



Annual Report 2023



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Migration & Asylum
General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons
& Institutional Protection



Co-funded by
the European Union



HOME 
AFFAIRS FUNDS
SAFETY FOR ALL | 2021-2027





Annual
Report
2023



The paintings presented are creations of unaccompanied minors.



Contents



Greeting by the Minister of Migration and Asylum	4
Greeting by the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum	6
Foreword by the Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection	8
Introduction	12
Statistics of unaccompanied minors	14
Flagship actions implemented by the General Secretariat	19
1. Institutional Protection of Unaccompanied Minors	21
1.1. Preparation for the implementation of the National Guardianship System	22
1.2. Harmonisation of best interest assessment procedures	24
1.3. Promotion of the institution of foster care for unaccompanied minors	24
1.4. Code of Ethics for those who work with children	25
2. Ensuring the housing of all unaccompanied minors	27
2.1. Completion of the Voluntary Relocation Programme	30
3. National Emergency Response Mechanism	33
4. Ensuring the quality of services provided in the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors	41
4.1. Implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures of the accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors & field audits in the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors	41
4.2. Exchange of know-how with other countries	42
4.3. Personnel training programme in cooperation with the National Kapodistrian University of Athens	42
4.4. National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors	42
5. Promotion and prevention of mental health of unaccompanied minors and empowerment of frontline professionals	45
6. The Mentorship project	47
7. Supporting the social integration of unaccompanied minors	51
7.1. Enhancing the access to formal and non-formal education for unaccompanied minors	51
7.2. Promotion of integration actions for the participation of unaccompanied minors in cultural and sports activities	52
7.3. Support for unaccompanied minors regarding their preparation and transition to the labour market	52
7.4. Raising awareness of the local community	53
7.5. Participation in European projects	54
8. Actions to protect vulnerable third country nationals	57
8.1. Actions to protect against trafficking in human beings	57
9. Actions that are expected to be implemented shortly	59
9.1. COMPASS – COMPLEMENTARY Mechanism for Supporting the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors in Greece	59
9.2. Programme "STIRIXIS – Housing programme for vulnerable applicants for international protection"	60
9.3. Reinforcement of services provided at the Safe Areas of CCACs and Fylakio RIC	60
Acknowledgments	62



Greeting by the Minister of Migration and Asylum

The assumption of my duties at the Ministry of Migration and Asylum coincided with the establishment of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection. This strategic choice by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his government is indicative of the – now rightly allotted – pivotal position of the protection of vulnerable third country nationals within the institutional framework of the migration and asylum ecosystem.

At the same time, the establishment of the General Secretariat serves as recognition for the work already performed for the protection of unaccompanied minors during the last three years. From the immediate identification of an unaccompanied child upon their entry into the country, to the accommodation of children in structures designated for child protection, and the appointment of guardians who will accompany them throughout their course in Greece, a holistic system has been built with the aim of leaving no child exposed to danger.

Protection does not end there; the next step is supporting children so that they can reach their full potential. Access to education, vocational guidance, and training is an immediate priority for unaccompanied children. Through innovative and pilot projects, as well as strategic partnerships with national and international stakeholders, the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection helps children find their place in Greece as active members of society.

During 2024, the goal is to reinforce and expand the innovative path already carved out, bearing fruit through targeted actions addressing more groups of vulnerable migrants and refugees. Validating the message that, in our country, fundamental rights are protected, and legal migrants and refugees are supported so that they can contribute to societal wellbeing, proving that legal migration, with the appropriate management, can constitute an opportunity for growth.



Dimitris Kairidis

Minister of Migration and Asylum





Greeting by the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum

It was February 2020, when the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors was created on the initiative of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, with Irini Agapidaki as its first Secretary. Shortly afterwards, the Prime Minister did me the honour of entrusting me with the mission of protecting the "children of war". And shortly after, the mandate as Secretary was taken over by Heracles Moskoff.

During these years, the flagship actions of the Special Secretariat have multiplied day by day: Thousands of children were housed, supported legislatively, legally, and psychosocially, their health care was ensured, they were integrated into education and vocational training, they made a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood, they gained autonomy and independent living.

The National Emergency Response Mechanism, the National Guardianship System, the National Protection Registry, the Mentorship Project, the link between Greek language skills and education and residence in the country were established. We have lived and continue to live moving success stories, we have seen children enter universities, we have created a comprehensive accommodation system with many good partners, we have successfully completed the relocation of 1,368 children to 13 European countries.



Sofia Voultepsi

*Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum,
responsible for Integration, Vulnerable
persons, and Unaccompanied Minors*

Our duty to protect the "children of war"

Our success has been recognised internationally, Greece has deservedly won the title of pioneer in child protection, more and more countries, organisations and large groups are standing by our side and supporting our work.

In the meantime, the Special Secretariat has been integrated into the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, always keeping the special place it deserves.

In a world that "produces" wars and refugees, children are the most innocent victims. And the easiest target. Protecting them from all kinds of dangers, their instrumentalisation by organised crime, extremism, and radicalisation, is the highest humanitarian duty. But also, a great contribution to Greek society, to the country's prosperity and to social peace and cohesion.

And nothing makes us prouder than the phrase "we want to give back to Greece what it has offered us".





SKILL AND TECHNIQUE
NEW GENERATION
RECKLESS ATTITUDE
YOUNG AMERICANA
OUT OF THE BOX THINKERS
DENIM STREET STYLE
ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE ABILITY
S T Y L E
WEARABLE GRAPHICS
CREATIVE CONCEPTS

Foreword by the Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection

The establishment of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection was and is a socially, politically, and institutionally imperative action. One of the key lessons we have learnt during our three years of operation as the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors is that vulnerability is a dynamic phenomenon with a multitude of manifestations running through the entire refugee population of our country and one that we can no longer turn a blind eye to.

In this new venture that we are launching, we go forward with the resources and experience of the past, the readiness of the present and the optimism of the future. Our main tool remains the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, a landmark document that started to be developed from the very first days of the Special Secretariat. It is a coherent account of the actions required to strengthen and reform the system of accommodation, the best solutions for the promotion of children's rights and their integration into Greek society. Starting from this example, we are now at the stage of elaborating a National Strategy for all Vulnerable Persons of refugee profile.

And speaking of the accommodation system, both as a Special Secretariat and now as a General Secretariat, we attach particular importance to the issue of ensuring appropriate and decent living conditions for every unaccompanied minor. In 2023, we managed about 3,500 accommodation requests while at the same time we proceeded with the publication of the Standard Operating Procedures and Licensing Framework of the Accommodation Centers for Unaccompanied Minors, and respectively the Standard Operating Procedures for Supervised Apartments for Semi-Independent Living of Unaccompanied Minors – which will be in force from the new year – which set high standards both in terms of building infrastructure and services provided to unaccompanied minors.

The operation of the National Emergency Response Mechanism has been crucial in our effort to formulate a solid framework of protection for every unaccompanied child and decisive in highlighting the multidimensional phenomenon of vulnerability. The Mechanism has now been established by law and has a telephone line that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with the support of interpreters and qualified professionals. The hotline provides guidance to children, citizens, local and public authorities on the steps and actions to be taken from the identification of an unaccompanied child to their placement in emergency accommodation centers.

At the same time, maintaining our role as the competent authority for the guardianship of unaccompanied minors, and after a period of systematic preparation, we expect the launch of the National Guardianship System at the beginning of the new year, thus ensuring for each unaccompanied child a properly trained professional, the guardian, in order to represent him/her in all procedures and to ensure his/her best inter-



Heracles Moskoff
*Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons
and Institutional Protection*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Moskoff', written in a cursive style.





Rogya

ests. In this demanding project we will be working with two civil society organisations with long experience in the field of child protection, METAdrasi and Praksis, which will be the guardianship service providers.

Another very important ally that we made sure that the unaccompanied children have by their side is the Mentors team. Mentors, having a refugee background and the necessary skills, now act as role models, providing individualised support and empowerment to unaccompanied minors in our country's accommodation facilities. These are people who have managed to fully integrate into Greek society, despite the lack of supportive framework they faced when they arrived in the country. We envision the same successful integration path for every unaccompanied child who remains on Greek territory.

After all, effective integration remains our fundamental objective. It is equally important, however, that our integration actions have a vision. The General Secretariat has recognised the crucial importance of supporting unaccompanied minors during the difficult stage of their transition to adulthood. And that is why our initiatives and interventions do not end on their 18th birthday. We envision the effective integration of these young people, creating an inclusive space for third country nationals that will allow them to integrate loss into their lives and reinvent themselves.

It is precisely on this basis that we have proposed the introduction of a relevant provision on the legalisation of the residence of young adults – who entered the country as unaccompanied minors – with an integration pathway, in the framework of an amendment to the Migration Code. Thus, the new law provides for the possibility of granting a residence permit to former unaccompanied minors who have successfully completed at least three classes of secondary education in Greek schools in Greece before reaching the age of twenty-three.

For the implementation of all our actions, multi-sectoral cooperation as well as support and synergy with civil society organisations has been crucial, essentially shaping a culture of partnerships between public and private entities as well as with international partners. We intend to apply the same successful model to our upcoming initiatives.

The growing phenomenon of human trafficking is at the forefront of our expanded strategic planning. A special department within the Secretariat is expected to be created for this purpose and we are developing a new national action plan to combat exploitation and trafficking in human beings, emphasising the synergies of organised civil society and the state. With these new and expanded competences we will be able to take care not only of victims of trafficking, but also of single-parent families, of victims of torture, of LGBTI applicants for international protection who experience multiple stigmatisation.

We need to recognise the vulnerabilities that may be found in third country nationals or stateless people with a refugee profile in order to manage them. We need to be educated in the fact that exploitative relationships are not limited to violence and coercion and that in order to empower victims, especially in the case of trafficking, we need to focus on the prevention part. A focused action that will be manifested both





through interventions at the level of education and training of front-line professionals in the methods of detecting the signs of exploitation or abuse and through interventions in public discourse aimed at informing and raising awareness among the general public, making it clear that in the chain of exploitation, respectively, demand plays a dominant role: in the equation there is not only the victim and the perpetrator but also the client or even the bystander.

In today's societies, the issue of integration is raised in all spheres of human existence and beyond the refugee issue. Our aim is to combat prejudice, isolation and stigmatisation by building a strong framework of protection for every child and every vulnerable person of refugee profile living in the country.

Meeting of the Secretary General with the President of the Republic.

The artwork given to Ms. Sakellariopoulou is a creation of Jameel, member of the team of Mentors of the General Secretariat.

Introduction

The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, formerly the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, has been the competent authority for the protection of unaccompanied and separated minors for **three years**, since February 2020. With its help, all necessary measures are taken for the protection, well-being and social integration of unaccompanied minors in the country, with the aim of creating a comprehensive framework of child protection and care, implementing the **National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors** developed by the Secretariat itself, so that, through actions, programmes and initiatives, the rights of minors are safeguarded. Specifically, the National Strategy is developed in four pillars as follows:

- (a) Improving the reception and accommodation system and ensuring the rights of unaccompanied minors,
- (b) finding and implementing sustainable solutions for each child,
- (c) protection from all forms of violence or exploitation, and
- (d) improving data collection on unaccompanied minors.

In July 2023, the **General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection** was established within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum to design and develop an effective protection framework **for all vulnerable groups of the refugee and migrant population** in the country. At the same time, the responsibilities and services of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors were transferred to the General Secretariat as a whole.

The new General Secretariat, having an expanded framework of responsibilities, aims to design and implement an **integrated system of protection for all vulnerable third country nationals or stateless persons** in Greece, and to coordinate the relevant services and agencies for an optimal response to the increased needs of support for these persons.

In this context the **National Strategy for Vulnerable Persons**, is drafted, which will set out the pillars of the General Secretariat's action, define its objectives, set targets and finally provide the basis for the design of actions and programmes to achieve the

above. Through the development and implementation of a variety of activities, the General Secretariat aspires to strengthen the Ministry's efforts to prevent abuse and exploitation, as well as to ensure the access of the persons in need, including the child victims of human trafficking, to the protection services they are entitled to.

The **protection of unaccompanied minors** continues to be a major concern of the General Secretariat and is achieved through the provision of housing for minors and the supervision of accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors, the institutional protection of their rights and the support of their social integration.

At the same time, protection services for additional categories of vulnerable third country nationals or stateless persons are being developed, with the development of actions for **institutional supervision, support, housing of this population, but also for the protection of victims of trafficking and violence**.

