

CWC MEETING MINUTES

CwC Meeting	
Meeting Subject	National CwC Working Group Meeting
Date, Time & place of meeting	19/04/2017, UNHCR Athens Office
Meeting Chair	Rachel Maher (UNHCR)
Minutes/notes prepared by	Spyros-Vlant Oikonomou (UNHCR, Protection Unit Intern)
Present organizations	UNHCR, Solidarity Now, DRC, HELP Refugees, Refugee Info, MsF, Salvation Army, Advocates Aboard, Translators Without Borders, HLHR, IRC

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. Briefing on relocation and Dublin

	UNHCR's Assistant Protection Officer attended the meeting, during which she	
	provided a briefing on the Relocation Scheme and Dublin procedures. Some of	
	the issues discussed were:	
<u>Relocation</u>	• The 11 th E.C. progress report, as well as the renewed list of eligible	
<u>Scheme</u>	nationalities for relocation which were recently published (reviewed	
	quarterly).	
	The difference between the duration of the relocation procedure and	
	the time of transfer was explained. As mentioned, from the time of full	
	registration to that of acceptance of a relocation request, which is	
	made by the Asylum Service to the potential host country's authorities	
	(PoC only file one asylum application), there is an average waiting	
	period of 49 days. From full registration to the eventual transfer,	
	however, the interval may, on average, be that of 4 months. With	
	countries (e.g. Sweden) having started pledging more places for the	
	Scheme, this interval may decrease, as the aim is to have all	
	beneficiaries of relocation transferred by September 2017.	
	 Security checks, as a prerequisite for relocation differ between MS. On 	
	occasions, though a relocation may have been accepted, it may be	
	withdrawn following these checks. This is not able to be appealed, nor	
	is it accompanied by a relevant, issued decision, as the procedure is	
	conducted at the level of internal communications between relevant	
	Member State governmental services. As is the case when relocations	
	are not accepted, so too in this case PoC are informed that their	
	applications will be examined in Greece.	
	• PoC who did not make the 20 th of March threshold re the EU-Turkey	
	agreement, but were nonetheless referred for relocation are those	
	who landed during the gap between the EU decision, which did not	



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<u>Dublin Procedure</u>	 deny anyone the right to relocation as it was not amended and the binding internal political decision taken by the EU on July 16th. As of now, the total number of beneficiaries who may have been accepted for relocation after 20th of March 2016 is unknown. There are still cases whereby PoC reject their relocation to specific countries, although these have decreased; Romania and Bulgaria continue to be rejected more highly than other Member States. Rescheduling of day-time of relocation flights, due to last-minute issues arising (e.g. unfit to travel), is possible. With respect to relocation and secondary movements (from one MS to another), such movements have been observed. In such cases, if a PoC is apprehended, they are returned to the relocation country, and not the first country of asylum. Regarding a rejection of an offer by a candidate, if POCs have been notified with their relocation decision and they have accepted their decision by signing the proof notification and then they subsequently decide that they do not want to be relocated to that Member State, they will be referred to Skype to book a new appointment for a subsequent application. 	
<u>Asylum Cards</u>	 With respect to the Dublin procedure, it was mentioned that, subject to the fulfilment of the rules of transfer, the process is lengthier than that of relocation. From the time of full registration, to that of the request being filed, the timeframe is within the 2-3.5 months period. From then, and until a reply has been provided by the potential host state, a period of 2 months may be required after which, if the request is accepted, the transfer takes place within, approximately, 6 months from the time of acceptance. Overall, this means that transfers of PoC, as per the Dublin Regulation, may take an average of 9-11 months from the time of full registration. In what regards access to information, with respect to the status of the procedure, information on the evolution of reunification cases can be acquired solely through the GAS. 	
	 Lastly, a short update on the matter of PoC having their full registration in cases where they have lost their pre-registration asylum cards was provided. If a PoC who was pre-registered during the pre-registration exercise of June and July 2016, and presented him/herself to the Asylum Service at the date for the appointment for full registration without having in his/her possession the asylum seeker's card, then full registration would not be able to take place. The full registration appointment would be rescheduled, and s/he would be issued with a new card which would expire at the date of the appointment, upon which the appointment for his/her full registration would be indicated. 	

3. Transportation



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<u>Assistance for</u> <u>Transportation</u>	 UNHCR's Senior Protection Officer also attended the meeting, during which he provided an overview of UNHCR's progressive handover of assistance for transportation. Specifically: As mentioned, transportation assistance will be the responsibility of the SMS agencies, with the deadline for the full transition being the <u>10th of May</u>. As per its commitment, UNHCR will continue supporting transportation to full registration appointments, for PoC living under UNHCR's accommodation scheme, and those being accommodated in UNHCR-managed sites. The rest, however, and with few exceptions, will be handed over to SMS agencies. UNHCR's aim is to focus more on urban areas and retain its protection role via coordination and monitoring in sites. Action Plan: Ongoing discussions are carried out with SMS agencies for coordination purposes, and in order to ensure that transportation is available for all PoC. A list of sites and SMS agencies will be shared and the the number of sites managed by UNHCR will be clear on that list. 	Action points

4. Communication With Communities

With respect the issue of other CWC matters, the discussion concerned:
Some aspects of island communications and the need to streamline CWC coordination.
 Translators Without Borders provided an update on their platform. Their online program will revolve around connecting NGOs with interpreters, providing online trainings to interpreters, and ethical guidelines for NGOs. It is expected to be operational in the next, few, months.
 HELP Refugees, similarly provided an update on their field of operations. The overall aim, as mentioned, is that of opening channels of communication and cover potential gaps, thus complementing the work that is already being done. IRC presented an overview of the refugee.info blog and Facebook page. The issues covered regard aspects of protection and integration, with all content being available in English, Arabic and Farsi. Lastly, plans of expanding these platforms were also mentioned, including to a number of N. African countries, as well as Southeast European ones.