

Roma Task Force

Meeting Details			
<i>1st of November 2024 - Next meeting planned for December 12, 2024</i>			
<i>10.00 am</i>			
<i>“Roma Voice” Coalition</i> <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i>			
<i>allamarin7@yahoo.com</i> <i>liaison.moldova@intersos.org</i>			
Agenda			
<p>Agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report on T6 and other RACs consolidation 2. Report of 2024 roma related activities & Future of RTF, initial overview on activities for 2025 planned by RTF members 3. Plan for support of the Roma population <u>2022-2025</u> 4. AOB 			
Participants			
<i>INTERSOS Moldova</i> <i>Tarna Rom</i> <i>UNHCR</i> <i>OHCHR</i>	<i>Roma Voice Coalition</i> <i>PER ROMNI</i> <i>UNICEF Moldova</i> <i>Association “Porojan”</i>	<i>CWS</i> <i>ICRC</i> <i>IMPACT</i>	<i>NRC</i> <i>Ministry of Education and Research (MER)</i> <i>UN RCO</i>

Summary of discussions and agreements / action points

Agenda	Discussion
<p>1. Report on T6 and other RACs consolidation</p> <p>Cristina Sîrbu Co-Chair Roma Task Force, Head of Communication & Advocacy <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i></p> <p>Marin Alla Co-Chair Roma Task Force, General Director <i>Roma Voice Coalition</i></p> <p>Cristina Sîrbu Co-Chair Roma Task Force, Head of Communication & Advocacy <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i></p> <p>Marin Alla Co-Chair Roma Task Force, General Director</p>	<p>Cristina Sîrbu, co-chair of the Task Force on behalf of Intersos Moldova, welcomed everybody, presented the Agenda of the meeting and asked if anyone wanted to add another item to the agenda and did the Tour de Table of the participants.</p> <p>Marin Alla discussed the situation with Testimițanu 6, a center slated to close by the end of November. Currently, several families have been relocated or are awaiting transfer, with some facing challenges due to the center's restrictions, especially for men. Integration issues, schooling for children, and cultural misunderstandings have made the process complex. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is actively working with these families to accommodate them in new locations, balancing transparency with support. Some families, however, wish to return to Ukraine, complicating the situation further. Continuous communication and structured mediation efforts are ongoing to ensure a smoother transition.</p> <p>Ms. Cristina Sîrbu asked how many families are in the RACs centers, how many were there before the closure decision, how many will not be relocated, and if there are specific figures available.</p> <p>Mr. Alla mentioned that he knows the number of families but not the exact number of individuals to be relocated. However, certainly six people do not want relocation. Currently, seven families reside in RAC, while four have been relocated, with a larger number of individuals involved.</p>

Roma Voice Coalition

Natalia Stelea
Senior Field Associate
UNHCR Moldova

Ms. Natalia Stelea added that initially there were 130 people registered in the Ministry's database at the start of the closure process, however the verification from the Case Worker identified only 101 people. Some families left without providing notification, which created confusion. So far, 31 vulnerable individuals have been relocated to other centers, with support from Child Protection and a Roma mediator to facilitate communication and identify each family's needs. Ms. Stelea suggested organizing another meeting with the Ministry during the following week to discuss the situation before the closure deadline, ensuring open communication between managers and families to prevent issues and find alternative solutions.

Marin Alla
Co-Chair Roma
Task Force,
General Director
Roma Voice Coalition

Mr. Alla emphasized the importance of immediate action when informed of issues, expressing gratitude for the MLSP prompt communication. He noted that close coordination with the Roma Task Force improves outcomes for both managers and beneficiaries. He highlighted that relocation is based on regulations set by the Ministry, and different centers cater to specific groups (e.g., mothers with children or elderly people). Mr. Alla praised the collaboration efforts from the UNHCR and the Ministry, noting positive aspects in the Testimițianu 6 closure process. He emphasized preventing discrimination against the Roma community, particularly regarding access to housing and integration, and underscored the need for unity in managing these challenges.

