



## Protection Working Group

Meeting Details	
<b>Date</b>	<i>2 April 2024</i>
<b>Time</b>	<i>10.00 am – 12.00 pm (hybrid)</i>
<b>Chair</b>	<i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator</i> <i>Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugee Rights, Ombudsperson Office, Co-Chair</i>
<b>Reporting</b>	<i>Sara Sivkova, Senior Protection Assistant, UNHCR</i>
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:painter@unhcr.org">painter@unhcr.org</a> , <a href="mailto:carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md">carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md</a> , <a href="mailto:sager@unhcr.org">sager@unhcr.org</a> , <a href="mailto:sivkovas@unhcr.org">sivkovas@unhcr.org</a>
Agenda	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Border Updates (CDA)</li><li>2. Partner Updates (All)</li><li>3. Update on UNHCR Cash Program (UNHCR)</li><li>4. Presentation: Protection Monitoring Overview of Privately Managed Accommodation centres (Informal RACs) (UNHCR)</li><li>5. Presentation: Expanded Medical Services under TP/ Update on current measles outbreak (WHO)</li><li>6. Overview of PWG Frequency/Format Survey Results (UNHCR)</li><li>7. AOB</li></ol>	
Participants	



Regional Refugee Response  
for the Ukraine Situation

<b>Andrew Painter, UNHCR</b>	<b>Cristian Slobodeaniuc, WFP</b>	<b>Ina Rusu, ADRA</b>	<b>Virgiliu Hangan, P4EC</b>
<b>Sean Sager, UNHCR</b>	<b>Daniele Madan, WHO</b>	<b>Irina Rotaru, CERI Moldova</b>	<b>Diana Alexei, Chisinau Municipality</b>
<b>Sara Sivkova, UNHCR</b>	<b>Danielle Pedretti, HelpAge</b>	<b>Chaza Ghandour, ICRC</b>	<b>City Hall</b>
<b>Suenanica de Rozario, UNHCR</b>	<b>Scarlett Hawkins, NRC</b>	<b>Fede Bagolin, WeWorld</b>	<b>Pipa Bown, FCDO</b>
<b>Diego Nardi, UNHCR</b>	<b>Cojocarua Irina, NRC</b>	<b>Flore Rossi, UNICEF</b>	<b>Elena Ustoroi, CWS</b>
<b>Katie Lampe, UNHCR</b>	<b>Serghei Muntean, ACTED</b>	<b>Svetlana Jioara, CDA</b>	<b>Emilie Fournier, REACH</b>
<b>Daniel de Moraes, UNHCR</b>	<b>Dmytro Kharchenko, ACTED</b>	<b>Ines Arnautovic, DRC</b>	<b>Virgiliu Hangan, P4EC</b>
<b>Olha Florynska,</b>	<b>Martha Glover-Short, CRS</b>	<b>Zoe Kostitsi-Papastathopoulou,</b>	<b>Lilia Gantatuc, Comisia Migratia</b>
<b>OHCHR</b>	<b>Alina Babacaev, INTERSOS</b>	<b>DRC</b>	<b>Natalia Peancovskaia, Tarna Rom</b>
<b>Carolina Cazaciuc,</b>	<b>Martin Kunze, Youth One World</b>	<b>Cristina Triboi, Tdh Moldova</b>	<b>Putuntica Cristina</b>
<b>Ombudsperson Office</b>	<b>Svetlana Bebic, ICRC</b>	<b>Kyriakos Giaglis, MIA/NORCAP</b>	<b>Victoria Ionita</b>
<b>Victor Morari, Ombudsperson</b>			<b>Catarev Cristina</b>
<b>Office</b>			<b>Audrey Perera</b>



## Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p><b>Welcome &amp; Review of Agenda</b></p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p><a href="mailto:painter@unhcr.org">painter@unhcr.org</a></p>	<p>The <b>PWG co-chair</b> 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: <a href="mailto:sivkovas@unhcr.org">sivkovas@unhcr.org</a></p>	<p>Agenda presented and agreed</p>



## Agenda Point 1

### Border Updates

Sean Sager, Protection Officer,  
UNHCR

[sager@unhcr.org](mailto:sager@unhcr.org)

Svetlana Jiora, CDA/LCA  
[svetlana.jioara@cda.md](mailto:svetlana.jioara@cda.md)

*CDA representative provided updates for January and February from the BCPs:*

During the reporting period, there were 36 asylum seekers at **Palanca BCP**, including 29 on the green border. CDA has noted an increased number of people crossing the green border. Among the asylum seekers arriving in the Republic of Moldova (RM), there are citizens of the Russian Federation (RF) possessing expired passports preventing them from reaching the Russian Embassy (on RM territory) for passport renewal, who opted to apply for asylum to enter the country. Some Ukrainians were refused entry due to surpassing the legal duration of their stay in RM. Subsequently, they sought asylum to be allowed to enter and then apply for TP.