At the same time, the **National Emergency Response Mechanism**, which continues its successful operation as a safety net for minors living in precarious conditions or homelessness, has a prominent place.

Finally, a new addition is the **Programming section**, in order to achieve the objectives of the General Secretariat in the most effective way, through appropriate programmes and actions, but also through cooperation with national, European and international bodies.





let be Freedom
in mind, soul and
body faith in you
words and pride
in you nature

soul and Let be
body faith Freedom
in you words in mind
and pride in nature



Updated status: Unaccompanied Minors in Greece

01.01.2024



Basic Data

***2,000 Estimated number of UAMs in Greece of which:**

- **84%** Boys
- **16%** Girls
- **9%** <14 years old
- **1,462** minors in **Accommodation Centers**
- **174** minors in **Semi-independent Living Apartments**
- **128** minors in **Emergency Accommodation Facilities**
- **236** minors in **Reception and Identification Centers & Closed Controlled Access Centers of islands**
- **0** minors in **Accommodation Facilities Asylum Seekers**

**Including 99 minors, who are accompanied by an adult who is not their legal guardian (separated).
Including 3 unaccompanied minors and 9 minors with 3 caretakers from Ukraine.

Capacity

- **2,060** places in **Accommodation Facilities** (Accommodation Centers, Semi-independent living apartments)
- **200** places in **Emergency Accommodation Facilities**

The data are dynamic and adjusted accordingly through control and verification by the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons of Institutional Protection.

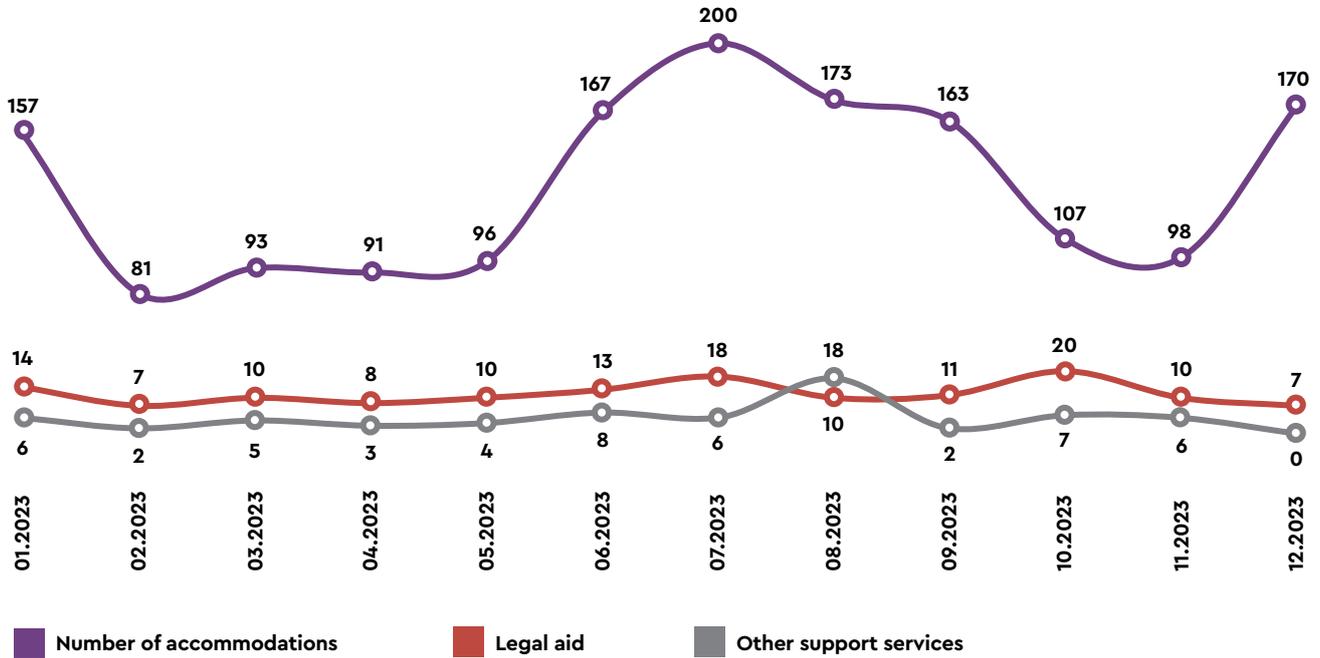


UAMs by accommodation type

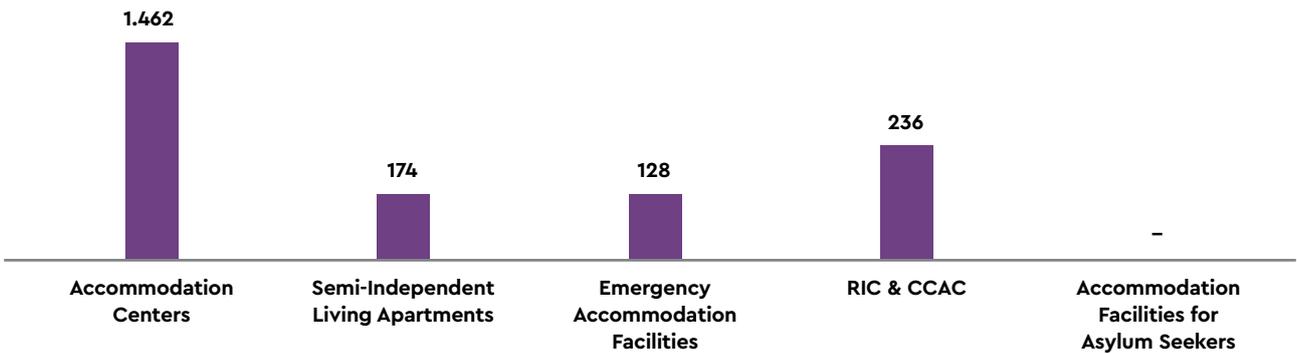




National Emergency Response Mechanism



UAMs population analysis by Accommodation Type



The National Emergency Response Mechanism for Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) in precarious living conditions launched the telephone line in April 2021. Until today, the Mechanism received **10,475** calls, which concern **7,750** different cases of (UAMs), out of which **6,452** concern accommodation requests, **678** legal aid, and **620** other types of assistance. Since 02.03.2022, the line has received referrals for **4** unaccompanied*, **10** orphans (with escorts) directly from an orphanage of Ukraine and **573** separated minors from Ukraine.

*There are cases of unaccompanied minors whose status changes from unaccompanied to separated following their initial referral as well as due to their adulthood.



Updated status: Unaccompanied Minors in Greece

01.01.2024

Number and capacity of UAMs accommodation centres, SIL apartments, emergency accommodation facilities



Basic Data

UAMs Accommodation Centers

In operation: **63** accommodation centres with a total capacity of **1,808** places

UAMs Semi-Independent Living Apartments

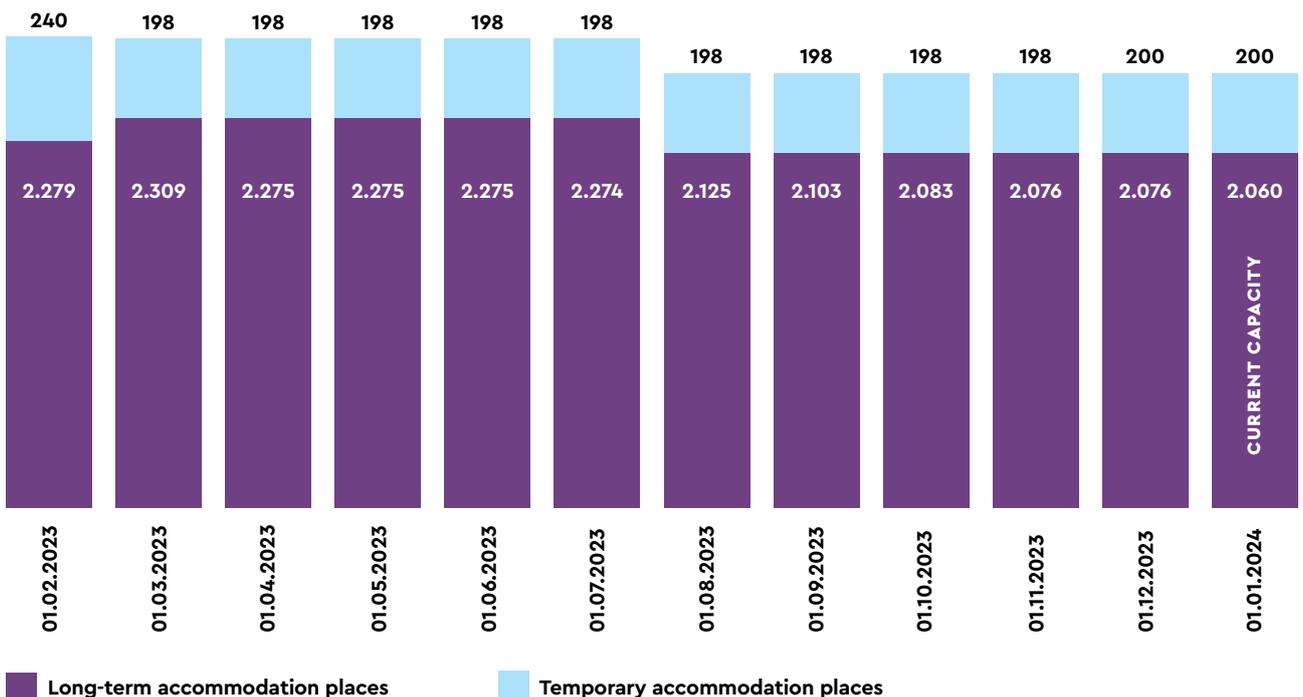
In operation: **63** SIL apartments for UAM older than **16** years old with total capacity of **252** places

UAMs Emergency Accommodation Structures A.A.

In operation: **5** emergency accommodation facilities with a total capacity of **200** places



