

Athens, 22.1.2021

Minutes of the 90th MHPSS Technical Working Group at Babel Day Centre

Chaired by Maria Ntetsika

Participants: ADDMA, Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos, GCR, EPAPSY, MsF OCG, Network for children’s rights, MsF VoT, ARSIS, MdM, HR360, Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors/ Unit for Social Integration and Support of Unaccompanied Minors, Greek Network for the Right to Shelter and Housing, Spyros Koulocheris, Babel Day Centre

Agenda:

- Discussion with Mr Lazaros Petromelidis, representative of the Greek Network for the Right to Shelter and Housing, on issues related to the increase of homeless refugees and asylum seekers
- Discussion and updates on the current situation
- AOB

<p>Discussion with Mr Lazaros Petromelidis, representative of the Greek Network for the Right to Shelter and Housing, on issues related to the increase of homeless refugees and asylum seekers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR360: The last six months they have observed an increase of homeless people residing on the urban setting of Athens. The majority of them either has fallen out of the asylum procedure or has broken the geographical restriction in the islands.• Network for children’s rights: Many unaccompanied minors from Pakistan visited the offices of the organization the last week. The majority of them lives in the streets, does not have heavy clothes and has not yet been registered for the asylum process.• Spyros Koulocheris: We need to examine the issue of the increase of homeless people together with the legal aid on the
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second level of the asylum process. Many individuals have been fallen out of the procedure and they are now in a limbo situation especially in the islands. In addition, there is a great difficulty for trans women to find a safe shelter, since in many cases they are not being identified as women. There is a programme focused on the support of trans women called trans care.

- **Unit for Social Integration and Support of Unaccompanied Minors:** The registration in the asylum process remains a crucial issue for the unaccompanied minors that is already known to the Ministry. Many steps, legal and practical, are taking place to accelerate the process.
- **MsF VoT:** In the VoT clinic, they have as well observed an increase of homeless people. In many cases it has proved to be very difficult to rent a house after exiting the Estia programme and also due to bureaucratic reasons often it takes a long time for a refugee to receive the state benefits.
- **ARSIS:** There is a gap regarding the accommodation of survivors of torture and an integration policy focused on VoTs as well. The right to shelter needs to be part of a larger policy regarding integration and not a problem trying to be solved through short-term programs.
- **ADDMA:** The number of the non-compliant remains large, all of them can potentially become homeless at any moment.
- **EPAPSY:** There is a last-minute notice about the continuation of residing in the Estia apartments, which increases the pressure and the stress to both refugees and professionals. Moreover, there isn't any provision for accommodation for refugees/asylum seekers with disabilities.
- **MsF OCG:** In the clinic of MsF, they have noticed that many vulnerable individuals and families were forced to leave the Estia programme without having previously secured any place

to go. In addition, the survivors of sexual or gendered based violence in Samos are obliged to stay in the site together with the perpetrators since there isn't any provision for a shelter.

- **MdM:** A shelter for single women and single mothers started operating by MdM funded by EEA grants. The shelter has a capacity for forty-four women. A woman needs to have a negative Covid_19 test of the last seventy-two hours.
- **Greek Network for the Right to Shelter and Housing:** In a discussion with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that recently took place, the person in charge informed the representatives of the Network that the number of homeless people in Greece at the moment is seven hundred sixty-two. The existing system for the recording of homeless people in its Municipality is not very effective according to the experience of many organizations. The Network in discussions with UNHCR suggested to focus on the issue of homelessness of refugees and asylum seekers in the advocacy initiatives, as it is the common ground with the initiatives of the Network. No matter who is living in the streets, the fact is that he or she is living in the streets. Regarding the social housing, at the moment there are only six hundred apartments all around Greece. During the Covid_19 pandemic eighty homeless people receive a fine for not complying with the restrictive measures. The municipalities are obliged to transfer the homeless people in shelters during the pandemic due to protection of public health issues. Recently the municipality of Athens announced the existence of sixty-three buildings owned by the Municipality. The Network sent a request on the Municipality about the plans for using a number of these buildings for social housing or other forms of housing. Up to now, they haven't received a response. This is the report on the access to decent and affordable housing for all of the European Committee on Employment and Social Affairs:

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2020-0247_EL.html

<p>Updates on the current situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR360: The organization continues to provide services in Skaramagas and Elaionas sites. The community Centre provides services remotely due to the restriction measures. • ADDMA: There are still some details that need to be discussed with the Ministry of Migration. At the moment all the staff of the HESTIA 2021 has a three-month contract with the organization. There will be some changes related to the exit strategy and the vulnerable cases, that are not yet fully known. • GCR: In Elaionas safe zone, there is a positive change regarding to the duration that an unaccompanied child needs to stay in the safe zone until he can move to a shelter. However, the issue of the long waiting period for the registration in the Asylum services remains.
<p>Agenda for the next WG</p>	<p>-Discussion and updates on the current situation</p> <p>-AOB</p>

The next MHPSS WG meeting is going to take place on **Friday 5th of February** at **09:30 -11:30**.