



Protection Working Group

Meeting Details	
Date	<i>15 February 2023 - Next meeting 15 March</i>
Time	<i>9.00 am – 11.00 am</i>
Chair	<i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator; Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugee Rights, Ombudsman Office, Co-Chair</i>
Reporting	<i>Sean Sager, Protection Officer, UNHCR, Maryna Bozkurt</i>
Email	painter@unhcr.org , carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md , sager@unhcr.org
Agenda	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome & Review of Agenda (9:00-9:05)• Situational update (9:05-9:27)• Presentation on PWG Work plan 2023 (9:27- 9:40)• Temporary Protection (TP) Presentation (9:40-10:05)• Comments, questions, and discussion (10:05-11:00)• AOB	



Participants			
<i>Andrew Painter, UNHCR</i>	<i>Constanta Cravet, Concordia Social Project</i>	<i>Cristina Baroni, INTERSOS</i>	<i>Sachiko Kumazawa, AAR Japan</i>
<i>Sean Sager, UNHCR</i>	<i>Fatima Wahaidy, UNFPA</i>	<i>Ludmila Malcoci, Keystone</i>	<i>Sachiko Kumazawa, AAR Japan</i>
<i>Carolina Cazaciuc, Ombudsperson Office</i>	<i>Ersilia Apreta, IOM</i>	<i>Alison Botlomley, NRC</i>	<i>Svetlana Jioara, CDA</i>
<i>Adrian Efros, JCMC</i>	<i>Ludmila Malcoci, Keystone</i>	<i>Cristina Ceclu, PIN</i>	<i>Daniele Pedretti, HelpAge</i>
<i>Daniele Pedretti, HelpAge</i>	<i>Catalina Birsanu, UNHCR</i>	<i>Kayla Pries, NRC</i>	<i>Aida Arakalyan, HI</i>
<i>Hanna Ursol, UNHCR</i>	<i>Dominique Louise Sbardella, Plan International</i>	<i>Lyydia Makinen, OXFAM</i>	<i>Sophie Dupont, Oxfam</i>
<i>Martina Bogdeva, UNHCR</i>	<i>Toporet Valentina, MOTIVATIE</i>	<i>Silvia Bicenco, HEKS Moldova</i>	<i>Simona Ruznic, TdH NL</i>
<i>Monica Vazquez, UNHCR</i>	<i>Petru Lupu, UNHCR</i>	<i>Mihaela Lavrov, PW</i>	<i>Liz Devine, MdM</i>
<i>Alberto Tonon, UNHCR-OHCHR</i>	<i>Vitalie Popov, UNHCR Call Center Team Leader</i>	<i>Alison Botomley, NRC</i>	<i>Natalia Postolachi, Hope4</i>
<i>Suenanica de Rozario, UNHCR</i>	<i>Vanessa Bordin, UNHCR</i>	<i>Peter Fenoy, HEKS Moldova</i>	<i>Andrei Hincu, CARE</i>
<i>Maryna Bozkurt, UNHCR</i>		<i>Nataliya Yakubovska, NRC</i>	
<i>Martina Gastaldello – UN Human Rights</i>		<i>Simona Ruznic, Tdh NL</i>	



Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p>Agenda Point 1</p> <p>Welcome & Review of Agenda</p> <p><i>Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugees Rights, Ombudsperson Office, Co-Chair.</i></p> <p>carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>The PWG co-chair welcomed participants, thanked them for their presence, and encouraged them to attend in person for future meetings, in order to have more engaging discussions. He presented the agenda, and no objections were raised.</p> <p>If any modifications are necessary to minutes of the PWG, please contact: mbozkurt@unhcr.org</p>	<p>Agenda presented and agreed</p>
<p>Agenda Point 2</p> <p>Situational Updates</p> <p><i>Cristina Baroni, Protection Officer, INTERSOS</i></p>	<p><i>CDA provided updates from the border</i></p> <p>During the last period, there were 30 asylum seekers, out of which 14 crossed the Green border and were documented at BCP Palanca, where they claimed asylum. Additionally, there were 23 improperly accompanied children, most of whom were 16 and 17 years old. They were accompanied by their relatives, who were either coming to Moldova or returning to Ukraine. Several humanitarian buses came from Ukraine, including the organization</p>	<p>UNHCR to provide additional updates regarding the need for biometric passports for entering Hungary, when available</p>