Current capacity compared to previous months



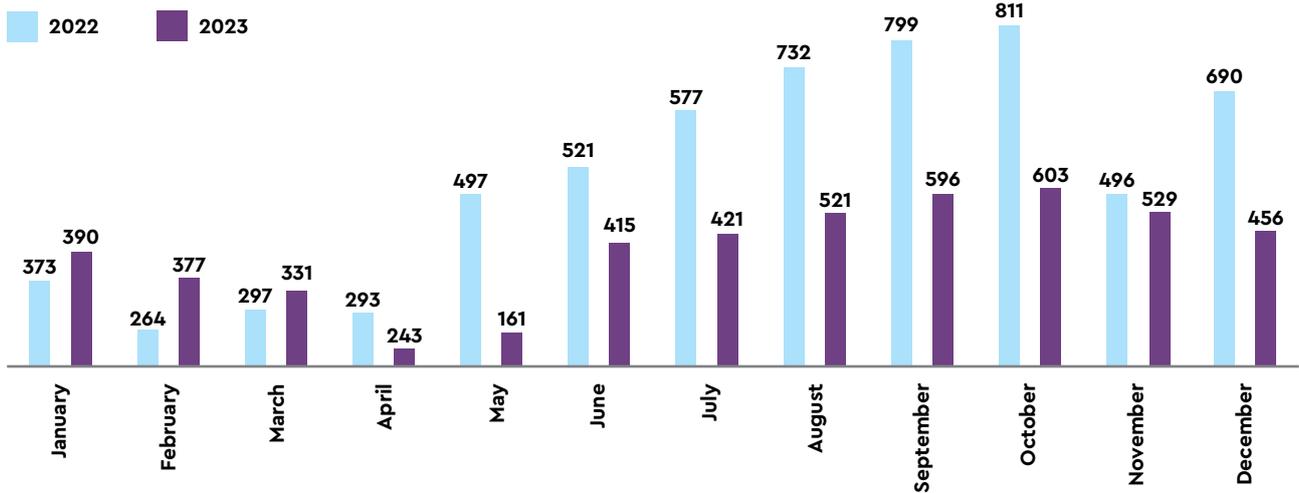
Capacity by type and region



Updated status:
Unaccompanied Minors in Greece

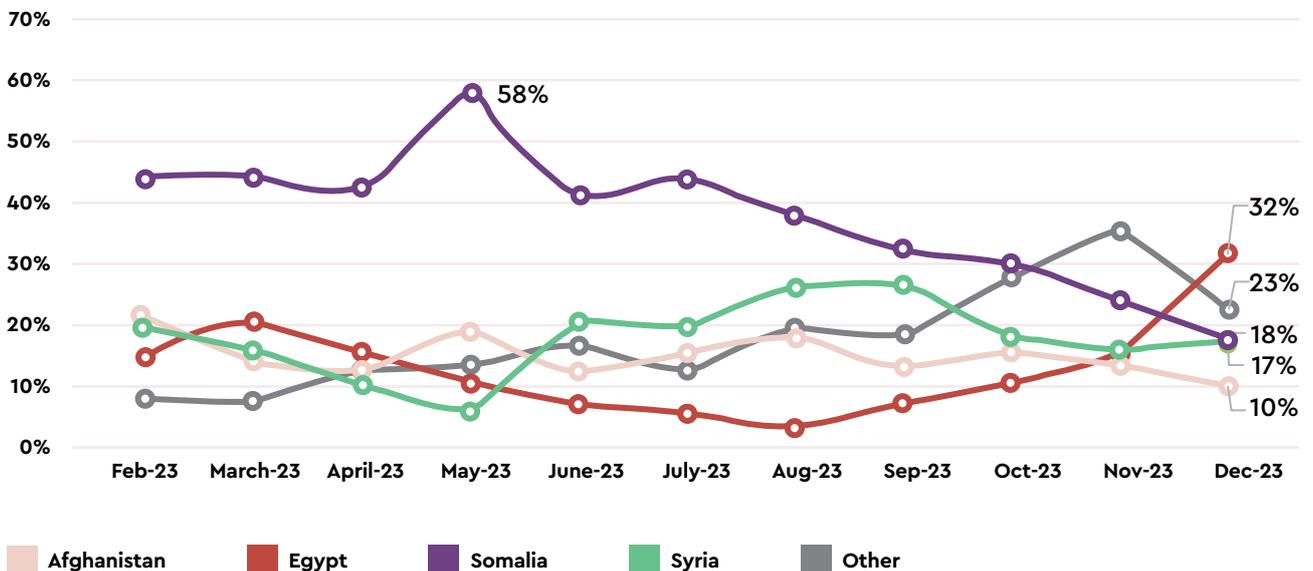
01.01.2024

Number of UAMs referrals to the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection per month



49,982 Total number of UAMs referrals from January 2016 to 1st January 2024

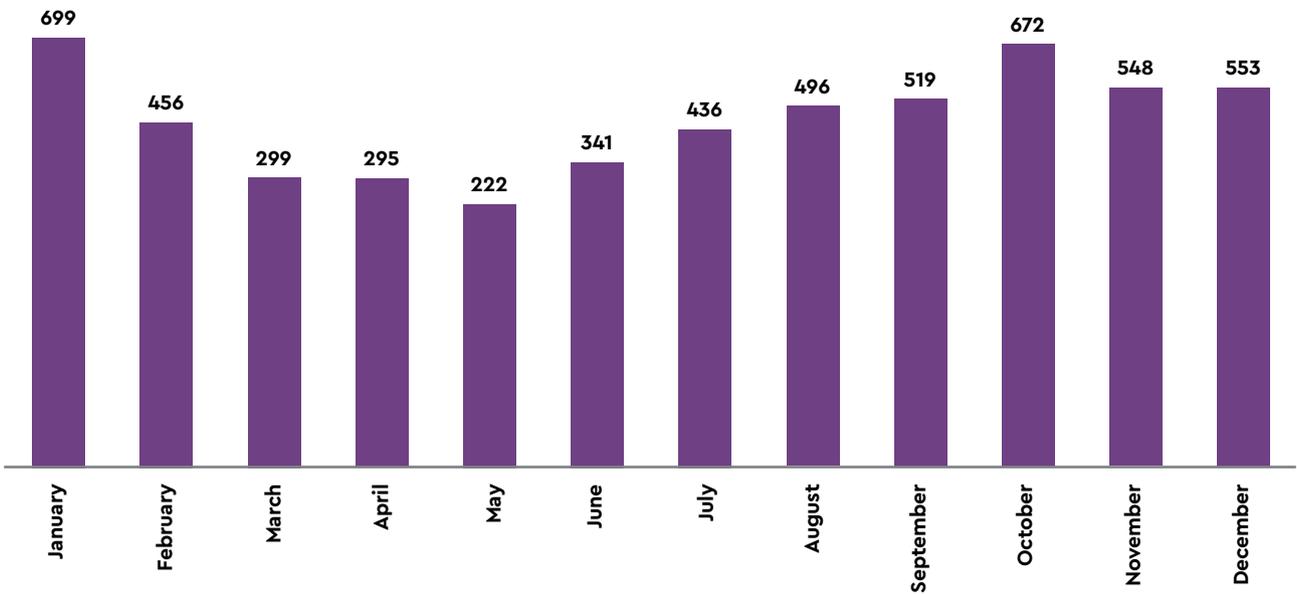
Percentage of UAMs referrals to the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection per month and nationality
 01 February 2023 – 01 January 2024





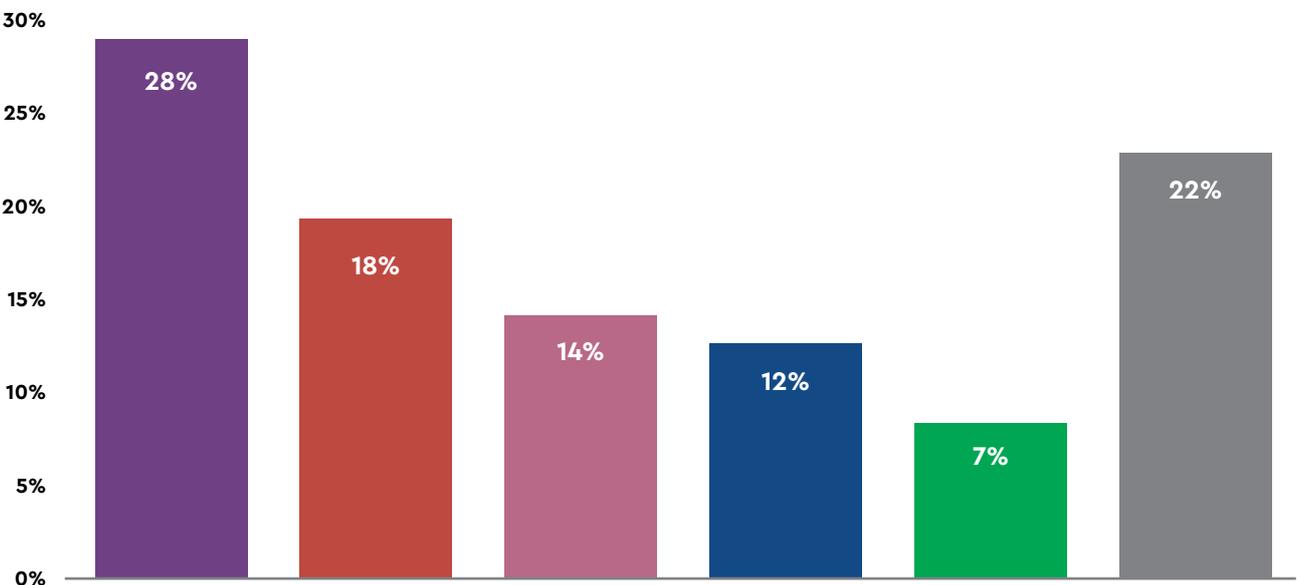
Settled referrals* per month

*Placement issued or cancelled after verification



Estimated UAMs population by nationality 2,000

■ Somalia
 ■ Afghanistan
 ■ Syrian Arab Republic
 ■ Egypt
 ■ Pakistan
 ■ Other





Institutional Protection of Unaccompanied Minors

The **institutional safeguarding and shielding of the rights** of unaccompanied minors is one of the fundamental objectives and fields of action of the General Secretariat. Towards this exact direction aims the operation of the Institutional Protection Unit, the responsibilities of which include the coordination of the actions of services and agencies, state and non-state, involved in **issues of child protection**, such as housing, health, education, intervention in child protection issues, such as the age determination process, the provision of minors with Social Security Registration Number (AMKA), Temporary Number of Insurance and Health Care for Foreigners (PAAYPE) and Tax Identification Number (AΦM), as well as enhancing access to their rights, establishing a uniform process for assessing best interests and protection from abuse and violence.

At the same time, through the broader supervision exercised and the continuous contact and feedback carried out with the above bodies and services, it is possible to identify institutional gaps and consequently to fill them by initiating the appropriate actions.

Inextricably linked to the institutional defense of the best interests of unaccompanied minors is the adoption of the corresponding legislative initiatives and interventions. To this end, the Unit both recommends the adoption of legislative and administrative measures that promote the priorities of the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, and provides general information and opinions on provisions that should be included in a law or regulatory act concerning or affecting the protection of unaccompanied children. In this context, the **provision for the granting of a ten-year residence permit** to adults, formerly unaccompanied minors, upon successful completion of three classes of secondary education in a Greek school up to the age of 23 was included in the new Migration Code (Article 161 of Law 5038/2023).

In addition, the Unit deals with individual cases of unaccompanied minors requiring special attention and treatment by providing information and guidelines and liaising with the relevant competent bodies and services.



1.1. Preparation for the implementation of the National Guardianship System

The General Secretariat is the national authority responsible for the guardianship of unaccompanied and separated minors living in the country. Thus, in 2022, the **National Guardianship System for Unaccompanied Minors** was established, the objective of which is to ensure the best interests of unaccompanied minors, their overall well-being, the enjoyment, and effective protection of their rights through the formulation of an alternative, flexible and functional model that responds to the fluctuating and growing needs of this vulnerable population. In this context, the General Secretariat is now a member of the **European Guardianship Network**, which is funded by the European Commission, with the contribution of the Dutch organisation Nidos, with the aim of bringing together the bodies working in the field of guardianship in each EU Member State to exchange good practices, resolve any issues and provide information on European legislation.

Under this new National System, the State, through the General Secretariat, holds a coordinating, guiding and supervisory role, while the prosecuting authorities, which until recently acted as temporary guardians, now constitute the impartial institutional guarantee for the appointment of non-profit legal entities specialising in child protection as **guardians**. The guardians exercise their duties through appropriate natural persons, professionals employed by them, known as **"guardianship mandated persons"**. To better coordinate and support the guardianship mandated persons with the management of children's cases, the role of **coordinator** is also introduced, creating a system with more accountability and oversight.

The implementation of the Programme is expected to start at the beginning of 2024, with the provision of guardianship services by 180 guardianship mandated persons to estimated 2,700 unaccompanied minors throughout the country, for one year with the possibility of extension. The guardianship service providers emerged from a relevant evaluation process and are provided for by the relevant Decision of Inclusion in the National AMIF Programme 2021-2027, under which the provision of the above services is entrusted to METAdrasi and PRAKSIS, which have proven years of experience in the protection of unaccompanied minors.

Guardianship services will be provided to unaccompanied minors residing in first reception facilities, accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors and semi-independent living apartments, while arrangement is made for the provision of additional services where necessary, and for the provision of interpretation services. The **functions of guardianship** concern:

- the **custody** of the unaccompanied minor (such as housing, medical care, education and training, daily care),
- **representation** of the unaccompanied minor in matters of personal status and
- assistance in **property matters**.



For the smooth application and implementation of this new Guardianship system, all relevant procedures and institutional actions, including the drafting of ministerial decisions for the **operational implementation of the system**, such as the mechanism for the submission and management of complaints of unaccompanied minors in the context of guardianship, the National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors and the regulation on the organisation and operation of the Guardianship Council for Unaccompanied Minors and the relevant circular, were launched and took place in 2023.

The project is co-funded by the Programme Greece -Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF)2021-2027 following the AMIF Call _014 with ref.no: 274730/24.05.2023 issued by the Managing Authority for Migration & Home Affair Funds, and total budget 6,000,000 €.



