

Child Protection Sub-Working Group
02.04.2021 Minutes of Meeting

Date:	Wednesday, 02 April 2021 at 10.00-12.00 a.m., via Webex	
Participants:	SSPUAM, GAS, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes, IOM, IRC, MoLSA (EKKA), , the Smile of the Child, Faros, DCI, METAdrasi, Elix, Hellenic Red Cross, Arsis, NCR	
Chair:	UNHCR: Theodora D. Tsovili (tsovili@unhcr.org)	
Agenda	National Tracing and Protection mechanism for UAC living in precarious conditions as an alternative to protective custody – Launch of 24/7 Tracing Line	
	<p>Mrs Agapidaki welcomed the establishment of National Tracing and Protection mechanism for UAC living in precarious conditions as an alternative to protective custody in the beginning of 2021 and announced the launch of the 24/4 Tracing line which is ready to receive referrals of UAC identified as in precarious conditions as of 5 April 2021.</p> <p>The SSPUAM stressed the importance of immediate notification of central team upon identification of homeless children, given the sensitive and high risk character of this particular category of UAC. The SSPUAM mentioned that broad categories of UAC fall under the protection umbrella of the Mechanism, not limiting its spectrum to “homeless children” <i>stricto sensu</i>, but including also children living with adults who are not assigned with their care through formal procedures, children living in the streets, children unofficially residing in accommodation sites, hosted in squats and other conditions that could be considered as precarious.</p> <p>National Tracing and Protection Mechanism Expert coordinator described the Mechanism, its institutional basis, operational components and mode of implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ <u>The legal basis</u> of the Mechanism stems from the abolition of protective custody under art 43 of L.4760/2020 ⇒ Actors supporting the implementation of the Mechanism are IOM, METAdrasi, Network for Children’s Rights and Arsis in Thess/niki ⇒ <u>Main objective:</u> immediate transfer of homeless UAC to emergency accommodation ⇒ For cases of undocumented unaccompanied children traced at entry points, where RICs operate (Evros, Mytilene, Kos, Samos, Chios, Leros), the reception and identification procedure will be followed, as per L.4636/2020 ⇒ <u>Basic actors and competent authorities involved:</u> Prosecutor's Office, Police (identification and registration, accompaniments, when necessary), Asylum Service, Authorized representatives/Guardians, SSPUAM (Tracing & Protection team, 24/7 Tracing Line, coordination), IOM (emergency accommodation facilities), ARSIS Thess/niki (Day Center/ Info Desk, Mobile Unit, case management teams), METAdrasi (Day Centre/ Info Desk, Mobile Unit, accompaniment support service, 24/7 interpretation provision), Network for Children’s Rights (info desk, case management) ⇒ <u>Referrals to the 24/7 line can be made by:</u> civil society actors, the police, hospitals, private entities, refugee community, municipalities, the Asylum Service, citizens, unaccompanied children 	<p>Action Points:</p> <p>SSPUAM and the Smile of the Child agreed to have a meeting in order to ensure coordination of the two existing help lines</p>

- ⇒ The Tracing line may be reached at: tel. (0030) 2132128888 & (0030) 6942773030 (through WhatsApp and Viber), 24/7 basis
- ⇒ the referring actor will be instructed to follow the referral procedure, as already established (e-mail to ssuams.stegasi@migration.gov.gr, using the same referral form) & will be provided with further guidance, as applicable
- ⇒ Service provision per actor:
 - Day Centers/info Desks Athens & Thess/niki: Receive self-referred UAC in precarious conditions & among other services provision, refer them to SSPUAM
 - Mobile Units METAdrasi Attica Arsis Thess/niki: Tracing of UAC through street work activities or following requests by SSPUAM, provision of non-food items, psychological first aid, conduct assessments and accompaniments, as applicable
 - IOM is in the process of establishing 100 places for UAC in Attica and Thessaloniki. IOM will support the daily case management in the emergency accommodation facilities with appropriate staff, including accompaniments of UAC for medical examinations

