

Discontinuation of the Transition Guardianship Programme - EKKA, METAdrasi, UNHCR Impact and Challenges

February 2020

Guardianship Law 4554/2018

- in force as of 01 March 2020
- recruitment of professional trained guardians
- guardians need to ensure that services are provided to the UAC and all basic needs of the child are met in the child's best interests

Main challenges

- Reception and Identification Services
 - Registration procedures by Police/Frontex upon arrival and Reception and Identification Procedures i.e. so far the ARM ensured that the children are registered as unaccompanied reflecting her/his vulnerability according to the law;
 - Presence of the ARM in age assessment procedures remained crucial and in particular in cases of appeal;

Main challenges

- Health and Mental Health Services
 - Access to health and mental health services hindered for the UAC in the RICs and mainland i.e. provision of assistance required in medical emergency situations, urgent hospitalization, surgery etc.;
 - escorts to hospitals for medical examinations;

Main challenges

- Access to asylum procedures
 - Access to the Asylum Service hindered i.e. impediment in the registration of UAC in the Regional Asylum Offices especially for children aged 15 years and below;
 - presence and assistance during the examination of the claim for international protection in the asylum interview;
 - family reunion cases under Dublin remain at risk of dismissal when the strict deadlines are not met or documentation incomplete;
 - ARM conducts the BIA for the UAC which is crucial for the so-called Taking Charge Request (TCR) to be submitted by the Dublin Unit;

Main challenges

- Homeless UAC (urban areas)
 - No targeted assistance and homeless UAC excluded from the protection system and referral to appropriate care arrangements i.e health services, EKKA;
 - Gap in the timely identification of homeless children at risk;
 - Gaps linking the homeless child with registration in the Asylum Service (refugee claims and family reunion procedures under Dublin), conducting BIAs, etc.;

Main challenges

- Semi – Independent Living (SIL)
 - Delays observed on the referrals and placements to SIL arrangements for older UAC of 16-18 years old as the placements depend on the action and support of guardians;
 - Cash to UAC for SIL: given the absence of guardians a gap is observed when restrictions on cash cards should be lifted (after the two-month period)

METAdrasi Staffing Capacity (February)

- METAdrasi Attica team is composed of 6 Focal Persons/ ARM and 4 coordination staff;
- As for the other areas of Greece:
 - 2 Focal Persons/ARM in Thessaloniki,
 - 1 Focal Person/ARM in Orestiada,
 - 2 Focal Persons/ARM in Lesvos
 - 2 Focal Persons/ARM in Chios;
 - 1 Focal Person/ARM in Samos;
 - 1 Focal Person/ARM in Kos and Leros (based in Athens covering through missions)
 - 1 Focal Person/ARM Ioannina

Lesvos (February 2020)

- ✓ METAdrasi team: 1 focal person/AMR, 1 lawyer, 1 volunteer;
- ✓ Joint info sessions on the discontinuation of the programme (UNHCR/METAdrasi): more than 90 UAC from Section A and B participated;
- ✓ All actors informed through the local WGs (Protection, Legal, CP) by METAdrasi;
- ✓ PP information pending by METAdrasi;
- ✓ METAdrasi in contact with the Minor's secretariat in Moria to coordinate the registration of the newly arrived UAC
- ✓ Ongoing mapping exercise in Moria for the identification of UAC with the participation of: RIC, EASO, NORCAP, Better Days, Praksis, METAdrasi, UNHCR; (on hold due to security reasons)
- ✓ Alleged minors registered as adults, even though they presented original and valid documentation of their country of origin;
- ✓ Insufficient access to MHPSS and general health actors, medication and treatment;
- ✓ Missed deadline for family reunification cases of UASC;

Chios (February 2020)

- ✓ Two METAdrasi focal persons/ AMR (operational until mid March 2020);
- ✓ METAdrasi informed the PP and RIC Manager; all actors informed through the local WGs (Protection, Legal, Coordination, UAC) by METAdrasi or UNHCR;
- ✓ Praksis/EASO/RIS conducted one-off mapping exercise for UAC targeting those arrived in 2019; 2020 arrivals are registered before RAO within a few days upon arrival, as per the new legal framework - Dublin cases with strict deadlines are to large extent flagged;
- ✓ METAdrasi focal person focused efforts in registering UAC with RAO (13 UAC remain unregistered including arrivals on 01.03.2020)
- ✓ No presence of ARM during the registration of UAC by Police/ FRONTEX upon arrival
- ✓ No presence of ARM during the registration by RAO of UAC, including those below 15;
- ✓ Gaps on the guardian's previous involvement during notification of positive and/or negative (family reunification) decisions (signature on the notification by the guardian);
- ✓ Challenges in covering UAC basic needs and accessing health care services; UNHCR has prioritized the enrollment of the UAC outside the safe area, so as to follow up with the other actors on their needs.

