



INTER-AGENCY CONSULTATION FORUM Lesvos Meeting Minutes

Date:	Thursday, 9 June 2022	Time:	09h00
Location:	Teleconference and via physical presence at the UNHCR office		
Chairing:	UNHCR, Theodoros Alexellis		
The Inter-Agency Consultation Forum took place via WebEx and via physical presence due to lax COVID19 restrictions.			

Welcome and Introduction

1. **Overall Snapshot**
2. **Protection**
3. **Sectors: Main developments and challenges**
 - a. **WASH (MOTG)**
 - b. **Pre-Integration (UNHCR)**
 - c. **Shelter (Eurorelief)**
 - d. **Basic Assistance (Eurorelief)**
 - e. **Education (METAdrasi)**
 - f. **Health (CMA)**
4. **AoB**



UNHCR asked IACF participants to register individually at the IACF member list, using their own emails, instead of registering multiple people under one, organizational email, so that they can all receive updates and snapshots.

UNHCR's Head of sub-Office Lesvos informed the participants that the nature of the IACF may change from a Forum to a regional Coordination Meeting, such as an Inter-Sectoral Working Group, which will only include Actors implementing programs on Lesvos, as we are transitioning from the emergency to a more stable situation.

1. Overall Snapshot (statistics as provided by Greek Authorities)

Arrivals to Lesvos

There was a total of **189** arrivals in Lesvos from 2 May until 5 June 2022. In comparison to last year's 107 arrivals during the same period, there is a noticeable increase, both in people arriving each month and in the total of arrivals. Possible factors for this may include easing of COVID-19 restrictions and improvement of the weather.

As of 5 June 2022, there were **562** arrivals in Lesvos. **30%** from Afghanistan, **25%** from Somalia, **14%** from Sierra Leone, **5%** from the Democratic Republic of Congo, **5%** from Eritrea and **21%** from other origins. There is a considerable increase in arrivals from African countries.

As for the demographics of the residual population on Lesvos, there is a total of **1,291** people, out of whom **49%** is from Afghanistan, **18%** from Somalia, **5%** from Sierra Leone, **4%** from Syria, **4%** from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and **20%** from other nationalities. Men represent a total of **53%** of the population, whereas women represent **24%** and children **23%**. Out of the total number of people residing in Lesvos, **1,025 (79%)** reside in Mavrovouni RIC, **188 (15%)** reside in other facilities.

As of 5 June, the total arrivals in Greece are **4,212**. Out of those, **2,035** were arrivals by sea, and **2,177** were by land. The total arrivals through Lesvos were **562**.

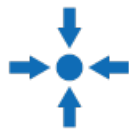
Departures from Lesvos

In 2021, there was a total of **8,196** departures from Lesvos to the mainland. As of 5 June, in 2022 there is a total of **697** departures so far. From 2 May until 5 June **146** of those departures took place.

2. Protection (UNHCR)

During the last **Protection Working Group** (PWG), UNHCR briefed the participants on the following developments:

The Reception and Identification Service (RIS) and the Regional Asylum Office (RAO) started conducting the registration of new arrivals inside the Reception and Identification Center (RIC), so new arrivals do not have to be transferred to the premises of RAO in Pagani.



RIS staff plans to move the single men from the Rubb halls in the Yellow Zone to the Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) in the Red Zone. Protection actors agreed that the authorities should be encouraged to consult with them while planning for shelter allocation, to avoid any protection concerns.

UNHCR reiterated the invitation to Protection actors to contribute to the mapping of the population residing outside the RIC, with the main aim being to understand their situation and assess their protection needs. This will also facilitate the communication with population outside the RIC for developments that may concern them.

UNHCR observed a challenge in free legal aid provided by the Registry lawyers, since it is not clear whether they can support rejected asylum seekers at first instance when the Appeals' Authority invites the appellant to an oral hearing. UNHCR has reported to the Asylum Service and is following up on this development.

Lesvos RAO rejected as inadmissible the subsequent asylum application of a Syrian asylum-seeker, even though more than two years have passed since he entered Greece. Upon residing in Greece for over a year, the condition of having a link to Turkey is not fulfilled and his application should be examined on the merits. UNHCR is aware of three more similar cases of Syrians rejected on admissibility grounds by the Appeals' Authority. UNHCR raised both issues with the Head of Lesvos RAO and is following up.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) updates

UNHCR delivered a presentation on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) during the last PWG. Moreover, UNHCR conducted a discussion on the new circular issued by the prosecutors of the Greek Supreme Court, which was shared with all prosecutors across the country. UNHCR welcomes this development, hoping that the prosecutors will examine each possible human trafficking case in accordance with this guidance.

