>