Natalia Stelea
Senior Field Associate
UNHCR Moldova

Ms. Stelea emphasized the need for better communication and suggested organizing another visit with partners and the MLSP to address issues immediately. She noted that rent assistance projects are ending, with limited spaces left for the Testimițeanu center, and urged timely application for this support. Ms. Stelea also highlighted that the MLSP is actively working with regional managers to support new families, addressing needs like medical care and education. She encouraged sharing any issues with family registration in schools so that timely solutions can be found, reinforcing the importance of consistent communication to support all relocated refugees effectively.

Elena Sîrbu
General Director
“PER ROMNI”

Ms. Elena Sîrbu expressed gratitude for the meeting and shared concerns regarding the vaccination status of children among relocated refugees, noting that many lack necessary vaccinations. She proposed organizing a focused meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Education and Research and the Center for Preventive Medicine to address this issue, particularly for those living in private accommodations who may not have access to information. She also highlighted complaints from women relocated to a village, noting they struggled to access basic services for their children. Elena emphasized the need for equitable treatment of Roma women and children and suggested discussions about following internal regulations among relocated men to prevent issues seen in the past. She reaffirmed her commitment to collaboration.

Natalia Stelea
Senior Field Associate
UNHCR Moldova

Ms. Stelea addressed Ms. Sirbu’s comments regarding support for Roma women and children, emphasizing that managers have limited supplies available. She acknowledged that rapid relocations might have prevented managers from gathering necessary items for women and children. Natalia Stelea encouraged Elena Sirbu to report any specific cases where assistance is needed, particularly for children, assuring that their partners would address these needs. She requested that such information be sent to Cristina Sirbu, or directly to UNHCR, to ensure that necessary support is provided.

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication &
Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Cristina Sirbu asked Natalia Stelea for an update on the efforts to consolidate the RACs, specifically requesting more information about the latest activities and details regarding the upcoming RAC closures.

Natalia Stelea
Senior Field Associate
UNHCR Moldova

Natalia mentioned that there are currently 28 active centers, with two, Testimițeanu and Doina, undergoing closure. The Doina center will be closed soon, and most families have either been relocated or have applied for rent support. A total of 194 individuals are accommodated in these centers, with 99% being vulnerable, including 275 elderly individuals and 54 children. The consolidation strategy began in 2023, supported by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and other partners. So far, 311 families have been relocated,

<p>Cristina Sîrbu Co-Chair Roma Task Force, Head of Communication & Advocacy <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i></p>	<p>with 222 moving to other centers and 212 applying for rent assistance. Evaluations of the centers have been conducted, and the consolidation process will resume in the spring after winter.</p> <p>Cristina Sirbu inquired if there is any information available regarding which centers might be closed in the next phase of the consolidation process.</p>
<p>Natalia Stelea Senior Field Associate <i>UNHCR Moldova</i></p>	<p>Natalia Stelea mentioned that a decision on the next centers to be closed has not yet been made. However, discussions with the Ministry aim to ensure that the remaining centers provide good geographical coverage of the country. She also highlighted that many refugees are refusing relocation to centers outside of Chişinău, despite those centers offering necessary support and services.</p>
<p>Cristina Sîrbu Co-Chair Roma Task Force, Head of Communication & Advocacy <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i></p>	<p>Ms. Cristina Sirbu asked if there are data in which centers we have persons of Roma ethnicity.</p>
<p>Natalia Stelea Senior Field Associate <i>UNHCR Moldova</i></p>	<p>Natalia Stelea mentioned that they have information about the centers housing individuals of Roma ethnicity, which is shared by their partners from ACTED. These partners visit the centers at least twice a week to collect data disaggregated, including by ethnicity, and they will share this information with others as needed.</p> <p>She described the strategy and SOP developed with the Ministry, outlining partner responsibilities in the closure process. A multifunctional team (MFT) visits centers to discuss closures and assess beneficiaries'</p>

	<p>needs, helping to identify suitable accommodation and support for families. She offered to provide further details if needed.</p>
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2. Report of 2024 roma related activities & Future of RTF, initial overview on activities for 2025 planned by RTF members

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication &
Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Cristina Sirbu provided an overview of the Roma Task Force's activities for 2024 and plans for 2025. She announced that the inter-agency coordination mechanism would be streamlined next year, but the Roma Task Force would remain active as an inter-sectorial group addressing the needs of displaced Roma individuals. Cristina Sirbu proposed a short exercise for attendees to fill out a form regarding their 2024 activities and future intentions, explaining that it would be easier to complete it during the meeting rather than through email later. She provided a QR code for the form and allocated 15 minutes for participants to complete it.