Medium flow of cars and a medium flow of pedestrians in both directions. Ukrainian Intelligence Services were present at the BCP. State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGSU) was observed near the Moldovan territory near the UNICEF tent, on the transit road near the entry barrier where they have been observed stopping cars. They were observed conducting documents and vehicle checks in the area by the entrance to the BCP.

No daily transport from the BCP to Palanca Bus Hub was provided, only on request. Regular buses run without interruption. During the reporting period, there were 6 humanitarian buses by Gloria NGO, with 160 refugees on board from Odesa, Kherson, Dnipro, and Donetsk. Most of them continued to Constanta, Romania with transportation provided by IOM.



	<p>Some 59 refugees were heading to Germany with transportation provided by the NGO Be an Angel.</p> <p>Third-country nationals (TCNs) were subjected to additional verification and needed to wait for several hours at the BCP. At least seven (7) Ukrainians were fined 600 lei for exceeding the legal duration of stay 90 days in RM. Some 12 Ukrainians were denied entry to RM due to overstating the 90 days legally permitted duration of stay and did not claim asylum. Some UA were fined for expired vignettes for cars.</p> <p>Ukrainian men have been denied exit from Ukraine by the SBGSU; some of them were counselled on their rights to claim asylum but most of them were escorted to the vehicle of border guards and departed from the BCP. Two instances occurred where parents traveling with children were denied exit from RM to Ukraine because they lacked travel documents, possessing only their child's birth certificates. They were advised to visit the Ukrainian consulate to obtain the necessary travel documents for their children.</p> <p>Ukrainians coming to Moldova were from Odesa, Odesa region, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Dnipro. Most of them benefit from Temporary Protection (TP) in RM and return to Ukraine to visit relatives or renew documents. Many arrivals are beneficiaries of TP in EU countries. There are also some individuals entering RM for the first time and intending to apply for TP. Ukrainians returning to UA are mostly from Odesa, Odesa region, and Kyiv coming from EU countries or Moldova. Some of them are returning due to not being able to adapt to another country. TCNs returning to Ukraine are</p>	
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checked rigorously and in many cases are denied entry to Ukraine and need to return to RM.

Seven unaccompanied children (UASC), aged approximately 15-17 years old, were observed at Palanca BCP. Since March 1, Guardianship authorities are no longer stationed there; instead, they are requested to come when minors are involved. CDA noted that border police typically assumed responsibility for assessing UASC cases, only involving guardianship authorities in exceptional circumstances.

An increased influx of asylum seekers was noted at **Otaci BCP**. Twelve cases of asylum seekers were intercepted on the green border, with only one registered at the BCP. There was a moderate flow of cars and pedestrians in both directions, notably with people traveling to Mogilev Podolsk. Blue Dot provided hot drinks, ACTED assisted with transportation, and Action Against Hunger distributed food packages. The Moldovan Intelligence Service was present at the BCP, and regular bus services operated without interruptions.

TCNS are rigorously checked, those who could not prove the purpose of the trip and have no visa are denied entry to RM and vice versa. At least three (3) Ukrainians were fined for overstaying the 90 days of legal stay in Moldova and twelve were fined for overdue vignettes. Two cases of UA citizens crossed illegally the border of RM; upon detection by BCP none claimed asylum; after being registered they were allowed to continue in their journey to EU countries.



Most of the arrivals through Otaci BCP were from Vinnytsia, Vinnitsa region, Zhytomyr, and Kyiv. People are coming to Moldova to visit relatives or transit Moldova to EU countries. Person returning to Ukraine are coming from different EU countries to check on their belongings and plan to return to Moldova or EU countries.

No cases of UASC in Otaci BCP, BP conveyed that starting this year there have been no instances where they needed to contact the guardianship authorities. They emphasize their practice of initially evaluating potential minors and then calling the guardianship authorities if needed.

Starting March 12, CDA resumed the monitoring activities at the international airport. CDA monitors flights from Baku, Yerevan, Istanbul, and Tbilisi. TCNs, especially from the Russian Federation, Ghana and Turkey are rigorously checked and have to undergo a second line of checks. In some cases, citizens of the Russian Federation and Ghana have been denied entry to RM and were returned to the country where they came from. No asylum claims and no UASC at the airport.

*UNHCR representative informed about the ongoing Border Monitoring Visits:*

UNHCR is currently conducting regular monitoring visits to key BCPs in Ukraine and Romania. Based on discussions with border police, UNHCR is monitoring the movement and asylum trends. The border police have reported encountering an increased number of men of conscription age crossing irregularly. According to the border police, any person crossing the



green border irregularly must apply for asylum. UNHCR plans another visit to Sculeni and Leuseni border crossing points in the upcoming weeks.

