Child Protection Sub-Working Group

17.04.2019 Minutes of Meeting

Date:	Wednesday, 17th April 2019 at 09.30 a.m., Conference Room 1	
Participants:	MoL, The Greek Ombudsman, UNHCR CO, UNHCR FOA, UNICEF, IOM, Red Cross, NCR, TdH Hellas, The Smile of the Child, Light House Relief, MdM, The Home Project, ICRC, Velos Youth, Safe Passage, Juvenile Probation Office Athens, GCR, Babel	
Chair:	**UNHCR: Theodora D. Tsovili (tsovili@unhcr.org)**	
Agenda	▪ Presentation	
MoL – Developments and Updates on the Law for Guardianship	EKKA submitted to the MoL for clearance/final review the draft version of the 4 first Ministerial Decisions which are directly linked to the law 4554/2018 coming into force. The ministerial Decision are the following: *Ministerial Decision 1*: Development of the operational and technical specifications regarding the registry for unaccompanied minors; *Ministerial Decision 2*: Development of the operational and technical specifications regarding the registry for guardians. *Ministerial Decision 3:* Development of the operational and technical specifications regarding the registry for accommodation centres, *Joint Ministerial Decision 4:* Establishment of the required qualifications for the recruitment of guardians, the content of the application form, the ratio of unaccompanied minors per guardian, the definition of technical details of their recruitment procedure, evaluation, terms/content of the contract and salary, financial allocation under the National Programme. In line with the aim of the tripartite agreemtent and after Easter, an amendment of the Law 4554/2018 stipulating the date of entry into force of the Guardianship Law as of 01 Septemer 2019, will be submitted to the Parliament for voting. At the moment, 41 Authorized Chindren's Representatives/Guardians have been deployed in the field: RICs, Evros Fylakio, Athens and Thessaloniki. In total 900 to 1000 unaccompanied children are covered by the Authorized Children's Representatives/ Guardians and the most vulnerable among them have been prioritised. As of September 2019, and the entry into force of the Law, the number of Guardians will be increased in order to cover as many needs as possible.	
Annual report of 2018 of the Children on the move Network. - Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Mrs Theoni Koufonikolakou	The Deputy Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Mrs. Theoni Koufonikolakou, presented the Annual Report of 2018 of the Children on the move Network. The Annual report is based on the information gathered through mission field visits and in particular in the Vathy RIC on Samos, in the sites and on the feedback collected by the NGOs. The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights presented the main content of the report and in particular the objectives, the main activities, the structure of the report, the main observations and remarks on the situation of children on the move, the current overview of the figures on child protection and the major develpments on the field. The main areas the report focuses are the following:	**Action points:** ▪ The need of child psychiatrists and proper capacity building in dealing with refugee children population to be added in the recommendation of the Annual Report 2018 of the Children on the move Network. ▪ The presentation of the Deputy Ombudswoman for

	• the protection of children upon arrival and early reception stage, the RIS procedures for children including UASC, • access to international protection in view of the different procuderues in land and sea borders and the obstacles observed, • the available data and the precedurial issues on the family reunification under the Dublin III, • Key aspects on the access to dignified and safe accommodation, • Living conditions in open sites, • Access to Health care, • Access to education, • General remarks on key issues and enduring problems specifically for the unaccompanied children, The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights presentation was concluded with the compilation of the recommendations and advocacy priorities. The presentation of the Annual Report followed discussion among the participants of the CPsWG on the following issues: ✓ The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights informed the working group that all requests regarding the backlog of non registered UAC by the AS have been compiled and were shared with the Director of the AS pending feedback the week after the working group. On this issue, several NGOs expressed their concerns that the faster procedures and the prioritisation on registering UAC in the AS will result in fast-track and speeding up of the procedures of the application for international protection. The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights will further share and discuss these concerns with the AS Director, Mr. Karavias. ✓ The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights provided feedback by the ENOC (European Network of Ombudspersons for Children) for the Dublin III procedures. In particular, the other Member States (MS) are more reluctant to accept UAC from Greece and they have changed their agenda by providing administrative excuses on the negative decisions.	Chidren's Rights will be shared with the participants of the working group.

	✓ The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights informed the working group that following a report on a specific case of abuse of children in Police Station in Thessaloniki, which is under investigation, there is a process of preparing draft Guidelines for Police officers when a child is brought in protective custody in police stations. ✓ The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights highlighted the need for the abolition of the measure of protective custody of children in police stations by linking this concern to the limited care arrangements. To this end, the implementation of foster care arrangements should be among priorities as the alternative measure as well as a short term intermediate solution before permanent placement. The Deputy Ombudswoman for Chidren's Rights referred to the example of the Netherlands system. UNHCR agreed on the need of alternative solutions to protective custody and foster care could be an interim as well as a long term solution. UNICEF acknowledges that the referral to foster care arrangements remains also an issue for the Greek children and should be seen as a long term solution. ✓ Babel flagged the critical gap of mental health issues for refugee children. There is a critical lack of child psychiatrists for cases to be referred to and capacity building is needed for those professionals dealing with refugee children.	
AOB	• UNHCR Lesvos CP Team also joined the working group and provided feedback on the current situation based on the discussion on the annual report 2018. In particular, UNCHR highlighted, that after a long absence, the deployment of a child-psychiatrist in the Hospital in Mytilene. In additional, concenrs were reaised on the high levels of drag abuse by children, including the unaccompanied children in Moria RIC. • The next Child Protection sub Working Group will take place after Easter vacations, on 15th May 2019 at UNHCR premises.	**Action points:** **N/A**