UNHCR has scheduled a training on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/GBV and Child Protection that will be addressed to the private security staff of G4S, with the participation of the Hellenic Police.

Child Protection (CP) Updates

The two lawyers, from PRAKSIS and Defense Children International, who legally represent the unaccompanied minors (UACs), face issues with the fact that RAO is scheduling asylum interviews of multiple UACs on the same day. The involved parties will invite RAO to jointly identify ways to move forward.

The Safe Area currently hosts **35** UACs, while IOM confirmed the transfer of **21** out of the **35** to a safe shelter in the mainland.

Other Protection Updates

As reported by Mental Health and Psychological Support (MHPSS) actors there is a gap in relation to the mental health response within the RIC, concerning people with psychiatric and addiction issues. The MHPSS actors are working on possible ways to resolve the issue.

IRC's MHPSS team is accepting referrals both for individual and group sessions.

Movement on The Ground (MOTG) shared the findings of their survey on WASH/Protection-related issues (*see more under WASH Sector updates*) and will seek support from the Health and Basic Assistance Working Groups in identifying solutions mostly concerning people with mobility issues.

The next PWG meeting is scheduled for 5 July, at 14:00, via physical presence and WebEx.



Legal Aid sub-Working Group (LAsWG) Updates

HIAS will keep chairing the sWG until next month. Moreover, the meeting will be taking place on a monthly, rather than a biweekly basis, at least until September.

During the last meeting, Diotima gave a presentation on the theme of "GBV/Trafficking identification and referral". Additionally, GCR shared the [2021 AIDA Country Report for Greece](#) published in collaboration with the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). HIAS is resuming info-sessions in their offices, on multiple thematic categories.

Participants raised concerns about the proper training of RIC employees to conduct the first assessment upon registration. Moreover, actors complained about receiving copies of their beneficiaries' files from the RIC with delay. Finally, Fenix noted that the vulnerability assessment is not completed until the interview.

There are two hearings pending before the Council of State against two Joint Ministerial Decisions. One decision concerns the NGO Registry and the other one the fee of 100€ for the second and further subsequent asylum applications. Both hearings were postponed until December.

The next LAsWG meeting is scheduled for 28 June.

3. Sectors: Main developments and challenges

a. WASH (MOTG)

MOTG conducted a comparative survey with people accommodated in the RIC to have an overview on both general access to WASH facilities and especially examine the access of people with mobility issues. Based on the findings MOTG is examining ways forward to improve accessibility.

MOTG in cooperation with Eurorelief is considering moving people with mobility issues closer to the WASH facilities and dropping hygiene products directly to their housing units, as well as providing mobility aids, including walking sticks and wheelchairs.

As various concerns were expressed regarding the access of single men accommodated in the Yellow Zone to the Blue Zone where single women and Female Headed Households (FHH) are residing, this accessway will be closed at 22:00 and opened at 05:00 by the police on a daily basis.

When the planned transfer of single men from the Yellow Zone to the Red Zone will take place, the WASH facilities will close at the Yellow Zone while the ones at the Red Zone will re-open.

The next WASH WG meeting is scheduled for 14 June at 13:00 via physical presence.

b. Pre-Integration (UNHCR)

Currently there are **421** Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs) in the RIC and **78** people received a recognition decision in May.



On 23 May, RIS resumed referrals of BIPs to the Passport Office for the issuance of identification and travel documents, giving mostly priority to individuals whose family members are BIPs and have already been served by the Police Taskforce, so the whole family can leave the island.

WG participants shared that BIPs face challenges regarding their work permits, due to the delays in the issuance of resident permits.

[SYNLESVOS](#) has launched a project boosting the empowerment and development of local producers and vulnerable groups, including refugees.

Eurorelief launched a new program, called “MORIA ACADEMY”, which aims to enhance the capacity of refugees. The program provides certified trainings and seminars to the beneficiaries, and links them with potential employers. The current trainings consist of agriculture and computer programming, and in the future, they hope to include tourism and hospitality trainings, as well as summer school activities for families.

Caritas Hellas supports refugees and vulnerable local population to submit their Annual Tax Declaration, free of charge. Caritas Hellas also informed the participants of a new social space in the centre of Mytilene, where educational and psychosocial support activities are provided. Eurorelief provides daycare to kids 1-3 years old for women to participate in Caritas’ educational activities.

The IOM Helios program informed the participants that on 15-17 June, job counsellors will be consulting with BIPs at the RIC. Possible employers from Crete will be joining.

The applications have opened for the project “Moving Together”, which aims to provide educational and sports activities alongside Psychosocial and Psychological support (PSS), in collaboration with MDM, for families and children between 10 and 18 years old.