1.2. Harmonization of Best Interest Assessment Procedures

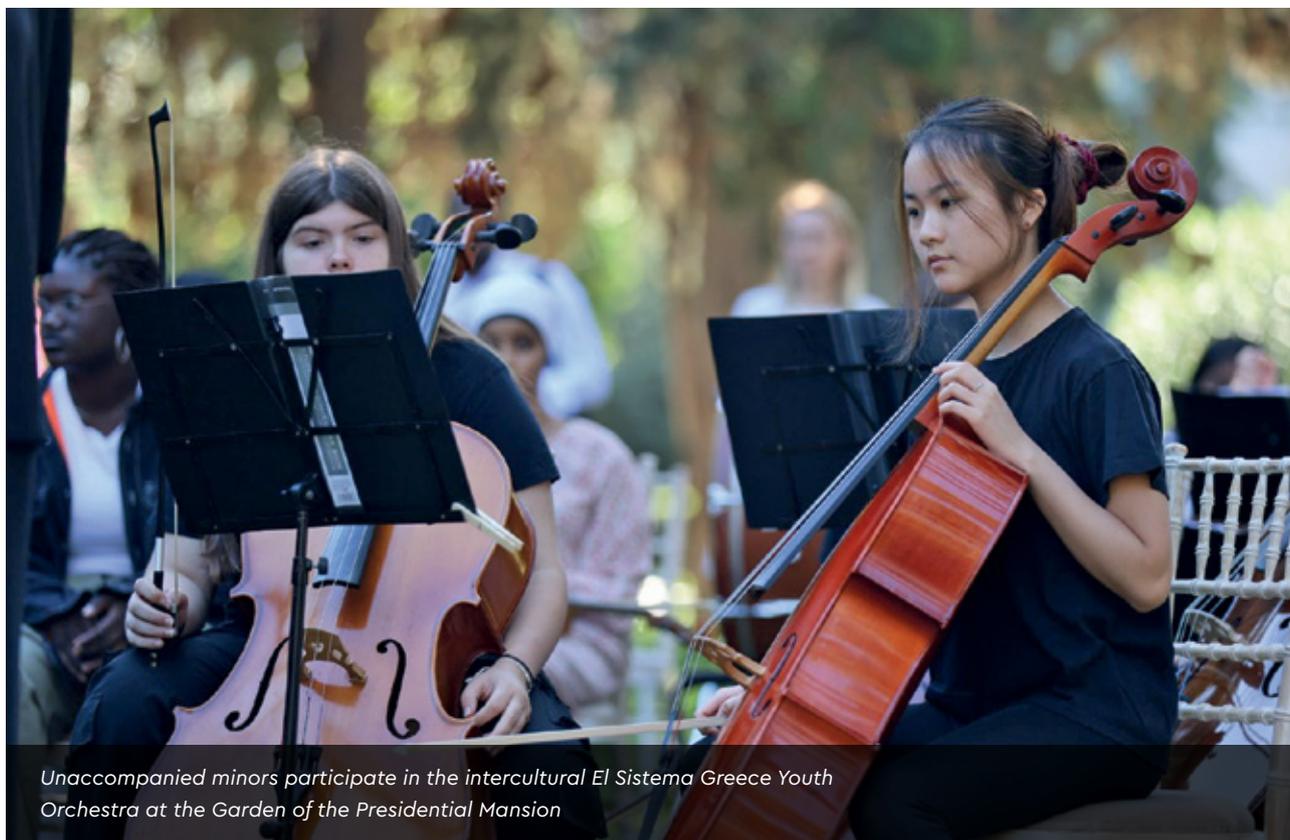
In the framework of the project "Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interest Procedures", implemented in cooperation with UNHCR and the European Union Asylum Agency, the General Secretariat has started the pilot implementation of a new Toolkit, aiming at the establishment of standard tools and the **harmonization of best interests of the child assessment procedures**. The toolkit is expected to assist the work of the guardianship mandated persons in the performance of their duties.

This **ground-breaking and child-centered project** aims to ensure consistent provision of high-quality and specialized services by child protection professionals to all children, third country nationals or stateless, who are unaccompanied, separated or temporarily removed from their families and reside in Greece. The aim of the programme, in line with the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, is to harmonize the best interests procedures in Greece, by using standardised best interests assessment forms and by having the assessment process carried out by experienced and trained professionals.

This new **Best Interest Procedures Toolkit** has been distributed for use to 24 partner child protection agencies, which provide identification and direct support services for unaccompanied children, as well as accommodation and care services for unaccompanied children throughout Greece. During the six-month pilot implementation of the Toolkit (August 2023 – January 2024) with the possibility of extension, **trainings for professionals** on how to conduct the best interests of the child assessment process were initiated by the General Secretariat.

1.3. Promotion of the institution of foster care for unaccompanied minors

At the same time, in an effort to formulate a child protection system that promotes de-institutionalization, assistance continued to be provided in the process of including unaccompanied minors in the national foster care and adoption system, with emphasis on foster care, in cooperation with the competent service of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family. With the implementation of the institution of fostering, as a measure of temporary protection and



Unaccompanied minors participate in the intercultural El Sistema Greece Youth Orchestra at the Garden of the Presidential Mansion



an alternative accommodation framework, unaccompanied children can receive the care and support they need within a family, promoting their integration into Greek society. To date, all unaccompanied minors under the age of 12 have been registered in the register of minors of the National Foster Care and Adoption System.

1.4. Code of Conduct for those who work with children

According to the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, all professionals who work with minors or who may come into contact

with minors should be bound by a Code of Conduct, which should include the basic principles governing work with children, what behaviour is considered acceptable and what is prohibited, the obligation to report illegal behaviour and the monitoring of the implementation of the code.

A working group has been set up within the General Secretariat to draft the Code of Conduct and the Code is to be completed within 2024 and distributed to child protection agencies.



Unaccompanied minors read the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Ensuring the housing of all unaccompanied minors

The General Secretariat and more specifically the Accommodation and Relocation Requests Management Unit, coordinates and ensures the placement of unaccompanied minors in appropriate long-term accommodation facilities, which may be either Unaccompanied Minors' Accommodation Centres or Supervised Apartments for Semi-Independent Living for minors over 16 years of age. These children, who are either in Registration and Identification Centers or closed Controlled Access Centers at the entry points of the country or in emergency accommodation facilities, are transferred to the long-term accommodation facilities, where they receive all the support services.

In 2023, the Accommodation Unit managed around **4,600 requests for housing** unaccompanied minors and handled all the procedures for their transfer and placement in long-term accommodation facilities.

At the same time, the Unit manages vulnerable cases of unaccompanied minors in need of special care, cooperates with child protection agencies and competent authorities, coordinating all the bodies involved, providing the necessary guidelines, and contributing substantially to the management of particularly vulnerable cases.

According to the institutional framework for the organized and safe accompaniments of unaccompanied minors of the law. 4960/2022, as incorporated in Law 4939/2022, in 2023, in cooperation with the NGO METAdrasi, the transfers of unaccompanied minors from the reception points to the mainland, but also from all points of the territory in a safe accommodation context, in the presence of an authorized and trained, in child protection issues, escort and interpreter, were implemented.

Also, during the year, staff of the Unit carried out study visits to the closed Controlled Access Centers of the islands, where they had the opportunity to see

up close the procedures and conditions for the reception of unaccompanied minors.

At the same time, in order to ensure a more effective and direct cooperation between the General Secretariat and the shelters for unaccompanied minors, in 2023, the Unit started meetings with the operating entities of the accommodation facilities, which created a useful bridge with the front-line staff, which is a cornerstone of the work of the General Secretariat.

In this context, a mapping was held of agencies that manage incidents of delinquent behaviour of minors and their interconnection with the operating entities of accommodation centers across the country.

The project is co-funded by the Programme Greece -Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF)2021-2027 following the AMIF Call _019 with ref.no: 414909/07.09.2023 issued by the Managing Authority for Migration & Home Affair Funds, and total budget 54,000,000 € and covers 1750 accommodation places in accommodation centers for unaccompanied minors. The remaining accommodation places are funded by other resources.

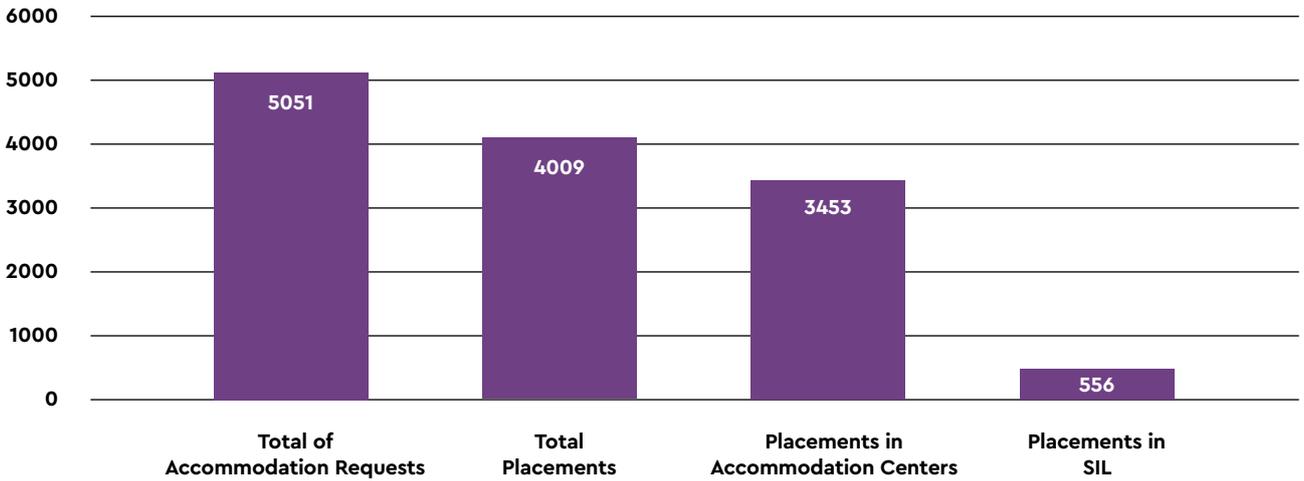
The project of the Supervised Apartments for Semi-Independent Living is co-financed by the National Programme of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the period 2014-2020 until 31/12/2023 and is included from 1/1/2024 in Programme Greece – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2021-2027.



An aggregated picture of housing requests for the year 2023 is given in the following graphs:



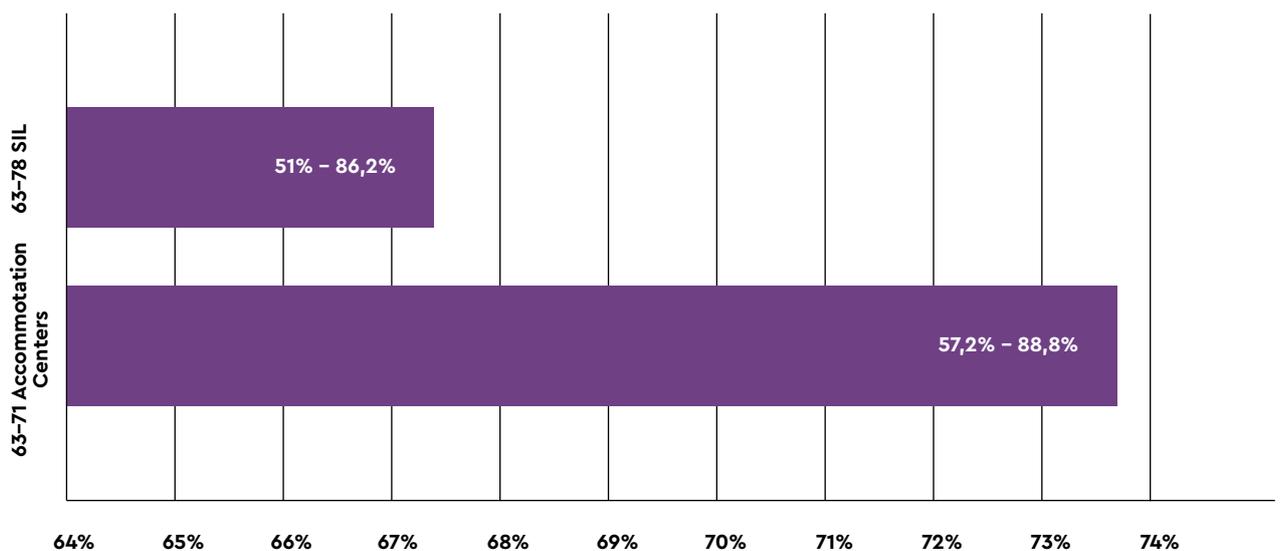
Management of accommodation requests for unaccompanied minors



The graph above shows the number of requests for the placement of unaccompanied minors in long-term accommodation facilities and then the total number of these placements, with a distinction between the number of placements in accommodation centers and the number of placements in SILs.



Occupancy of Long-Term Accommodation Facilities



The graph above shows the variation in the occupancy rates of the Accommodation Centers and the SILs within 2023. It should be clarified that the number of facilities is not constant throughout the year, and this is reflected on the left side of the graph.