Cristina Sirbu presented an overview of the activities implemented by various organizations in 2024, based on the completed forms. She noted that among the seven organizations that filled out the form, four focused on education, advocacy and MHPSS, three focused on health, child protection, prevention of GBV, women empowerment and cash or in-kind support, while five addressed information dissemination and data collection. Other activities included livelihoods, shelter, and legal documentation. Most organizations operated in formal refugee accommodation centers, with five also working in private accommodations. Cristina clarified the distinction between schools and public spaces, such as libraries, highlighting that access to schools requires specific coordination with the Ministry of Education and Research, like in the case of the Amare Amala: Roma Culture Week.

In regard to intentions for 2025, according to the data, most organizations planned to increase their intervention in the Roma community, and the majority has also either fully or partially secured funds for their intervention. In terms of sectors of intervention, most organizations planned on continuing with information dissemination and advocacy, and a few organizations will start with health-related activities.

3. Plan for support of the Roma population [2022-2025](#)

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication &
Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Mihail Platinda
Roma Inclusion in Education
Specialist
UNICEF

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication &
Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Cristina Sirbu provided an overview of the National plan for Support of the Roma Population, highlighting several key objectives. First, it aims to enhance policies and institutional frameworks. Second, she stressed the need for effective representation and participation, particularly for Roma women, through awareness campaigns and support for civil society organizations. Additionally, initiatives focus on combating discrimination by training public institutions and monitoring abuse cases. The plan also emphasizes guaranteeing social and cultural rights by raising awareness about educational access and promoting Roma culture in curricula. Moreover, the plan addresses health issues by informing Roma individuals of their rights and enhancing medical staff's cultural competence regarding Roma traditions, acknowledging progress while recognizing the ongoing challenges. In regard to health services access, Ms. Sirbu announced that INTERSOS Moldova is currently in the planning phase for sessions on roma history, culture and traditions for health providers within the national health system, and that four such sessions will be delivered by the end of the year.

Mihai Platinda inquired about the specific localities related to the capacity-strengthening efforts for medical institutions.

Cristina Sirbu responded that they plan to focus on four locations, which will be defined in collaboration with the Agency for Interethnic Relations. She noted that the aim is to target areas with high population density but does not yet have the specific locations.

Mihail Platinda
Roma Inclusion in Education
Specialist
UNICEF

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Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication &
Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Mihail Platinda suggested that these might include Sorooca and Otaci in the northern and central regions.

Cristina Sirbu confirmed they will wait for feedback from the Agency to finalize the locations.

Marin Alla emphasized the Roma Task Force's focus for 2025 on strengthening Roma organizations and enhancing their participation in decision-making processes. He outlined seven priority actions, starting with the need to involve key ministries in informing and guiding the Task Force's initiatives, particularly in relation to the EU's action plan for Roma. He advocated for modifying the statute of the inter-ethnic relations agency to ensure it can actively support minority policies. He proposed designating a liaison in each key ministry to enhance consultations on Roma-related issues, as well as fostering data exchange with Romania's agency experienced with Roma integration. Additionally, he called for capacity-building initiatives for existing Roma organizations and direct financial support mechanisms to strengthen their operations. By implementing these measures, he believes the coalition can effectively collaborate with the government and improve visibility and impact by 2026.

Ms. Sirbu emphasized the importance of enhancing collaboration with central authorities and improving the capacities of Roma organizations as key priorities for the year. She stressed the need for a coordinated approach in planning activities to avoid overlapping, ensuring that different organizations focus on various training areas based on their mandate. Ms. Sirbu mentioned that the capacity strengthening will be added in the form for 2025 intentions to be distributed to the RTF mailing list.

AoB

Cristina Sîrbu wrapped up the meeting, thanked everybody for their active participation and expressed hope to have all the decision makers present at this meeting - participating in all the further RTF meetings.