<p>protoff.moldova@intersos.org</p> <p><i>Svetlana</i> <i>Jioara</i> <i>CDA/LCA</i></p> <p>svetlana.jioara@cda.md</p>	<p>Hope and Faith with 56 people from Kherson, Odesa, and Mykolaiv, and three buses funded by the organization Gloria, which brought around 19 people from Dnipro, Kyiv, Kherson, and Mykolaiv regions to the barrier in Palanca, where they crossed the border as pedestrians. There were also two buses by the organization Be an Angel, one with 33 people and another with only two (2) people.</p> <p>During this period, there was an intense flow of cars in both directions, and the number of pedestrians was reduced. Most Ukrainians who come to Moldova are from Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Zaporizhia. They go to visit their relatives. Most of them are going to Transnistria, as life is cheaper there. However, some transit through Moldova to reach countries like Romania, Germany, and Austria. They claim that they have TP (temporary protection) in those countries and are already employed, and their children are enrolled in school.</p> <p>Most of the people who crossed the border were mothers with children who now intend to remain in Moldova or Romania due to power shortages and the impossibility to leave Ukraine. Their husbands are mostly military and can't go too far away. Third-country nationals are regularly checked when returning to Ukraine. They have to wait up to six hours to get permission to enter Ukraine, and some of them are denied entry. Finally, a bus funded by the Jewish community with 22 people was going to Chisinau Dacia Hotel.</p> <p>At Otaci BCP, the same pendular movements continue to be observed, and no cases of UASC were reported. At the Moldovan/Romanian border, no AS were registered. Arrivals expressed that they are returning to Ukraine to visit family/friends or to fix their documents.</p>	
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At the Chisinau Airport BCP (CDA Airport), there were 30 asylum seekers, mostly from Tajikistan, Syria, and Belarus.

INTERSOS provided additional updates

INTERSOS provided a situational update from Palanca bus station. Over the past month, there has been a consistently low flow of people. Most of the arrivals were from Odesa, Kakhovka, Kherson, Cherkasy, Mykolaiv, and Chernihiv, and most of them wanted to go to EU countries. Many Roma people were among the arrivals. The refugees reported that there were powerful explosions in Zaporizhia during the last few weeks.

Andrew Painter, UNHCR, provided an update from 3 February regarding Ukrainians crossing the border between Romania and Hungary without a valid biometric passport or Schengen visa. The Hungarian government has changed its requirements for entering from Romania, and now Ukrainians must have either a biometric passport or another passport with a valid visa to cross the border. A Be an Angel bus attempted to cross the border from Romania to Hungary but was refused entry. The bus returned to Romania, and the passengers were accommodated in Iasi.

Ersilia Apreta from IOM informed participants that Moldova has changed the border crossing rules for citizens of eight countries. These citizens can no longer enter Moldova without a visa obtained in advance from the embassy.

The decision of the Commission for Exceptional Situations, No. 57, states that the issuance of transit visas (identified by the symbol B) to nationals of the following states is suspended: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Socialist Republic of



	<p>Vietnam, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Iraq, Republic of Lebanon, and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.</p> <p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration will suspend the issuance of electronic transit visas (identified by symbols A and B) during the state of emergency. Applications for B and C visas will be submitted to diplomatic missions and consular posts by the applicant exclusively based on a personal interview.</p> <p>However, this decision does not apply to third-country nationals (TCNs) coming from Ukraine, but it does apply to those who want to go to Ukraine and come to Moldova as a transit country. Based on our understanding, most of these nationals are also university students in Ukraine. This decision is valid during the state of emergency, so we will need to see what happens in April.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 3</p> <p>Presentation on PWG Work plan 2023</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer,</i></p> <p>UNHCR</p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>PWG co-chair provided an update on the PWG Work plan, including highlight the overall objectives for 2023</p> <p>Overarching Objectives of the Protection Sector (RRP)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure access to the territory and to international protection (including temporary protection) and associated rights, on a non-discriminatory basis2. Promote social cohesion among refugee and host communities through targeted interventions3. Ensure that government services are inclusive of and accessible to refugees, as applicable, and that refugees with specific needs and from marginalized groups benefit from targeted support.	<p>UNHCR to circulate final version of 2023 PWG Work Plan and updated Terms of Reference (ToR)</p>



	<p>Work Plan Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enhance protection coordination and collaboration among protection partners, including within and across other Working Groups (WG), Sub-Working Groups (SWG) and Task Forces (TF) within the Refugees Coordination Forum framework.2. Advance thematic priorities for the protection sector3. Engage in advocacy efforts and strengthen support for key stakeholders, including government institutions, donor partners, and civil society organizations <p>For further information, please consult the 2023 PWG Work Plan circulated to PWG members.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 4 TemporaryProtection (TP) Presentation <i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p> <p><i>Suenanica de Rozario, Registry & Identity Mgmt. Officer UNHCR</i></p>	<p>The UNHCR co-chair provided an update on Temporary Protection (TP), which is an exceptional measure adopted by the Government of the Republic of Moldova that allows eligible persons from Ukraine to remain in the country for a set period of time. This measure entails rights and obligations. On January 18th, 2023, the government approved the granting of temporary protection to Ukrainians displaced by the armed conflict and certain third-country nationals, as per Government Decision 21/2013. The registration process for TP will start on March 1st. Protection will be granted until March 1st, 2024, with the possibility of two six-month extensions. The General Inspectorate for Migration</p>	<p>UNHCR to circulate the slides for the TP presentation, as well as the most updated TP FAQ</p>



