

Meeting Homeless UAC Task-force 30.11.2021

Participants: SSPUAM (NERM & Relocation FPs), UNHCR, Faros, Metadras, Network for Children's Rights (NCR), Defence for Children International (DCI), Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), WAVE, ARSIS, Safe Passage

The Tracing and Protection expert of SSPUAM provided updates on the **National Emergency Response Mechanism for Unaccompanied Minors in precarious living conditions (NERM)**

- Since the launch of the 24/7 tracing line in April 2021 and until 31 October, 1,467 new referrals were received by local authorities, CP actors, citizens and UAC in need of support
- 1,122 of the above/mentioned referrals concerned safe inclusion in accommodation
- The children identified in precarious conditions and supported by NERM were in their vast majority male UAC, with only 22 female children reaching out to the Tracing line
- Majority of identified UAC have crossed in Greece from Evros land border and were unregistered
- The largest part of referred UAC were located in Attica, followed by Thess/niki. Referrals from Ioannina, Crete and other locations were received to a lesser extent.
- Identified children originate predominately from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh & Egypt.
- Out of the total of UAC referred to the NERM, 553 were found in precarious living conditions such as apartments with compatriots or moving among different accommodation, 379 children were found in complete homelessness and 158 in protective custody in police departments.
- The Mechanism has received wide attention by local authorities, with GAS and Police referring numerous of cases, while 101 UAC reached the NERM themselves directly, and not through an actor which shows that the Tracing line is known among UAC.
- Elefsina is currently used as an emergency accommodation providing 50 transit places.
- The roll out of the NERM is considered an overall success providing immediate solutions for children found in heightened risk.
- A challenge observed is the non-harmonized practices among police departments.
- In response to GCR's question, the Tracing and Protection expert of SSPUAM mentioned that the IOM transit accommodation facilities are currently in the pipeline, while the timeline of implementation remains unclear. UNHCR added that the SSPUAM has faced funding challenges with regards to the emergency accommodation facilities and Doliana in Northern Greece and Schisto and Elefsina in Attica will serve as an interim solution, leading to the creation of 150 places.
- UNHCR mentioned that the SSPUAM envisions the institutionalization of NERM in the amendment of the Guardianship law which is currently under consideration by the Ministry.
- GCR noted that protective custody seems to be prolonged by almost a week in northern Greece, compared to the first phase of NERM implementation. According to Arsis this might be due to the recent closure of Vagiochori. GCR will share these cases with NERM to cross-check the reason behind such delays
- In response to GCR's question UNHCR noted that the emergency accommodation facilities will include 24/7 care of UAC and case management, in the purpose of setting out the strategic placement notion, i.e inclusion of UAC in long-term care arrangements based on their profile and needs.

- In response to Safe Passage's question, the SSPUAM representative noted that cases of age assessment are referred to RIS while asylum registration takes place after inclusion in emergency care arrangements.

Updates from Relocation scheme for UAC, SSPUAM representative:

- Up to date 1,065 UAC have been relocated to various European states in the framework of the Relocation scheme, i.e 69% progress of the program based on the initial pledge.
- There are currently 471 UAC in the pool which is currently under the matching process, while 120 UAC are expected to be relocated to Portugal and France asap
- So far, 42 UAC identified in precarious living conditions have been relocated to European states
- Arsis, DCI and Faros have been encountered with expectations by UAC to be included in the Relocation scheme. According to Arsis some newly arrived UAC were looking forward to be included in the Relocation scheme, and when they were informed that this is not possible anymore, they continued their irregular journey in northern Europe.
- SSPUAM representative reiterated that the Relocation program has closed and that it remains unclear whether Relocation will be institutionalized in the long -run. SSPUAM advocates for the standardization of Relocation at European level however, in the meantime no expectations should be raised among UAC.
- UNHCR informed the task force that between 17- 19 November, SSPUAM, Arsis, METAdrasi, NCR and UNHCR jointly launched the internal *Lessons Learnt exercise* for the National Emergency Response Mechanism for Unaccompanied Minors in precarious living conditions, following almost one year after its implementation. The exercise included thorough assessment of achieved results, actors' performance against set targets, progress made vis a vis agreed NERM action plan, operational challenges, risks and alternative modalities/ solutions adopted in response, identified trends etc in the purpose of optimizing NERM as a cost- effective and flexible scheme and facilitate effective institutionalization in the first semester of 2022.