

Terms of Reference for National Protection Working Group, Greece

Version – May 2016

Background:

By March 2016, over one million refugees and migrants arrived in Greece, mostly on their way to Germany or other European countries. The majority are Syrians, Afghans and Iraqi nationals and include refugees and asylum seekers who are in need of international protection and assistance.

While up to mid-November 2015, most persons of concern (POCs) stayed in Greece for only a few days, the situation has significantly changed after the February 2016 following new border restrictions implemented by the Governments along the Western Balkan routes and later the EU-Turkey Agreement concerning the matter. As a result, as of end of April 2016, over 54,500 persons in need of international protection and migrants are housed in the country; over 46,000 in mainland Greece and over 8,500 on the islands. 52 percent of this population are from Syria, 25% from Afghanistan, 16 % from Iraq, and the remaining 7% from different other counties of origin. As of the beginning of May 2016, refugees and migrants in mainland are accommodated in a number of formal sites as well as two informal sites in Eidomeni and Pireus. In addition, over 8,500 persons in need of international protection and migrants in the islands remain in the ‘hotspots’, closed facilities.

To respond to the current emergency, in January 2016, UNHCR and partners launched the Regional Refugee and Migrants Response Plan (RRMRP), to promote and implement a comprehensive protection response in the region. The plan includes the key sectors as protection, food, health and nutrition, Shelter, NFI and WASH (see the Inter-Sectoral Coordination framework).

In the Protection sector, the RRMRP identified strategic priorities such as safe access to territory, protection-centered assistance and access to effective solutions in safe and dignified environment. The Protection Working Group was established in order to ensure that these strategic priorities are implemented in a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, timely and efficient fashion.

Group Objective:

In line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and the RRMRP, the Protection Working Group provides technical guidance and oversight to ensure effective, coherent and predictable interventions to support the Government of Greece in its efforts to respond to protection needs of persons of concern. To achieve this goal, the PWG undertakes the following:

Joint protection response: The PWG will systematize, coordinate and facilitate the protection activities of agencies working with affected population. This includes joint efforts in the needs/gaps analysis, joint recommendations for responses, joint resources mobilization, joint planning, joint information management efforts and joint reporting. It is also important noting that the joint design of interventions provides the necessary **accountability framework**.

Capacity: The Protection Working Group will be responsible for continuous capacity gaps analysis and strengthening the capacity of national and international actors to ensure that protection responses are in

line with the strategic priorities, the evolving nature of the protection space and needs of persons of concern.

Advocacy: The Working Group is also responsible to identifying advocacy gaps and developing appropriate advocacy messages and tools to engage relevant Governmental and international organizations.

Strategic leadership: The National Protection Working Group provides support and guidance to the Protection Working Groups established in the field locations, as Thessaloniki, Lesbos, Chios, Kos, Lesbos, Leros and Samos. The PWG will have an oversight role over SGBV and Child Protection Sub-working Groups.

Principles and definitions:

The work of the PWG shall be guided by the main Principles of Partnership, namely:

- Equality among partners in consultation and decision making
- Transparency among partners
- Result-oriented approach to humanitarian action
- Commitment among partners to accomplish undertaken tasks
- Complementarity between the capacity and activities of local and international actors, and
- Accountability

The activities of members of the PWG shall be guided by the Protection Principles contained in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, namely:

- Do-no-harm: avoiding exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions as well as protect people from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion
- Impartiality: providing assistance in proportion to need and without discrimination
- Claiming rights: Assisting people claim their rights, access available remedies and recover from the effects of abuse.

Geographical Coverage

The Protection Working Group has a national, country-wide coverage providing strategic direction and guidance to the protection working groups established in the field.

Sector tasks and responsibilities:

- Jointly identify gaps and relevant recommendations for response through participatory methods
- Establish and maintain coordination systems to support service deliver;
- Develop and manage response plans;
- Develop, applied and promote standards, guidelines and good practices, including capacity building.
- Manage information to support decision making;
- Ensure emergency preparedness, including contingency planning if necessary;
- Capacity building
- Advocate on behalf of affected populations and sector participants; and,
- Ensure accountability to affected populations, including Communication with Communities.

Membership and Chairing

Membership to the forum is open to all agencies, who are currently operational and are engaged in actual delivery of protection services as part of their humanitarian response to the refugee and migrant crisis. The Protection Working Group is chaired by UNHCR. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) will serve as a co-chair. Further discussions are underway to ensure that the Greek Refugee Council will take on the co-chair function in the future.

Sector/Working Group Coordination Structure:

The Protection Working Group provides support and guidance to the Protection Working Groups established in the field locations, as Thessaloniki, Lesvos, Chios, Kos, Lesvos, Leros and Samos. In addition, the PWG will have an oversight role over Child Protection and SGBV Sub-working Groups. In addition, the PWG is represented in the Inter-Sectoral Working Group through its chairperson, where protection related inputs and challenges are discussed at the strategic and policy level.

Reporting

The field based protection working group and the Children Protection and SGBV Sub Groups reports to the National Protection Working Group.

The National Protection Working group that reports to the Inter-sectorial working group.

Meeting

The Protection Working Group will convene for a meeting on a weekly basis, every Tuesday at 09:00-10:30 at UNHCR Meeting Room located at 91 Michalakopoulou str, Athens Greece.

Minutes of Meetings

Minutes of the PWG meetings will be taken on a rotational basis (see the template) by member organizations who would share the draft among all members. The minutes will be endorsed at the beginning of the next meeting.

Revision of Terms of Reference

The terms of reference guiding the structure and activities of the Protection Working Group will be revised every three months and/or based on immediate needs as agreed by the members.

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