<p>derozari@unhcr.org</p> <p>Monica Vazquez, Asst Inter Agency Coord Off, UNHCR</p> <p>vazquezm@unhcr.org</p>	<p>(IGM), before the Bureau of Migration and Asylum (BMA), is the authority responsible for Temporary Protection.</p> <p>During the presentation, Suenanica de Rozario explained the registration process to obtain a document confirming the status of temporary protection. The registration process consists of two stages: online pre-registration and an in-person interview for documentation issuance. She also provided details on the implementation of both stages.</p> <p>Monica Vazquez held a presentation on communication with communities, aiming to ensure that accurate and reliable information on Temporary Protection is available at the national level for refugees currently living in Moldova, as well as those who will arrive in the future, authorities, and humanitarian workers. Informed decision-making processes are a shared responsibility.</p> <p>The UNHCR co-chair noted that many questions regarding the practical application of temporary protection remain open, and they are waiting for official clarifications from the General Inspectorate for Migration.</p> <p><u>Comments & Discussion:</u></p> <p><i>A representative from the NRC asked how the 45 days of stay outside Moldova will be calculated for TP beneficiaries. The UNHCR co-chair responded by saying that, to their understanding, the 45 days would be calculated from the moment of obtaining the status of temporary protection.</i></p> <p><i>A representative from HEKS Moldova asked if refugees could use the Moldavian phone numbers of host families for preregistration. Suenanica de Rozario from</i></p>	
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the UNHCR responded by saying that there was no comment from IGM yet, but they knew that one phone number could be used per family.

A representative from Keystone asked how accessible online registration would be for people with disabilities and those who did not have access to the internet or a computer. Suenanica de Rozario from the UNHCR said that they would come back to IGM on this issue during the next interaction. They were also establishing a framework of locations where individuals could go to receive assistance to complete preregistration online.

A representative from HI asked if persons with the TP status could receive free healthcare and how long the process was from preregistration until receiving the TP card. Suenanica de Rozario from the UNHCR responded by saying that the minimum period from preregistration to the interview was 10 days, but this period would depend on the number of people waiting in line. The list of medical services that individuals with TP could receive was still being clarified with the Ministry of Health.

A representative from HelpAge International asked about the registration period for receiving TP. The UNHCR co-chair responded by saying that, as far as they understood, refugees would have 90 days for registration when the Emergency Law expires.

A representative from HI asked about the criteria for eligibility for social assistance. The UNHCR co-chair responded by saying that social assistance was limited to families with children and unaccompanied minors. The Minister of Labor and Social Protection could be invited to do a presentation for the working group on the social assistance program.



A representative from the NRC asked if refugees residing in the territory of Transnistria would be eligible for applying for TP. The UNHCR co-chair confirmed that refugees residing in the territory of Transnistria would be eligible for applying for TP in one of the IGM centers.

A representative from People in Need asked if parents would be obliged to send their children to Moldovan schools after receiving the status of temporary protection. The UNHCR co-chair responded by saying that, under Moldovan law, children were required to attend school, and beneficiaries of Temporary Protection had the right to send their children to Moldovan schools. The Ombudsman's Office representative added that children would not be forced to register for education in Moldovan schools, , but the authorities gave assurances that those who want to enroll in schools will have this opportunity.

A representative from the JCMC said that, if necessary, they had experience in organizing online exams, and if the Ministry of Education of Ukraine made a corresponding request, the Ministry of Education of Moldova would ensure the conduct of such examinations.

A representative from IOM asked if there would be a feedback and complaint mechanism. The UNHCR representative said that the process was free, and they would use the mechanism in place of IGM. There was also the Green Line for receiving complaints, as well as the Anti-corruption line.

A representative from the Concordia Social Project asked how the issue of registration of Temporary Protection for the Roma community would be resolved, given that many Roma community members cannot read and write and don't have identification documents. The UNHCR representative said that they were working closely with the Roma Task Force to develop a plan, which included providing information and having in-person sessions.



Information collection and relevant links

Moldova operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe: The Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive - Six Months On (October 2022)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/unhcr-regional-bureau-europe-implementation-temporary-protection-directive-six-months-october-2022>

If necessary, feel free to add extra rows in the matrix above.