

Child Protection Sub-Working Group
28.07.2022 Minutes of Meeting

Date:	Thursday, 28 July 2022 at 10.00-12.00 a.m., via Teams	
Participants:	Special Secretary for the Protection of UAM/ MoMA, MoLSA (UAM Unit), MoJ/House of Child (Athens & Piraeus), RIS, EKKA, UNHCR FO Thessaloniki, UNICEF, IOM, GCR, PRAKSIS, Metadrasi, IRC, DRC, Smile of the Child, Eliza Foundation, , Intersos, Zefxis, European Lawyers in Lesvos, The HOME project, Solidarity Now, DCI Greece, ICSD, Safe Passage	
Chair:	UNHCR: Theodora D. Tsovili (tsovili@unhcr.org)	
Agenda	<p>Title: <i>Efforts to define the support system/ prevention, response and institutional framework for children survivors of GBV in Greece: Introductory meeting - referral points for immediate response</i></p> <p>The following organizations provided information on the scope of their work, the referral points and the services that they offer to children who survive Gender Based Violence (GBV), including refugee and migration children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Elisa Foundation, - Smile of the Child, - Ministry of Justice, represented by the Heads of the “House of the Child” in Piraeus and Athens. 	
Elisa Foundation	<p>A representative from Eliza Foundation presented in brief the services provided by the organisation with an emphasis given to the response practices for reported incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, the 1st Child Safety Care Unit at the P. & A. Kyriakou Children’s Hospital in Athens was established. The Unit constitutes the first one for the identification of children’s abuse and neglect cases in Greece with specialised staff (Paediatricians and Psychologist). • In 2021, the Child Safety Care Unit - ‘ELIZA’ at the Attikon General University Hospital in Athens was initiated. The unit constitutes the 2nd hospital-based unit for abused children. • ELIZA line 10454 provides support assistance through the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Guidance on the assessment of the incident ✓ Encouragement to report the incident ✓ Guidance on how to make a report on the incident ✓ Psychological support ✓ Advice on the different Protocols applicable to different cases, depending on the form of abuse ✓ The Helpline counsellors forward all the incidents that the callers are reluctant to report to the Public Prosecutors 	Action Points: n/a

	<p>Additional activities of the Eliza Foundation are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationwide educational workshops for professionals: aiming at the early prevention and detection of abuse; in total 10,500 professionals have been trained so far. • Safe Touches program: the program targets children aged between 5 – 9 y.o., teaches to protect themselves from sexual abuse, and at the same time trains parents and teachers to identify risk factors and signs of sexual abuse. Since 2017, 4,000 children and 1,000 parents and teachers have received training courses. <p>Further information will be found in the attached presentation of the Eliza Foundation.</p>	
<p>Smile of the Child</p>	<p>The Smile of the Child provides protection to the children survivors of any form of violence through the provision of safe living environment in the eleven (11) houses, “Homes for Children victims of any form of violence”, throughout Greece where children enjoy everything necessary for their healthy physical, mental, emotional, and social development.</p> <p>The Day Center operates from 09.00 a.m. to 17.00 p.m. - but also outside of opening hours if necessary - and provides free of charge customized clinical mental health services for diagnosis, therapeutic treatment and psychosocial rehabilitation of children and adolescents victims of abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or victims of bullying up to age of 18.</p> <p>The National Helpline for Children SOS 1056 is operating 24/7 with specialised staff including social workers, psychologist & provision of interpretation. The National SOS Helpline 1056 is free of charge and anonymous and can be used by the children and the adult citizens who wish to refer a child’s case at risk. The Helpline also provides an online chat application, a new way of direct communication for children. The Chat 1056 application introduces unique features, encouraging children to express themselves in a secure environment. Through the Chat 1056 application, children receive online counseling and support services and in cases where the professionals consider that an immediate intervention is needed then the child is contacted directly. All calls to the Helpline 1056 are free from landline and mobile telephones, no card is required when calling from telephone booths, whereas calls from card phones do not require any telephone credits.</p> <p>Further information will be found in the attached presentation of the Smile of the Child.</p>	<p>Action Points: n/a</p>
<p>“House of the Child” in Piraeus and Athens</p>	<p>The “House of the Child” units in Piraeus and Athens run under the competency of the Ministry of Justice and constitute a new and pioneering service in supporting children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation based on the operating models in Europe, the Scandinavian countries and Alabama (USA). Both units started their operation in December 2021.</p>	<p>Action Points: n/a</p>

The representatives of the “House of the Child” in Piraeus and Athens presented in brief the legal framework in Greece. In particular, the Law 4640/2019 (article 35) sets up the “House of the Child” as independent offices of the Ministry of Justice and not part of the Juvenile Probation Offices.

The “House of the Child” offices in Piraeus and Athens offer their services during investigative and pre-investigative procedures to ensure that interrogations and criminal proceedings are conducted in the best interests of the child and with respect for their rights. The aim is the children victims will be interrogated in specially designed areas, by specially trained professionals and far away from police stations, investigative offices or courtrooms. The recording of the statements in the form of audio-visual material follows the course of the criminal procedure, thus avoiding the re-victimization of the children.

The Piraeus and Athens units are staffed with psychologists and social workers. During the investigative examination procedures for crimes of a sexual nature against children, the child victims, following a relevant order/referral of the Investigator, testify in the child-friendly premises of the "House of the Child" either in Athens or Piraeus with the assistance of a specially trained psychologist as an expert witness. The social worker in the context of the interdisciplinary Individual Assessment investigates the psychosocial needs of the family and proposes measures/recommendations either specifically to support the child victim during the judicial examination or more general measures to support the family.

➤ Statistical data from December 2021 until 26 July 2022:

A) Athens Unit: since 07/12/2021, the Athens unit has assisted the Pre-Investigative & Investigative Authorities in 24 cases of testimony by children victims, of which 3 were of foreign origin with habitual residence in the country and only 1 case of a refugee background.

B) Piraeus Unit: since 09/12/2021, the Piraeus unit has assisted 16 children victims, of which 7 children from ethnically and culturally diverse groups (breakdown: 3 children were of Albanian origin, 1 child was from Bulgaria, 2 from Roma families originating from Romania, 1 child from Pakistan who was accommodated in a shelter for Unaccompanied children).

Further information will be found in the relevant attached presentation.

AOB

The next CPsWG will take place in September 2022 and will focus on the **prevention** practices to combat gender-based violence to children. The date and time will be confirmed.

Action Points:

n/a