**Discussion:**

There is a new conscription legislation now being discussed in Ukraine which may lead to more men of conscription age seeking asylum. UNHCR is closely following up on it and will inform PWG in case of new developments.

UNHCR asked about UA who are denied entry to RM applying for asylum to enter if they are subsequently withdrawing their application later. CDA noted that in most cases they do withdraw their asylum application in favor of TP registrations.

In connection with the BP taking on the responsibility to assess risk for minors identified at the border before calling the guardianship authorities, the Child Protection Sub-working is closely following up on the changes in the procedure with the guardianship authorities.

**CWS** inquired about the increasing number of men crossing irregularly to Moldova if they stay in the country or if they continue further. CDA explained that most of them continue their travel to EU countries and do not intent to remain in Moldova.

CDA mentioned a few cases of person not being allowed to entry due to not having proper travel documents. UNHCR representative explained that under the new TP law, Ukrainian are allowed single entry and exit using non-





	<p>biometric travel document. This trend should be observed as is may lead to more people resolving to apply for asylum to be allowed entry.</p>	
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**Agenda Point 2**

**Partner Updates**  
*All participants.*

No partner provided any updates.



<p><b>Agenda Point 3</b></p> <p><b>Update on UNHCR Cash Program</b></p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p><a href="mailto:painter@unhcr.org">painter@unhcr.org</a></p>	<p><i>UNHCR representative presented an update on the UNHCR cash assistance program:</i></p> <p>At the end of 2023, UNHCR introduced changes to its cash policy. The first change referred to the linkage of the cash assistance with the legal status and the second on targeting.</p> <p>More information is available in the presentation by UNHCR.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>The Ombudsman Office representative asked about the information provision for person who experience delays in cash assistance. UNHCR informed that in such cases, the beneficiaries should reach out to the cash assistance helpline 0 800 10823.</p>	<p>UNHCR will share the presentation in the inter-agency <a href="#">shared folder</a>.</p>
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**Agenda Point 4**

**Protection Monitoring  
Overview of Privately  
Managed Accommodation  
Centres (Informal RACs)**

*Sean Sager, Protection Officer,  
UNHCR*

[sager@unhcr.org](mailto:sager@unhcr.org)

*UNHCR representative presented findings from the Protection Monitoring Overview of Privately Managed Accommodation Centres.*

The PWG and the Basic Needs Working Groups initiated the monitoring exercise of the Privately Managed Accommodation Centres (Informal RACs) all across Moldova. Around 68 households, comprising 264 individuals, from 8 Privately Managed Accommodation Centres participated in the monitoring exercise.

More information is available in the presentation by UNHCR and the [factsheet](#) shared with the PWG.

**Discussion:**

HelpAge inquired about the statistics on a high percentage (45%) of respondents in accredited Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) having an urgent need for food. UNHCR representative explained that this does not refer to not having access to food, but it might correspond with the diversity of food offered (i.e. specific dietary needs or personal preferences for food items). WFP representative commented that based on their monitoring reports of food in RACs, there is a general satisfaction with the food. WFP suggested that this may refer to the extra food items that the refugees need to acquire outside the regular food provision. More information should be obtained from the focus group discussion with refugees to explain this data.

UNHCR will share the presentation in the inter-agency [shared folder](#).



HelpAge asked about problems with accessibility to Privately Managed Accommodation Centres. UNHCR explained that only in a few cases the managers of the privately managed accommodation centres were not interested in engaging in the exercise; the centres were already closed, or the residents were not available during the monitoring visit for questioning.

The Ombudsman Office representative asked whether there were any faith-based privately managed accommodation centres. UNHCR explained that the majority of the centres in the survey were managed by faith-based organizations.

CWS asked if some kind of medical care is provided in the privately managed accommodation centres like medical staff visiting the centre. CDA explained that in most cases, there is no medical staff assigned but that most of the residents in the privately managed accommodation centres were TP card holders who can access medical care from family doctors.

UNHCR explained that some of the findings will be further analyzed, and discussed with the sector leads (i.e. Education Working Group or Health Working Group) to organize some awareness-raising sessions for specific privately managed accommodation centres.

The Ombudsman Office representative inquired about the ongoing regulation/consolidation policy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) applying to these privately managed accommodation centres. UNHCR explained that this regulation does not affect the privately managed accommodation centres as they are not managed by the state.



**Agenda Point 5**

**Expanded Medical Services  
under TP and update on  
measles outbreak**

*Daniela-Maria Madan, WHO*

[madand@who.int](mailto:madand@who.int)

*WHO representative presented information about the Health Benefits Package 2024:*

To access the new Health Benefit Package the beneficiaries of TP need to register with a primary healthcare doctor/family doctor. As of 29 February 2024, there were around 5,150 persons registered in the system.