F G H I J K L M N O P

face - prosopo
nose - miti
eye - mati
arm, hand - heri
foot (s), feet (ss) - pothi, pothia
tooth, teeth - thonti, thontia
head - kefali
shoulder - omos

finger, toe - thahtilo
mouth - stoma
hair = malia
ear = afti

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

Introduce

I am Maria
I am from G
in Thessaloniki
teacher.

student
Afghanistan

Food born
 color
 number

Καλησπέρα
Good morning

Καληνύχτα
Goodnight
شب بخیر

Πως σε λένε;
How do you call yourself?



2.1. Completion of the Voluntary Relocation Programme

After three years of operation, the Voluntary Relocation Programme was successfully completed on March 31, 2023. The Greek government, with the support of the European Commission and the cooperation of EU Member States and other countries, im-

plemented the Voluntary Relocation Programme for unaccompanied minors residing in Greece to other European countries from April 2020.

A total of 1,368 unaccompanied children were transferred to other European countries. From January to March 2023, **55** unaccompanied minors were transported on 5 separate flights to Portugal.



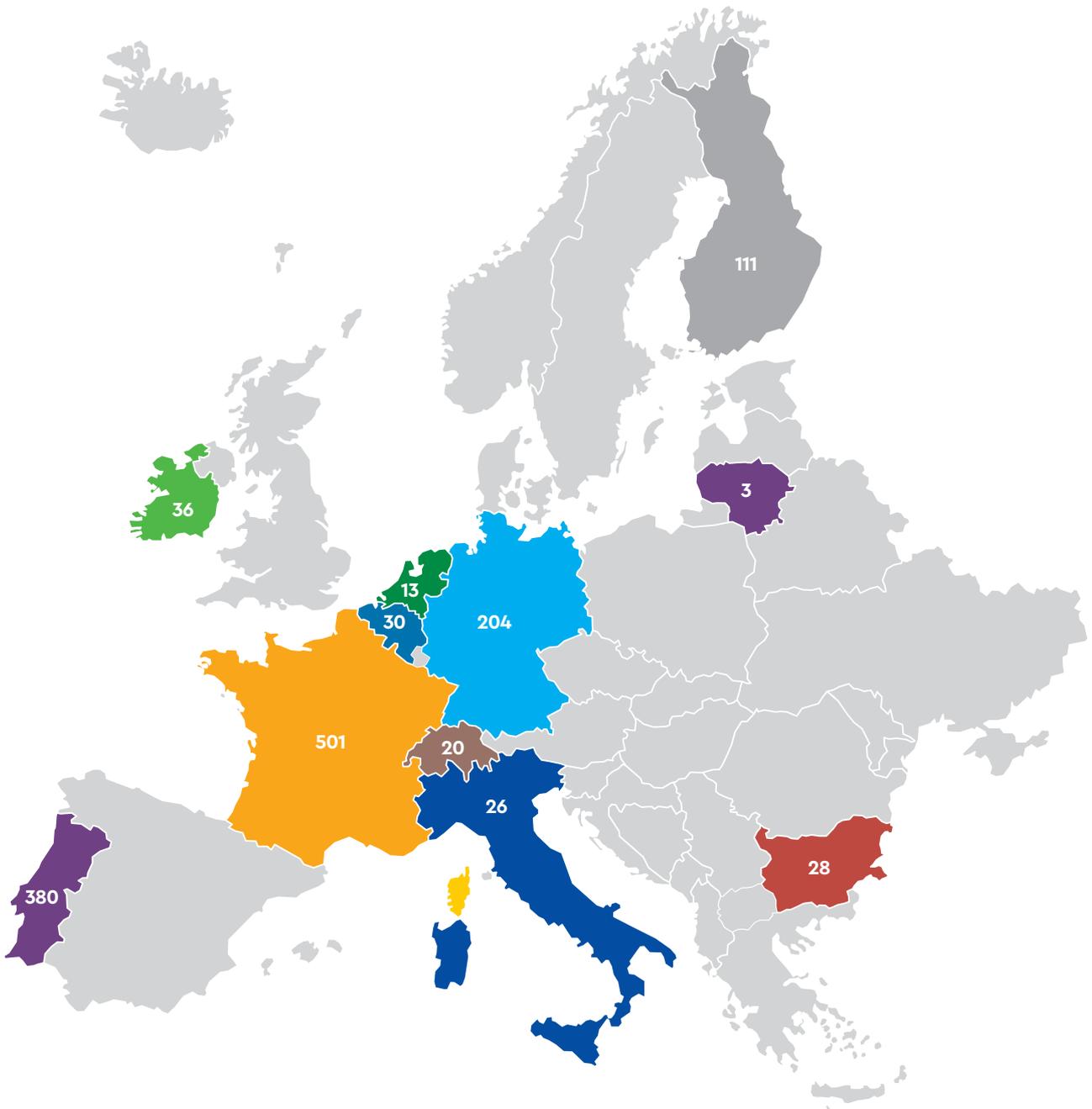
Secretary General farewells the children before their transfer to Portugal.





Map of Europe with the total project numbers

Relocation UAMs



- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Belgium |  France |  Italy |  The Netherlands |
|  Bulgaria |  Germany |  Lithuania |  Portugal |
|  Finland |  Ireland |  Luxembourg |  Switzerland |





National Emergency Response Mechanism

The National Emergency Response Mechanism (hereafter NERM) was designed by the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors (now General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2020, and was put into implementation in 2021. NERM was established in 2022 and aims to identify and provide immediate accommodation in **Emergency Accommodation facilities** for unaccompanied children living in homelessness or precarious conditions. Fundamental pillar of NERM is the **Tracing Line**, to which cases of unaccompanied children who are homeless or living in precarious conditions are referred and through which guidance is provided for their immediate transfer and accommodation in a safe environment, being an example of best practice for the protection of unaccompanied children.

With the establishment of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, **NERM will extend its responsibilities** to other categories of vulnerable adult persons and will develop actions of active intervention in the field and liaison of vulnerable persons with the competent reception and receiving authorities, hospitals as well as liaison with health and social care services.

Within the framework of NERM's operation, cooperation has been developed with civil society organizations, specifically with the "Network for Children's Rights" in Attica and "Arsis" in Thessaloniki, which have undertaken the operation of **Info Desks** and **Mobile Units**. The unaccompanied children have the opportunity to go to the Info Desks on a daily basis, to receive information regarding their right to accommodation in accommodation facilities and to receive legal and psychosocial support. The social workers and psychologists proceed with the assessment of the best interest of the children and under the coordination of NERM and the unaccompanied child is in-

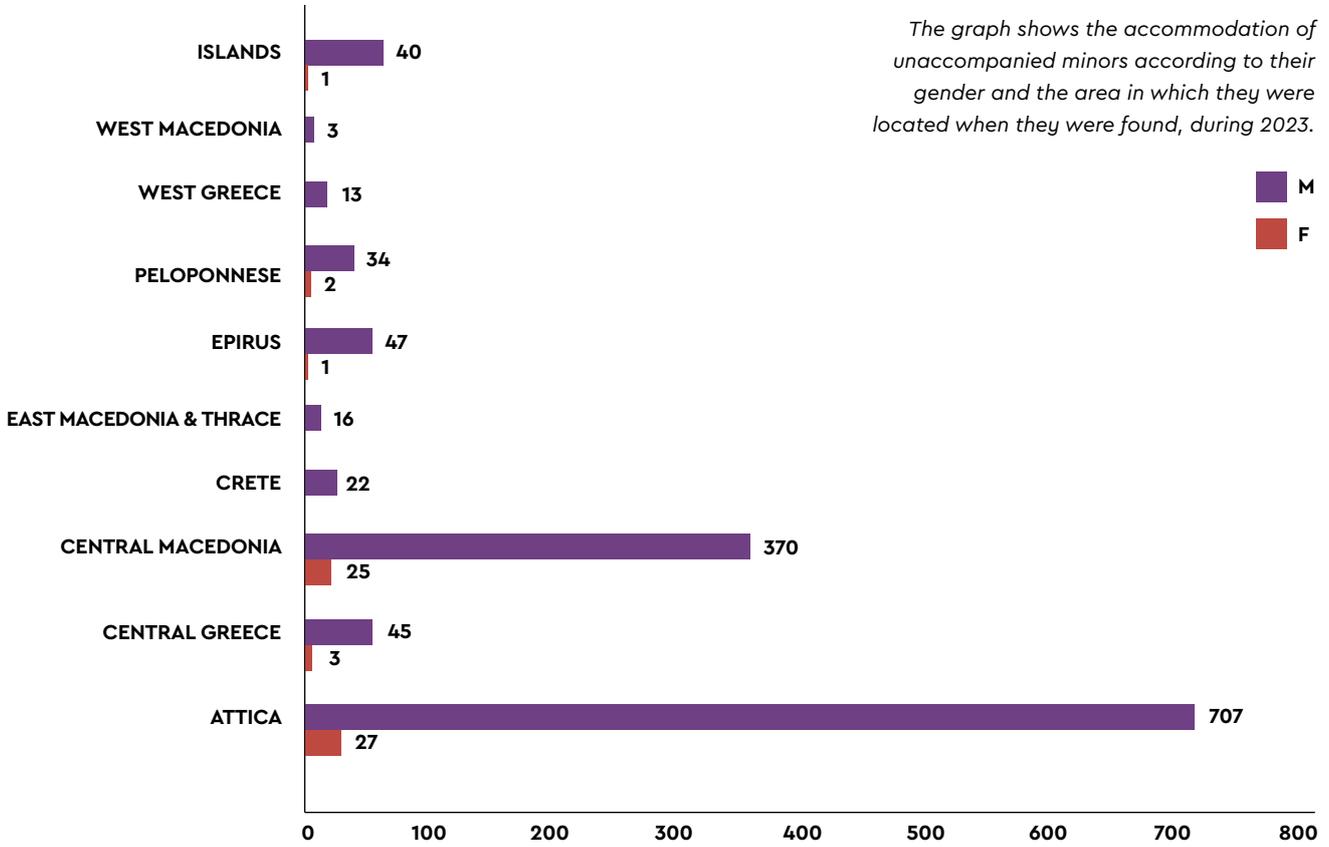
cluded in the Mechanism's system of immediate accommodation. Finally, the Mobile Units are responsible to escort the unaccompanied children to the Police Departments of Reference for their registration, to health facilities for medical examinations, when required, and finally to emergency accommodation facilities for their placement. It should be noted that since the beginning of NERM's operation, namely from 21/04/2021 to 31/12/2023, the number of unaccompanied children who have been accommodated in emergency accommodation facilities is **4,437**. During 2023 **1,356** unaccompanied minors have been accommodated.

Currently, there are five **Emergency Accommodation Facilities** for Unaccompanied Children operating nationwide, with a total capacity of 200 places, under the operational responsibility of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in the mainland. Specialized services are provided in the above facilities, such as psychosocial and legal support, education, and health care, while during the children's stay there, the registration of their request for international protection at the Regional Asylum Offices is also completed. During the stay of the children in the facilities in question, the special needs of each child are assessed while the best interest assessment is completed in order to find the most suitable long-term accommodation facility.