A meeting with local authorities and stakeholders on the education of refugee and migrant children took place, organized by the Ministry of Education with the support of UNICEF and with the participation of the General Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education, the Head of the Independent Department for the Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education and UNHCR. The aim was to inform local authorities and communities about relevant challenges and to mobilize them to facilitate and support children's access to education.

The next Pre-Integration WG meeting is scheduled for 4 July at 13:00 via physical presence and WEBEX.

c.	Shelter (Eurorelief)
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There are **15** empty containers in the RIC’s Blue Zone, and many have various issues, such as A/C malfunctions, power failures etc. Eurorelief is providing this information to the RIC’s Facility Management Team and Technical Service, to find ways forward, so people can move in as soon as possible.

As Eurorelief is aiming at placing RIC residents only in insulated units, they performed an assessment on the Red Zone, and in cooperation with the Technical Service, they have undertaken general maintenance and repairs, so the RHUs can be ready for future housing. Currently there are **72** insulated RHUs.

In the Yellow Zone, Rubb Hall 2 caught fire on 31 May. The fire also caused damage on Rubb Hall 3. Consequently, a total of **28** people were moved to different housing units. The Ministry of Migration and



Asylum (MoMA) has verbally approved the transfer of **318** single men from the Yellow to the Red Zone. MoMA's official written approval is expected. Eurorelief plans to inform the residents on 14 June about the movement, which will take place on 15 June. The transfer is expected to be concluded by 16 June, with assistance from RIS staff. The communities will be involved in the decision making.

The next Shelter WG meeting is scheduled for 14 June at 12:00 via physical presence at the Shelter Container.

d.	Basic Assistance (Eurorelief)
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MOTG has started distributing fans to the RHUs and plans to start a continued distribution of fly strips to all housing units.

Families and single women can receive sunscreen and mosquito repellent in Eurorelief's free hygiene shop, following the camp wide distribution. Moreover, there will be another round of sunscreen distribution for the single men in the following weeks. Additionally, MOTG will do another mosquito spray distribution, provided by EODY.

Following the fire in Rubb Hall 2 and Rubb Hall 3 in the Yellow Zone, Eurorelief distributed Core Relief Items (blankets, sleeping bags and mats), clothing, shoes, a dry food package, as well as a ticket for the Hope Project, to receive additional clothing.

The next Basic Assistance WG meeting is scheduled for 20 June at 13:00 online.

e.	Education (METAdrasi)
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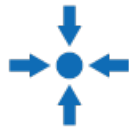
There are currently **30** children registered in formal education. The Refugee Education Coordinator (REC) will inform children who will be registered for the new school year, that they could enroll in summer activities consisted of remedial teaching, provided by METAdrasi.

A new guideline dictates that the RIC will take over the initial outreach as far as educational activities are concerned, with the aim of getting the families' consent to share their data with the relevant organizations. Subsequently, the organizations can reach out to families to complete the registration. The written guidelines from the RIC are expected.

On World Environment Day, following the approval by RIS, children who attend METAdrasi's educational activities participated in an excursion to Agia Paraskevi supported by the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest. The excursion was a joint effort by many actors, including METAdrasi, UNHCR, Home For All and Hellenic Red Cross.

There is a functioning library at the Education Hub at the RIC, operated by Starfish.

f.	Health (CMA)
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Medical

Medical visits have increased by 5% in May and the possible reason behind is increased arrivals. Additionally, in May, MDM took over primary care services, however they are low in resources. This is of concern in case there is further increase in needs.

The medical area has no running water and a lack of bottled water which makes it difficult for people to take pills.

In units with no A/C, people cannot store their medication safely in cool places during the summer. The Medical team provides ice packs as temporary solutions.

Regulations on medical prescriptions dictate that people should carry their prescription along with the medication, in case of checks at the gate. The Medical Working Group participants expressed concerns since specific medications can only be given to the patients once the prescription is collected by the pharmacist. EODY and the Police are discussing possibly allowing patients to carry a copy of the prescription or other ways forward.

Individuals without PAAYPA can only receive prescriptions from Public Health Actors. This creates concerns as some medical specializations are not available at the hospital, and people need to visit a private physician. There is an exception for psychiatric medication.

Mental Health

IRC is extending their services to include the local vulnerable population, beyond refugees.

RIC residents have a growing demand on access to medication, with or without a valid prescription. Staff has had to deal with aggressive behaviors if needs are not met.

CMA and MSF conducted a meeting to raise concerns about the appropriate training and resources to deal with urgent mental health cases.

Since 1 June, the psychiatrist of CMA has resumed consultations, but is not accepting new patients until a solution is found on an appropriate way to conduct her work, given the limited resources.

5.	AoB
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The next IACF meeting will be held on 7 July.