Ending the emergency law, refugees can access emergency medical assistance but only refugees with TP can benefit from the whole Health Benefit Package.

- Emergency pre-hospital medical assistance (emergency call 112)
- Primary health care
- Hospital medical assistance
- Emergency dental care
- Outpatient Specialized care
- Compensated drugs and medical products
- Oncology medical services, including diagnosis and treatment
- Outpatient and inpatient dialysis services
- Mental and psychosocial services
- Medical examination for public health reasons

To facilitate the registration and access to medical services, WHO together with IOM trained 15 Ukrainians with medical backgrounds to serve as health mediators across Moldova, including the Transnistrian region. The role of the health mediators is to raise awareness of the available health services accessible under the Temporary Protection Directive and to strengthen the

UNHCR will share the presentation in the inter-agency [shared folder](#) and will disseminate the contact information for [health mediators](#).



	<p>referral mechanism and registration of family doctors. A list of health mediators and their contacts will be shared with PWG network.</p> <p>More information is available in the presentation by WHO available online in the shared disk.</p> <p><i>WHO representative informed about the measles cases detected in the Refugee Accommodation Center in Chisinau:</i></p> <p>WHO informed about the procedure that took place at the RAC Testemiteanu 6 where an outbreak of measles was registered. All the necessary steps were taken to isolate suspected cases, to hospitalize affected individuals and to prevent further spreading of disease. On March 29 the last suspected case was identified. WHO distributed the communication materials.</p> <p>More information is available in the presentation by WHO available online in the shared disk.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>CWS asked about the feedback or information from beneficiaries about access to healthcare and registration of family doctors. WHO explained that after consultation with the health mediators, there was mainly a positive experience in accessing the healthcare but there were also some negative experiences with medical providers in accessing the entitlements or long</p>	
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	<p>waiting lists for family doctor appointments. The Ministry of Health has an official complaint mechanism where the refugees can file a complaint.</p> <p>UNHCR asked about the responsibilities of health mediators, can refugees who have problems accessing healthcare ask the mediator to accompany them to the family doctors. WHO agreed that mediators can accompany the refugees and help them explain the diagnosis as they have medical knowledge.</p> <p>UNHCR asked which health services are excluded from the Health Benefits Package. The refugees are not entitled to health insurance, rehabilitative services, palliative care, and expensive test procedure MRI. Nevertheless, there are UN agencies (UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA) and the National Medical Insurance Company (CNAM) providing reimbursements for healthcare provided to refugees. Ending the emergency law, only refugees with TP can benefit from the Health Benefit Package.</p> <p>UNHCR asked about the outreach to medical care providers by the Ministry of Health. WHO explained that awareness raising, and courses are being provided to medical care providers. All the necessary information is also available on CNAM and Ministry of Health websites in Romanian.</p> <p>The Ombudsman Office asked about the Ministry of Health's position on the refugees who do not wish to be vaccinated for measles. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection were supposed to have a discussion on some kind of regulation regarding unvaccinated refugees residing in formal RACs.</p>	
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<p><b>Agenda Point 6</b></p> <p><b>Overview of PWG frequency and format</b></p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p><a href="mailto:painter@unhcr.org">painter@unhcr.org</a></p>	<p><i>UNHCR co-chair presented the results from PWG format Survey:</i></p> <p>The UNHCR co-chair presented the results of an online form shared with PWG members inquiring about the modality and frequency of PWG meetings. Based on 25 responses the information is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most respondents were either satisfied (18) or very satisfied (4) with the current frequency of PWG</li><li>• The majority (21) would prefer to keep the hybrid modality of PWG meetings</li><li>• The preferred frequency would be to keep the monthly meetings (14); one-third of respondents (8) would prefer to hold the meeting every two months with ad hoc meetings as needed.</li></ul> <p>Based on the findings from the survey the future PWG meeting will continue to be in a hybrid format and will be held every 5-6 weeks, no more than two months with ad hoc meetings as necessary.</p>	<p>It was decided that the PWG will continue to be held monthly (5-6 weeks) in a hybrid format.</p>
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<p><b>Agenda Point 7</b></p> <p><b>AoB</b></p> <p><i>All participants</i></p>	<p>The AO Association of Persons with Disabilities in Moldova representative informed that his organization plans to open two multi-functional centres focusing on services for people with disabilities, including refugees with disabilities. The multi-functional centres include health services, legal aid, rehabilitation, and vocational training.</p>	
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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 you have any difficulties accessing the Inter-agency shared folders do not hesitate to contact [sivkovas@unhcr.org](mailto:sivkovas@unhcr.org)