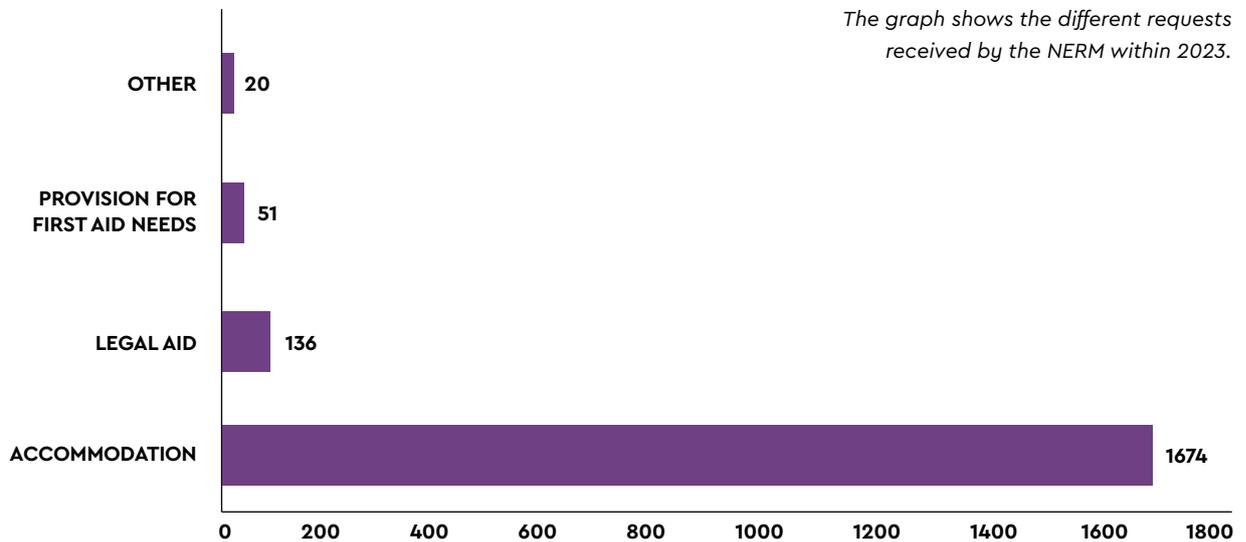




Tracing Location



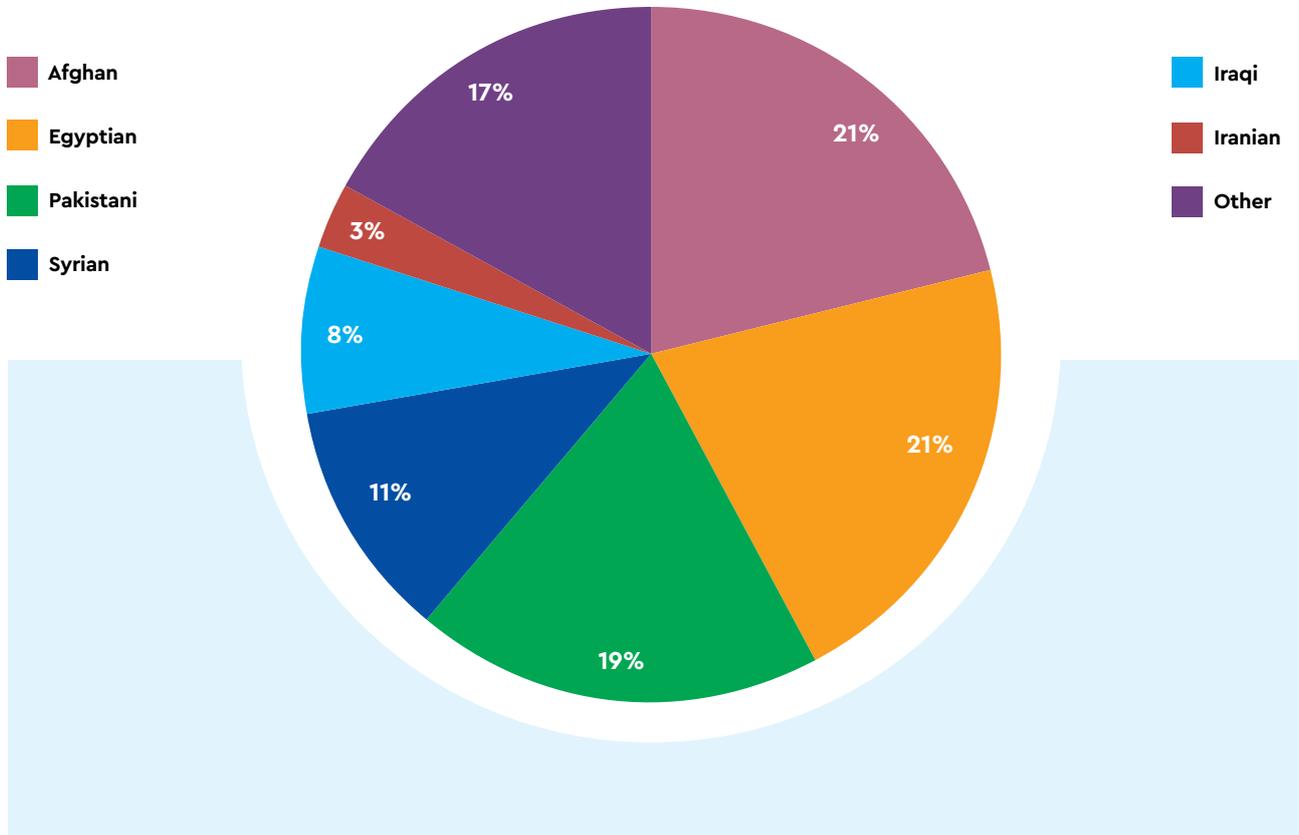
Requests





Nationalities

The graph shows the nationalities of the children supported by the NERM, during 2023.



Moreover, NERM has developed targeted actions from October 2022, through the innovative programme **"Protection for All Minors"**, implemented in Athens by the "Network for Children's Rights", funded by INTERSOS. The said programme aims to the individualized intervention of the unaccompanied and separated minors living in precarious living conditions. More specifically, in the Urban Safe Space reception area for unaccompanied children, specialized services are provided aiming to encourage children who do not wish to join accommodation facilities to leave their precarious living conditions and be accommodated in safe place.

A definitive role, in the specific programme, play the **"Assistants"**, who are social workers and psychologists and are responsible for developing an action plan for each individual child, while at the same time they have a daily physical presence at the Regional Asylum Offices of the prefecture of Attica, in order to trace in time any unaccompanied and/or separated

child who reach RAOs. The said programme is being implemented, until the end of this year, only in Attica, while, as of 2024, the possibility of its extension to Northern Greece is being considered.

As part of NERM's operation, "METADRASIS", also provides a tele-interpretation line which operates Monday to Saturday from 06.00 to 22.00 in **Arabic, Farsi, Dari, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali** and other languages, based on availability.

On the occasion of the submission of a Pledge by Greece to the **World Refugee Forum** organised by UNHCR for the strengthening and maintenance of NERM's operation, the work of the Mechanism was presented at the World Refugee Forum, on 14 December 2023, highlighting as a **best practice in the field of child protection**.





Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, Heracles Moskoff, was at Palexpo in Geneva, Switzerland, to recall our country's commitment to uphold children's rights and strengthen the child protection framework, as well as to share good practices and present the National Emergency Response Mechanism.

"Greece has one of the world's leading approaches to child protection", was the comment made by Gillian Triggs, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection with UNHCR, during her speech at the World Refugee Forum 2023.

In addition, in March 2023, the General Secretariat, the Office of UNHCR in Greece and the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences organized conference in which the successes, challenges and key findings for NERM, starting with the Panteion University research study on homeless unaccompanied children in Greece, which led to the implementation of the Mechanism. During 2023, numerous visits were made by **working groups from country delegations** such as Switzerland, Spain, and Morocco. The aim of the visits was to present NERM as best practice in the field of protection of unaccompanied children and to exchange good practices.

In addition, in June 2023, in the framework of the cooperation between the General Secretariat and the HQ of the Hellenic Police, a two-day training was held at the Attica Aliens Directorate. This training was attended by members of the Police Reference Units, which operate in the field of management and protection of unaccompanied children. The purpose of the training was the registration and identification process of unaccompanied children traced within Attica who do not possess identification documents, as well as the administrative procedure followed when they are identified.





The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection received the second prize competing with 14 other Member States by presenting the National Emergency Response Mechanism in the framework of the European Crime Prevention Network EUCPN, and the annual competition of best practices in the prevention of trafficking in human beings hosted this year by the Spanish Presidency in Valencia.

The award was received by the Greek delegation consisting of members of NERM, a representative of Arsis Thessaloniki, a representative of the Network for the Rights of the Child and a representative of IOM Greece.

The European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) is awarded every year in the framework of the annual conference organised by the EUCPN for the exchange and dissemination of experiences and knowledge on best practices in crime prevention and security enhancement in the EU Member States.

Two success stories of the National Emergency Response Mechanism

The stories of little M. from Iraq, and 17-year-old A. from Somalia are two typical examples of the successful action of the National Emergency Response Mechanism, which helps to identify minors at risk while taking care of them.

The young M. from Iraq was hosted in the Controlled Facility of Temporary Accommodation of In-

ternational Protection Applicants of Serres. When NERM was informed about his identification, all necessary procedures were carried out for the immediate transfer of the minor to an appropriate for his age and needs accommodation facility. With the help of Arsis Mobile Unit, he was transferred to the emergency accommodation facility in Thessaloniki, where he stayed for one month in order to assess his best interests, and was then transferred to the Accommodation Centre for Unaccompanied Minors where he is still being accommodated, where he has access to education, health, psychosocial and legal support services.



The 17-year-old A. from Somalia was living in precarious conditions in Kavala. When NERM was informed by the Controlled Facility of Temporary Accommodation of International Protection Applicants of Veroia, all necessary steps were taken for his safe transfer and accom-

modation. Under the coordination of NERM and Arsis Mobile Unit, the minor was immediately transferred to an emergency accommodation facility and after the completion of his best interests assessment he was accommodated to a long-term accommodation center.







Ensuring the quality of services provided in the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors

4.1. Implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures of the accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors & field audits in the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors

Following the institutionalisation of the framework for the accommodation of unaccompanied minors through Law 4960/2022, as incorporated in Law 4939/2022, the Standard Operating Procedures and Licensing Framework of the Accommodation Centers for Unaccompanied Minors and of the Supervised Apartments for Semi-Independent Living of Unaccompanied Minors, were defined. At the same time,

the procedure for the supervision and evaluation of long-term accommodation facilities was established, in order to provide appropriate and quality care services to minors (JMD No 187634/2023, as in force and MD 138529/2023).

Thus, in 2023, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the General Secretariat, implementing the Standard Operating Procedures of Accommodation Facilities for Unaccompanied Minors, carried out on-site audits to long-term accommodation facilities throughout Greece, in order to assess the implementation of the operating standards and to monitor and evaluate the quality of the services provided by these facilities. The audit teams carrying out the audits consist of staff members of the General Secretariat who have received trainings and are constantly developing their expertise. At the same time, specialised tools and methodology have been developed for carrying out



On-site audit by a team of the General Secretariat at an accommodation center for unaccompanied minors.

the audits, which are adapted to effectively verify the implementation of the institutional framework and identify in time any deviations from it.

An important development in 2023 was the recruitment of five fixed-term contract staff, who strengthened the operational capacity of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in conducting on-site audits in long-term accommodation facilities and implementing support and capacity building activities for their staff. By strengthening their operational capacity, the audit teams, in 2023, conducted 56 regular audits, three follow-up audits and two ad hoc audits following re-

dated and organised, with the aim of further ensuring the best interests of minors through the quality services provided to them.

4.2. Exchange of know-how with other countries

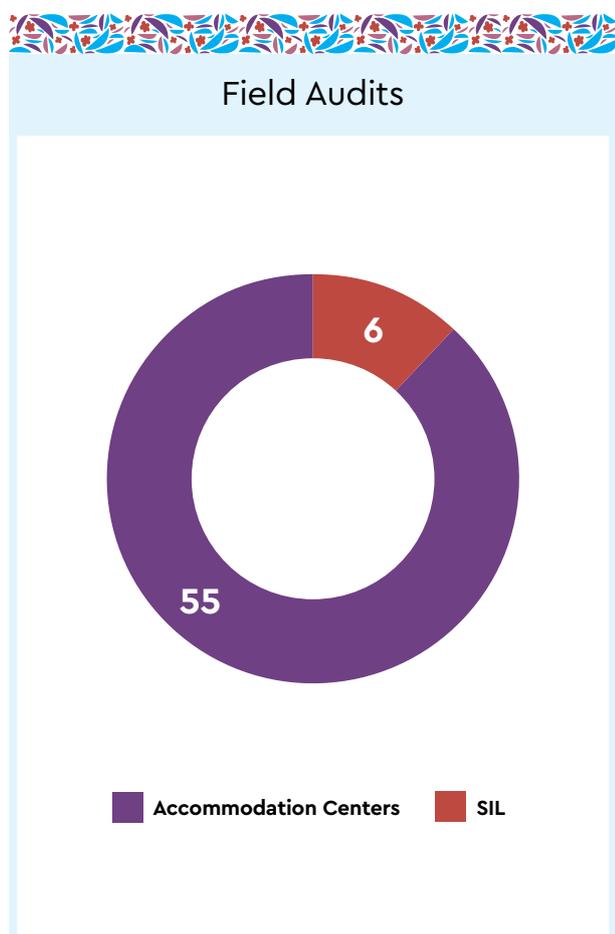
During 2023 the **cooperation with the Migration Directorate of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice** was further developed in order to exchange know-how on issues and procedures for the evaluation of long-term accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors in the framework of the project entitled "Enhancing the capacity of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection to improve the quality of services provided to unaccompanied minors within the accommodation centres". Specifically, three meetings were held in Greece and Norway, which contributed to the utilization of best practices and the optimization of audits in long-term accommodation facilities.