- ⇒ **Step-by-step procedure:**
 - When undocumented UAC are traced by the AS, public health institutions, civil society institutions:
 1. call the SSPUAM National Tracing Line (24/7) and send a referral to the SSPUAM
 2. the SSPUAM team notifies mobile units
 3. Mobile units locate the child and provide initial information on the procedure
 4. The mobile units accompany the child to the Police Department of reference for identification / registration
 5. The SSPUAM team seeks and secures a placement in an emergency accommodation facility
 6. The mobile units accompany the child to the emergency accommodation facility, following the order of the PP for the placement
 - ✓ When traced by the police: As per above, but the referral is sent by the police & mobile units are notified in order to attend the procedure at the police department
 - ✓ When a UAC or a citizen calls the line, steps 2-6 are followed & the referral is sent by the police to SSPUAM

 - When documented UAC are traced in Attica and Thess/niki, they do not go through the procedure at the police department
When traced by the AS, public health institutions, civil society institutions:
 1. Call the SSPUAM National Tracing Line (24/7) and send a referral to the SSPUAM
 2. the SSPUAM team notifies mobile units
 3. Mobile units locate the child and provide initial information on the procedure
 4. The SSPUAM team seeks and secures a placement in an emergency accommodation facility

5. The mobile units accompany the child to the emergency accommodation facility, following the order of the PP for the placement

- ✓ When traced by the police: as per above, but the referral is sent by the police & mobile units are notified in order to locate the child at the police department for the transfer to the emergency accommodation facility
- ✓ When a UAC or a citizen calls the line, steps 2-5 are followed & the referral is sent by the mobile unit

- Documented and undocumented UAC traced in rural areas:
 - ✓ Call the National Tracing Line of the SSPUAM Central Team (24/7)
 - ✓ The SSPUAM Team notifies the Police, who trace the child (if they are not the ones that have located him/her) and accompany him/her to the competent police station
 - ✓ If the child is undocumented, the procedure of identification / registration at the police department is followed
 - ✓ If the child is documented, he/she is transferred to the police department only for the purposes of placement
 - ✓ The SSPUAM team seeks and secures a placement in an emergency accommodation facility
 - ✓ METAdrasi's accompaniment service (or the police, if necessary) accompanies the child to the emergency accommodation facility, following the order of the PP

The representative of the AS requested whether in cases where the child is identified is homeless and documented, s/he still should he be referred to the Police. According to SSPUAM Expert in this case the child does not need to go through the police anymore, this step can be overpassed.

According to the SSPUAM expert, every child who is not in short or long term care arrangement, but is homeless or in precarious condition i.e living in apartments with adults, squats, with relatives not assigned with the care of the child through official order, UAC who move frequently among different locations, UAC who are victims of child labor and are identified in rural areas, UAC unofficially residing in sites/camps in mainland etc

The representative of the Smile of Child noted that they have been receiving calls about UAC in emergency or unsafe conditions and expressed their intention to refer these cases to the SSPUAM tracing line following the establishment of the National Mechanism.

On a similar note, the SSPUAM called all actors running hotlines for the protection of unaccompanied children to inform the SSPUAM on their activities in order to coordinate with each other.

With regards to the point raised concerning the registration of undocumented children, the SSPUAM reiterated that they are in constant contact with GAS, they are planning to set a special office for asylum procedures of vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied children. The goal of the SSPUAM is to minimize the waiting hours for the inclusion to emergency accommodation.

With reference to Faros' query, the SSPUAM Expert mentioned that each referring actor should share with the Central team basic information about the child who is identified in precarious conditions, similar with the data shared with the Accommodation unit for UAC's placement i.e biodata, location of the child etc. The Experts added that the Tracing line will be guiding referring actors on the requested information and actions to follow.

As regards the national registry for unaccompanied children, the SSPUAM mentioned that they are in process of collecting and harmonizing UAC data, in order to establish reliable and updated data sources for UAC at national level. The SSPUAM is in consultation with EKKA in this process. The ultimate goal is the development of a data base containing not only the legal status of UAC but also vulnerabilities of children and other important information.

With reference to UNHCR's query on the appointment of Guardians in support of the National Mechanism, EKKA representative mentioned that they intend to contribute with Guardians, as necessary.

TDH posed a question regarding the expected timeframes of implementation. According to SSPUAM some bureaucratic issues persist, while emergency accommodation is not fully operational yet as more space will be freed up soon.

According to the SSPUAM spontaneous arrivals of unaccompanied children to sites will be assessed as well, as it needs to be established whether children are found in precarious conditions as a result of having absconded from care arrangements. The SSPUAM intends to avoid triggering negative trends i.e UAC absconding from care arrangements in order to be included in emergency accommodation.