Samos (February 2020)

- ✓ One METAdrasi focal point for guardianship;
- ✓ The PP has been informed by METAdrasi;
- ✓ Gaps on the registration of UAC below 15 y.o. in RAO: RAO has been arranging multiple registrations/interviews/nationality assessments in an effort to mitigate the gap;
- ✓ Gaps on access to health care services: lack of medical actors operating in the site (complete damage and looting of the medical containers/area). CP actors/UNHCR in coordination with EODY to ameliorate the situation;
- ✓ Gaps in Family reunification cases (Dublin): no sufficient funding for DNA tests
- ✓ RIC directors instructions (Jan 2020): case load of UASCs on the island split between CP actors, IOM-funded project is expected to undertake children's cases beyond the safe area (i.e. not only of UASCs under 15 years old);
- ✓ UNHCR: info sessions and FGDs with UAC, UASC info point service (UNHCR's container every Thursday) to identify immediate needs;

Kos (February 2020)

- One METAdrasi Focal person based in Athens covering through missions;
- UNHCR and METAdrasi informed the PP on the discontinuation of the programme;
- UNHCR chaired coordination meeting with METAdrasi, RIS,EASO, EODY, IOM regarding the discontinuation and way forward;
- No presence of METAdrasi Staff in the registration of UAC by FRONTEX/Police upon arrival(METAdrasi's safe areas staff presence during registration is still to be discussed with the RIC Director);
- 30 Dublin cases handed over to METAdrasi Lawyer – no delays or missed deadlines observed;
- Coverage of medical expenses for UASC residing in safe area undertaken by METAdrasi/IOM;

Leros (February 2020)

- ✓ One METAdrasi focal person based in Athens covering through missions;
- ✓ Interim solution until now:
 - Mid February: the PP authorised the social worker and the psychologist of Zeuxis (IOM implementing partner of Safe Area) to conduct the BIAs;
 - In the absence of a legal guardian, the Public Prosecutor authorised two staff of RIS to represent the UAC before RAO to complete the asylum registration;
 - Despite initial concerns the Dublin Unit started to accept the BIAs for the cases of family reunification conducted at the presence of the social worker and the psychologist despite the absence of an ARM;
- ✓ RIS will only cover the basic needs of the UAC population during the absence of Authorised Representatives/Guardians;
- ✓ Increase in the issuance of Dublin cases negative decisions due to lack of Authorised Representatives/Guardians;

Evros (February 2020)

- ✓ One METAdrasi focal person / AMR;
- ✓ Referrals of CP cases were suspended until mid January 2020;
- ✓ UNHCR provided assistance to RIS/EASO on the following:
 - Update on UASC cases not been referred to CP actors since October flagging potential Dublin and/or custody cases;
 - Update on UASC not informed by any actor since their arrival on the procedures;
 - follow-up actions needed on UASC who reach adulthood until 02/01: prioritisation to AS registration;
- ✓ UNHCR provides legal information and monitors the everyday needs of UASC;

Thessaloniki (February 2020)

- ✓ METAdrasi appointed 2 staff covering: 50 UAC, out of which 23 in SIL project, 13 under Metadrasi, and the rest of them, under the age of 14 years old;
- ✓ Ongoing cases: interventions will continue, whenever representation is required - weekly meetings with the children will cease;
- ✓ METAdrasi staff received a representation authorisation by the PP for the children below 15 y.o. regarding the asylum procedures that might require prompt response;
- ✓ METAdrasi staff will continue receiving new cases of homeless UAC or in protective custody;

Ioannina (February 2020)

- ✓ One METAdrasi Focal person double task: care giver under the METAdrasi SIL project and acting as ARM in order to facilitate the placement of UAC in SIL apartments;
- ✓ METAdrasi informed the PP on the discontinuation of the programme;
- ✓ UAC under SIL scheme are and will be referred and placed without Authorised Representative/Guardian appointed;
- ✓ Authorised Representative/Guardian's absence will eventually affect the processing of the asylum procedures and the access to AAU (UAC below 15 y.o.);

Attica region

- ✓ 6 Authorised Persons/Guardians & 4 coordinators;
- ✓ PP in Athens, Ms Dalla, has been accordingly informed by METAdrasi;
- ✓ METAdrasi does not undertake cases that might be identified in the island of Crete or in Peloponnese;
- ✓ The team handles (with its own means) only the old cases (approximately 250) and does not undertake new cases;
Old cases: Open Reception Facilities, Safe Zones, Safe Shelters, SIL projects, foster care scheme, cases of homeless children as well as self-referrals
- ✓ Priority is given to cases of children with medical and legal needs (Dublin cases);
- ✓ METAdrasi provides support to newly-identified UAC during the registration procedure before the Asylum Service – no case management is provided;
- ✓ SIL: EKKA continues issuing orders for placements requesting METAdrasi to appoint focal persons as Guardians;
- ✓ Agios Andreas camp: METAdrasi's focal persons conducted several field visits and meetings with minors under 15 (Dublin cases), collaborated with IOM for the completion of BIAs and provided assistance to minor's under 15 in all their legal procedures and requests.



Thank you!