4.3. Personnel training programme in cooperation with the National Kapodistrian University of Athens

Aiming to **improve the quality of services** provided by the accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit started the implementation of a new training initiative through the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The aim is to organise specialised training courses to enhance the capacities of staff working in accommodation centres in areas such as services provided delivery, empowerment of unaccompanied minors and effective risk and crisis management. Utilising a multi-faceted approach, the project is implemented by a specialised team of trainers through asynchronous training, face-to-face meetings, and clinical supervision.

4.4. National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors

In 2022, the creation of a National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors was established. As a result, a working group was set up at the General



ports or complaints to accommodation centres and SILs, throughout the country.

Also, for the effectiveness of these audits, there was close cooperation among the General Secretariat and other relevant services of the Ministry, as well as with the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family regarding the implementation of the fostering by the accommodation shelters. Furthermore, the Registry of Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors was up-





Meeting of the General Secretariat with representatives of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice.

Secretariat with the participation of appropriately trained staff from all the Units as well as the Directorate General of Informatics and Communications of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in order to finalise the technical and legal specifications for the launch of the National Registry for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors. This register will contain **data on all issues relating to the protection of unaccompanied children**, in order to take suitable decisions for the children themselves, but also to have a **clear picture** of the number of minors that are in the country any time. For this purpose, the integration and incorporation of the data of the Registry of Unaccompanied Minors and the Registry of Accommoda-

tion Centres for Unaccompanied Minors and the transfer of the online electronic application called "Helidon" from the National Centre for Social Solidarity to the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum was carried out. Through this expanded registry, there will be a holistic control as for the capacity and operation of the accommodation centres and designed policies and services based on reliable statistical data for the needs of unaccompanied minors.

Currently, the processing of the Helidon 2 electronic platform, linked to Alcyone II, is being completed for the maintenance of the Registry and for the needs of supervision and evaluation of the Long-Term Accommodation Facilities.



Unaccompanied minor girls during a visit to a painting exhibition.



Promotion and prevention of mental health of unaccompanied minors and empowerment of frontline professionals

The project **"Promoting mental health and preventing mental disorders in unaccompanied minors in Greece: UAM Mental Health Hub"** is being implemented from May 2022 in cooperation with SOS Children's Villages Greece under the funding of the Government of Tyrol and SOS Children's Villages Austria with the ultimate goal of empowering professionals working in accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors and providing specialized services to enhance the mental health of unaccompanied minors.

Within 2023, the four thematic cycles of horizontal training involving all 800 professionals in the accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors, clinical supervision in 41 accommodation centres and training of 20 trainers from the 22 implementing bodies, were completed.

At the same time, within the framework of the close cooperation of the General Secretariat with Academic Institutions, 50 psychologists were trained in trauma-focused cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT) by a Lecturer of the Department of Psychology of Panteion University.

At the same time, useful material oriented to the needs of the field was created, such as:

- Instructors' Training Guide for strengthening the mental health of unaccompanied children in Greece.
- Guide for the development of Emergency Mental Health Interventions in Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors in Greece.
- A Guide to Clinical Episodes for Professionals in Accommodation Centres for Unaccompanied Minors.

The needs of the field were complemented by the creation of therapeutic groups for unaccompanied children in Athens and Thessaloniki, as well as the innovative peer support tool "I support my friends". Professionals were trained in how to equip adolescents with skills and knowledge so that they in turn and with supervision can learn to support their friends who are facing difficulties and stress.





The Mentorship project

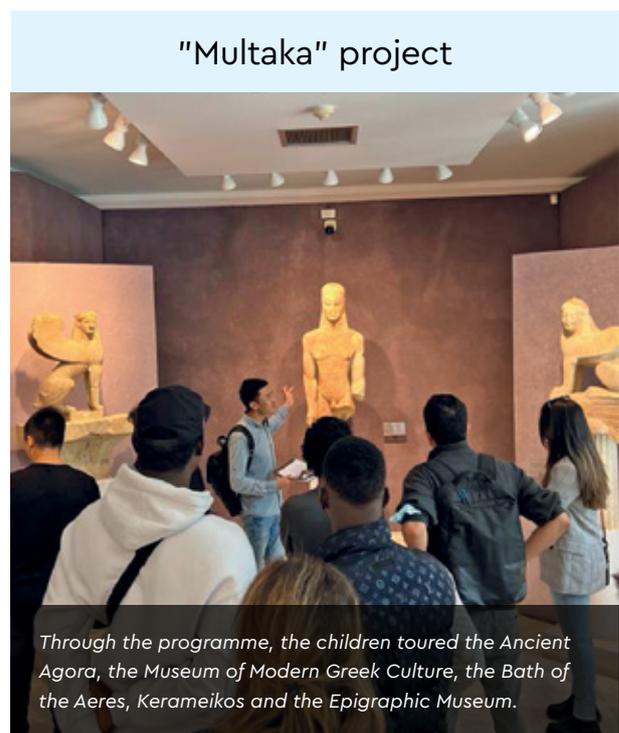
In 2023, the mentorship project completed **two years of implementation** and the team celebrated the anniversary together with the unaccompanied children living in Athens and Thessaloniki. The anniversary came as a culmination of the significant results achieved by the team in the two years of operation of the project. The Mentors working in the General Secretariat are former unaccompanied minors with a successful integration path, who act as positive role models for the children hosted in the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors.

themselves become representatives of their community, listening, and conveying new information and concerns. Through the **"Multaka"** project, which was implemented by the Directorate of Social Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the co-funded by the National Programme of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020, the Mentors, as intercultural tour guides, accompanied the children to museums and archaeological sites in Athens, thus strengthening the intercultural exchange of information and experiences.

A total of 121 unaccompanied boys and girls participated in the "2 years with Mentors" event. The celebration included painting workshops, video screening, ping-pong, hand football, air hockey and basketball and lots of music on a day dedicated to children.

During the year, **visits to accommodation centers and supervised apartments** in Attica continued, while two missions were carried out in Thessaloniki and one in Mytilene. The visits started to take a different tone as they were divided into focused discussions based on the needs of the children and information meetings aimed at promoting new tools and programmes for children.

At the same time, the aim of the past year was to give the children the opportunity to get to know the Mentors through a variety of activities. Thus, the activities increased and included more and more children, based on the preferences of the children as recorded in the previous year. The group continued for the second year the **"Teens Network"** which is implemented online and on a monthly basis, aiming at the smooth integration of the children, understanding the procedures in Greece and improving their daily life through thematic meetings. Above all, it increases the **children's participation**, as they



"The football match was so great, that day I was so happy, and I managed to forget the stress inside me through having fun. Thank you, guys, so much for making us happy, God bless you."

Unaccompanied minor from an accommodation facility

For those children who love the arts, the group is organizing monthly **painting workshops**. In each session the children had the opportunity to discuss the life and works of some famous European painters such as Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Banchi, etc., but also to discuss the works of artists with refugee/immigrant background such as Samsia Hasani, Naji Al-Ali. While they then captured their inspiration on colorful canvases.

The **love for sports** was not left out of the Mentors' activities, so in cooperation with the Integration and Support Unit for Unaccompanied Minors and with

the valuable help and support of the Olympiacos Football Club, a **one-day football tournament** was organized in May. The children were divided into 8 teams and with goalkeepers from the Olympiacos academy they played football, toured the team's fields, shared moments of joy and fair play.

Finally, those who love technology and the internet have the opportunity to meet the Mentors, learn about the importance of learning Greek, what guardianship is, etc. by following the **special video series "Learning with Mentors"** which is shown through YouTube.

"I'm very excited about the tournament experience. One day I will be training and playing soccer in a place like this. It's like living my future!"

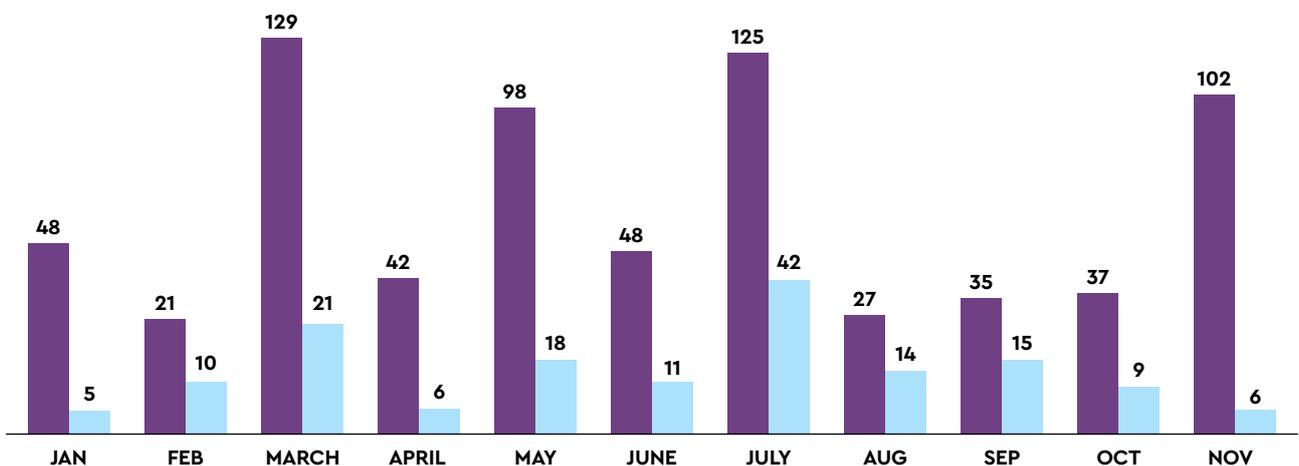
Unaccompanied minor from an accommodation facility



Mentorship 2023

68 Activities • **46** Visits • **869** Unaccompanied Children

SHELTER **SIL**





Participation of minor girls in educational workshops, together with Mentors.



*Scan the QR to watch on YouTube
the new videos of our Mentors*



Mentors support activities for unaccompanied minors.





Supporting the social integration of unaccompanied minors

7.1. Enhancing the access to formal and non-formal education for unaccompanied minors

The General Secretariat, through the Unit for the Integration and Support of Unaccompanied Minors, has established a stable cooperation with the Independent Department for the Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports and the local Refugee Education Coordinators. The necessity of continuous and steady **support of the school attendance** of unaccompanied minors was also evident with the important integration legislative initiative for granting a ten-year residence permit, that is provided under the new Immigration Code (article 161 of

Law 5038/2023), as the right of legal residence in the country is inextricably linked to the successful completion of three classes of secondary education of a Greek school in Greece.

At the same time, the mapping and mapping at local level of **non-formal education service** providers was completed during the year, which contributed positively to informing and linking the accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors with local institutions.

In the same context, the meetings with the educators working in accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors continued, in order to support them on issues related to both formal and non-formal education for minors and their further education in various topics.



Participation of unaccompanied minors in the intercultural El Sistema Greece Youth Orchestra in the Garden of the Presidential Mansion.



Participation of unaccompanied minors in the football tournament, in cooperation with Olympiacos FC.

7.2. Promotion of integration actions for the participation of unaccompanied minors in cultural and sports activities

With the aim to **promote cultural activities** that contribute to the social inclusion and integration of unaccompanied minors in Greek society, actions and collaborations were developed with governmental and non-governmental entities. Noteworthy was the collaboration with the Acropolis Museum through which the programme entitled **"Arts, craftsmen and professions in ancient Athens"** was created, the collaboration with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center and the Greek National Opera Alternative Stage, through which the **activities of the intercultural opera nursery Co-OPERative were developed**, as well as the collaboration with the **Intercultural Orchestra El Sistema Greece Youth Orchestra** and the **Department of Visual and Applied Arts of the School of Fine Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**, following which an exhibition entitled "My travels" was organized in May at the YMCA building.

Regarding **the promotion of integration actions through sports activities**, remarkable are the ac-

tions developed in collaboration with the International Olympic Truce Center and the Youth Sports Training Center SPORTCAMP, the cooperation with Olympiacos FC following which the football sports event "Let's play ball" took place, as well as the cooperation with Organization EARTH through which environmental events, sports and cultural activities were designed and implemented for unaccompanied children residing in accommodation facilities in Attica.

7.3. Support for unaccompanied minors regarding their preparation and transition to the labour market

In order to support unaccompanied minors in regard to their **preparation and transition to the labour market**, a cooperation network was created with entities and international organizations regarding vocational guidance and counseling of unaccompanied minors aiming at preparing them for the transition to the labour market.

In this context, it was created the training programme **Youth Achieve** of Junior Achievement Greece (<https://youthachieve.jagreece.org/>), an



Children who participated in the Imagine Peace Junior Camp, photographed with the Deputy Minister and the Secretary General.

educational tool for professional readiness, which is addressed to young refugees as well as to professionals working in the field who support them.

In addition, on the initiative of the Integration Unit and in collaboration with SolidarityNow, a **training workshop for professionals** on the labor integration of unaccompanied minors was organized in Thessaloniki.

In cooperation with various organizations, unaccompanied minors receive support in the areas of career guidance, job placement, liaison with employers and CV creation, while **training seminars** tailored to unaccompanied minors have been designed and implemented.

7.4. Raising awareness of the local community

In order to raise awareness of the local community, presentations of the competencies of the General Secretariat and experiential awareness workshops took place in Primary and Secondary Education schools, several times with the presence of the team of Mentors. At the same time, information and raising awareness actions were carried out for the local community through participation in round tables, workshops, and conferences.

Additionally, the Integration Unit in collaboration with Athens Comics Library designed and organized the **webinar "Policy making roundtable on inclusion"** over the Athens Refugee Week and with the participants coming from various European countries.



Sports activity for unaccompanied minors at the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center Foundation.





Unaccompanied minor girls attend a computer course in the accommodation center.

7.5. Participation in European projects

Regarding the transition of unaccompanied minors to adulthood, the European Programme AMIF **"Building Futures, Sharing Good Practices: Migrant Children's Transition to Adulthood – UACFutures"** was implemented and completed in collaboration with child protection agencies of other European countries and under the coordination of the Council of Europe. In the framework of the project, study visits were carried out for the exchange of know-how between the project partners, while the Integration Unit contributed to the creation of deliverables published by the Council of Europe, including the guide **"ROADMAP TO ADULTHOOD Milestones towards a Smooth Transition into Adulthood"**. It was also important the implementation of a two-day training (24–25/05) for professionals of organisations operating Accommodation Facilities for Unaccompanied Minors in the material created within the framework of the programme, during which the Guide for Training Psychosocial and Life Skills was presented.

Furthermore, in collaboration with ActionAid, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the National Centre for Social Research, the General Secretariat through the Integration Unit participates in the European Project **DIALECT3 "aAddressing IntersectionAL stEreotypes, building sCHOOL communities of Tolerance through physical education"**. The project aims to promote equality and combat racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.

P.A., an educational success story

The educational success of P.A., a minor from Ukraine, who was living in a supervised apartment for semi-independent living, proves that children who are supported can achieve the best results and integrate.

The then unaccompanied minor, who has recently come of age, had expressed her desire to study veterinary medicine in Greece from the very first meetings with the social worker of the semi-autonomous living programme. And she succeeded. She was admitted to the Greek university as she had, among other things, a secondary school diploma validated by an educational authority in Ukraine. She is cur-





Poster of an exhibition of paintings by unaccompanied minors.

rently studying at the University of Karditsa and is a new living proof of the success of the protection and integration actions for unaccompanied minors.

In June 2023, P.A. applied for admission to the departments of veterinary medicine and oceanology, continuing her efforts in developing her language skills in Greek, and in September 2023 she took a re-examination at the University of Athens, successfully.

P.A. during her stay at the SIL, with the support and supervision of the accommodation facility staff, she regularly visited the animal welfare organization, as she liked to take care of the stray animals, mainly by taking them for walks.

Stories of Educational Success

18-year-old Amar, a child who, when he arrived from Syria in our country at the end of 2017 without knowing any Greek, managed within 3 years to read and write Greek very well, but also to study greek history, philosophy, and culture. At the same time, he was involved in theatre, attending the intercultural and collaborative opera hub for young people Co-OPERATIVE, as well as opera performances at the Herodion. He even starred

in the National Opera's play "Go to come back" and in an Amazon Prime production series.

Deba arrived from Mali in October 2020 and was placed in a long-term accommodation facility for unaccompanied minors. He did not know the Greek language. He studied 10 to 15 hours a day and managed to pass his national exams. He is now a student at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, in the Department of French Language and Literature.

Wasif, who arrived in Greece from Pakistan, alone, when he was 16 years old and – in just 5 years – speaks fluent Greek today. This summer Wasif graduated from the Greek high school and now works as an interpreter in a long-term accommodation facility for unaccompanied minors. He is planning his next steps including a university degree.

Farouk, who came to Greece as an unaccompanied minor after obtaining an American GED, was admitted to Deree – The American College of Greece on a full scholarship, where he will study in the psychology department.



The European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA), in the framework of cooperation and transfer of know-how, trained the Head of the Unit for Integration and Support of Unaccompanied Minors of the General Secretariat, Ms Aroni, through the training programme "Becoming an EUAA trainer and assessor", where the employees of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum have the opportunity to become trainers themselves and transfer their knowledge and experience. In this context, a face-to-face training was held for officials of the General Secretariat, on the topic "Vulnerability identification and initial support (Part A)".





Actions to protect vulnerable third country nationals

8.1. Actions to protect against trafficking in human beings

With the establishment of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection and in view of the creation of a department for victims of violence and trafficking in human beings, the service supported and co-organised various training activities, highlighting the importance of implementing policies to support vulnerable third-country nationals as a means of preventing their victimisation. At the same time, it launched, together with civil society partners and international bodies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organisation, the use of financial instruments to develop actions to combat trafficking in human beings, highlighting the need for **cooperations** to ensure **holistic support for victims of human trafficking**.

In the context of promoting synergies with Civil Society, the information campaign **"Do you see me?"** was co-organized with the International Organization for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings A21 and the Ministry of Civil Protection, on sexual exploitation in view of the Pan-European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings. As part of the above campaign, the theatrical performance **"And God planted Paradise"** on the subject of trafficking took place at the Contemporary Theatre.

In addition, he was a constant supporter of the work of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings, which he informed about the participation of the Greek delegation, headed by Ms Sophia Vultepsi, participated in the International Ministerial Conference on the 20th anniversary of the **Palermo Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings**, which took place in the historic "bunker" of Palermo, in the building that bears the name of the heroic judges Giovan-

ni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, where the Great Trial of the Mafia was held. Together with the European Commission's office in Athens, it also supported the visit of Ms Diane Schmitt, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, who also attended a meeting of the above-mentioned Parliamentary Subcommittee, informing its members of the initiatives it has undertaken.

Finally, the Secretary General and the staff of the General Secretariat participated in **international conferences**, such as the Conference of National Reporting and Equivalent Mechanisms in Brussels, the Conference on the Human Dimension in Warsaw, Regional Expert Group (REGM) on Child Exploitation in Skopje and the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) Conference in Vienna, presenting, inter alia, as a good practice for the prevention of trafficking and early identification of its victims, the operation of the National Emergency Response Mechanism for unaccompanied children.



The contribution of theatre in raising awareness about sex trafficking was raised by the Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection, Heracles Moskoff, after the end of the performance "And God planted paradise", with text and direction by Valeria Demetriadou.



Actions that are expected to be implemented shortly

9.1. COMPASS – COMPLEMENTARY MECHANISM FOR SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN GREECE

In the context of the call for Specific Actions entitled "Special Action Member States under pressure – unaccompanied minors" from the Migration Asylum and Integration Fund Programme 2021–2027 with reference code – Reference AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1, the European Commission approved the Greek proposal entitled "COMPASS – Complementary Support Mechanism for the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors in Greece" with reference code – Reference AMIF/2023/SA/1.2.1/12-Lot 1 which was submitted by Managing Authority for Migration and Home Affairs Funds.

The project **"COMPASS – COMPLEMENTARY MECHANISM FOR SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN GREECE"** through its specific actions aims to strengthen the implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors in Greece.

The project will start its implementation in 2024 and is expected to complement the existing system, strengthen its capacity, alleviate the increasing pressure on services and ensure the welfare and safety of minors. Aligned with the four central pillars of the National Strategy, the project focuses on quality and targeted service delivery, improving the capacity of professionals supporting unaccompanied minors and facilitating children's participation in all matters concerning and affecting them.

More specifically, the project provides for:

- (a) the establishment of 5 Centres nationwide to provide specialised mental health services with a focus on trauma, legal aid, targeted services to combat the high drop-out rates of unaccompanied children, as well as services for unaccompanied minors who have reached adulthood (18–21 years old) and lack a protective framework
- (b) training and clinical supervision for professionals working with unaccompanied minors, in order to better respond to child protection issues and to protect them from burnout
- (c) services to accompany unaccompanied minors during hospitalisation and specialised emergency accompaniment to health care facilities
- (d) educational and informative materials and workshops to empower children to address violence, gender stereotypes, promote equality and encourage community participation.

The project will be implemented over 3 years by a consortium of partners with extensive experience in the field of refugee and child protection and is estimated to support around 3,000 unaccompanied children, 500 newly-adult minors and 1,742 professionals. It will also address further needs that have been identified as putting additional pressure on the national system of care for unaccompanied minors and will therefore contribute to structural developments and capacity building at national and European level. It is funded by Specific Actions (Lot1) AMIF 2021–2027.

The above special action will be included in the Programme Greece – Migration Asylum and Integration Fund, 2021–2027 with 90% co-financing from the European Union and a total budget of 13,552,343.42 €.





The Deputy Minister, Ms Voultepsi, with the Secretary General, Mr Moskoff, and the team of the Secretariat in the Garden of the Presidential Mansion.

9.2. Programme "STIRIXIS – Housing programme for vulnerable applicants for international protection"

The General Secretariat, in the framework of its new responsibilities, is planning and will implement the housing programme STIRIXIS. The beneficiaries of the Programme will be vulnerable adult applicants for international protection and their family members, and the benefits of the Programme will include housing in specialised accommodation settings for vulnerable third country nationals or stateless persons, psychosocial services, as well as accompanying services such as escorts, interpretation, counselling, job search support, etc.

The aim of the programme is to support and ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with vulnerabilities.

The project is co-funded by the Programme Greece of Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2021–2027.

9.3. Reinforcement of services provided at the Safe Areas of CCACs and Fylakio RIC

Taking into consideration the significant rise of unaccompanied children in the Aegean islands and Evros territory, the General Secretariat is planning to continue and reinforce the operation of the Safe Areas project, in cooperation with the Reception and Identification Service.

More specifically, the Secretariat is planning to reinforce services already provided and ensure that the unaccompanied children arriving in Greece are provided with the immediate and appropriate care and protection. To address the children's needs, a team of multidisciplinary professionals with social workers, psychologists, legal counselors, interpreters, and caregivers is planned to be deployed at the Safe Areas and Fylakio RIC, in order to offer protection and support to UAC, for the period that they remain in the facilities. It is noted, that it is planned for the caregivers to be deployed on a 24/7 basis, in order to ensure the safety and the well-being of the children.







Acknowledgments

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Minister of Migration and Asylum, Mr. Dimitris Kairidis, for his support to our work.

I also express my sincere thanks to the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum, Ms. Sofia Voultepsi, responsible for integration, for her continuous support and guidance.

Special thanks to the Secretary General for Migration Policy, Mr. Patroklos Georgiadis, as well as to the Managing Authority for Migration and Home Affairs Funds of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and its Head, Mr. Theofanis Papadopoulos, for the support in the implementation of our work, as many of the actions of the General Secretariat are co-funded by the Migration and Home Affairs Fund. This brochure is also part of a publicity action funded by the Technical Support of the Home Affairs Funds 2021-2027. I would also like to thank the Secretary General for Reception of Asylum Seekers, Mr. Dimitris Iatridis, with whom we aim at closer cooperation for the implementation of our actions.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the team of the General Secretariat for their contribution and dedication to the implementation of our actions and programmes.

Heracles Moskoff

*Secretary General for Vulnerable Persons
and Institutional Protection*











HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Migration & Asylum
General Secretariat for Migration Policy
Managing Authority for Migration & Home Affairs Funds



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Migration & Asylum
General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons
& Institutional Protection

Thivon 196-198, Agios Ioannis Rentis 18 233
Tel.: 213 2128506

Telephone line of
National Emergency Response Mechanism
0030-213 212 8888

sg.vp@migration.gov.gr
migration.gov.gr/en



Co-funded by
the European Union

