

Report of exchange programme in Moldova



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Participant Data

Name	Mrs. Ditte Bartholdy. Head of The Child and Youth Department in The Reception Center Sandholm and Avnstrup in Denmark
Name	Mrs. Ola Krawczynska. Case and program manager at the Reception Center in Leusden.
Organisation/ Ditte	The Danish Red Cross, Asylum Department
Organisation/Ola	COA

Itinerary (*List of places and people visited*):

The Main Directorate for Refugees:	Mrs. Ecaterina Silvestru Head of MDR Mr. Sergiu Visterniceau Deputy Head of MDR Mrs. Tatiana Ciumas – Azhizii Head of Documentation Unit Mrs. Evelina Osoianne Head of RSD procedure section Mr. Julian Popov Main specialist of the Documentation Unit
Reception Center:	Mr. Igor Prodan, Director Mr. Constantin Cojocari Chef –adjunct Mr. Octavian Pascaru General Practitioner Mrs. Natalija Guma Social worker Mr. Nelu Budeanu Main specialist of the Administration Unit MDR Mrs. Valentina Rafalskchi Head of the Deposit Unit Mr. Alexei Galitchii Pedagogue
UNHCR:	Mr .Peter Wijninga Representatiev Mr. Marcel Legal Officer
Save the Children	Mr. Vasile Batcu Director
Law Center of Advocates	Mrs. Irina Bobeicur, Project coordinator
Asylum seekers:	6 adults and 5 children

Table of contents

<u>Participant Data</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Table of contents.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Introduction:.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Descriptive report.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>GENERAL INFORMATION:.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>ACCOMODATION:.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>MEDICAL ASSISTANCE:.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>EDUCATION:.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>RECREATION:.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>WORK:.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>DISPERSAL:.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>STAFF:.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>CONCLUSIONS:.....</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>COUNTRY PROFILE / STATISTICAL DATA.....</u>	<u>17</u>

Introduction:

This year we were both able to join the Enaro programme and had the opportunity to visit a recently opened Reception Center, in Moldova, funded by UNHCR. We were delighted to have the possibility to learn about other working methods, share the knowledge, best practises and information about how the asylum seekers are taken care of by the Moldavian law.

The Enaro Fall exchange program started in Brussels with a two day introduction for the participants. We left to Moldova on the 9th of October and we stayed there for 9 days until the 18th of October.

During the stay we got acquainted with the system of reception of asylum seekers and the facilities and working methods at the Reception Center. We were able to interview and assist the social worker, the General Practitioner, the pedagogue, the employees of the Main Directorate for Refugees in Moldova¹ and some of the employees of organizations such as: Save the Children and UNHCR. Besides that we talked with some of the residents of the Center as well the asylum seekers as some of the residents who had received the permit to stay².

We were taken care of in a friendly way, encouraged to ask any question and we were given all the information, and written material we needed.



Nelu, Ola, Ditte & Octavian

¹ Placed under the Department of the National Bureau for Migration and Asylum

² In the asylum procedure in the Republic of Moldova, these resident at the Reception Center are called refugees.

Descriptive report

GENERAL INFORMATION:

*“In Moldova the authority to administer and deal with the issues of asylum seekers, refugees and humanitarian and temporary protection beneficiaries is the **National Bureau for Migration**, under which functions the **Main Directorate for Refugees (MDR)**. The Directorate for Refugees co-operates with public authorities as to process of implementation of necessary rules and procedures to ensure the observance of asylum seekers and refugees rights, as well as of the beneficiaries of humanitarian or temporary protection. In this regard the staff of the Main Directorate for Refugees is provided the possibility to communicate with this category of people, regardless their place of staying on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.*

The main Directorate for Refugees co-operates with the United Nations High Commissionaire for Refugees as to training the staff and ensuring informational teaching and methodological activity”.

(Revista de Drept de Azil si Drept Umanitar)

The newly-arrived asylum seekers in Moldova apply for asylum at MDR. The Main Directorate is also the place where they can apply for assistance.

A/ “Type of assistance available for asylum seekers and refugees living **outside** of the Reception Center:

- Subsistence support/monthly allowance
- Employment/job counselling/job placement
- Legal assistance
- Interpretation/Translation services
- Medical assistance/health care
- Education
- Romanian language courses
- Vocational training (for refugees only)
- Cultural orientation/community development (adults)
- Cultural orientation (children)
- Housing assistance
- Social counselling
- Occasional material assistance

B/Type of assistance available for asylum seekers **accommodated** at the Reception Center:

- Accommodation
- Subsistence support/monthly allowance
- Employment/job counselling
- Legal assistance
- Interpretation/translation services
- Medical assistance/health care, medical referral
- Education
- Cultural orientation/community development (adults)
- Cultural orientation (children)
- Social counselling
- Housing assistance
- Occasional material assistance” (Hand out from UNHCR)

LEGAL ASSISTENCE:

The Law Center of Advocates provides:

- “Legal counselling throughout the refugee status determination procedure
- Legal assistance to appeal in Refugee Council against negative decisions
- Legal representation in Court, by a lawyer

- Counselling of finally-rejected asylum seekers regarding further legal remedies and/or voluntary return to countries”. (Hand out from UNHCR)

ASSISTANCE OF MDR:

The asylum seekers and refugees who demonstrate that they have no other sources of support to meet their basic needs **are qualified** for this assistance.

The asylum seekers and refugees who:

- are staying on the territory of the Republic of Moldova for long period and who have reached the minimal level of integration,
- rejected by UNHCR before 2003 but currently registered at the MDR
- received assistance for voluntary repatriation, but currently re-registered with the MDR
- have other sources of existence

are not qualified for this assistance.

Asylum seekers who apply for asylum have to fill in the application form at the MDR. Immediately after that the finger prints are taken and the temporary ID card is issued.

Concerning the first interview, asylum seekers are entitled to be accompanied by an interpreter and a lawyer but in reality they don't use their right. According to Mr. Sergiu Visterniceau (Deputy Head of MDR) the first decision on the application form is made within two months. In case of a negative decision asylum seekers are entitled to appeal at the court in accordance with the Law of Republic of Moldova. The average time to obtain the final decision takes around six months.

The asylum seekers who are rejected are supposed to leave the country. There is neither repatriation programme in such cases nor supervision on departure. According to Mr. Sergiu Visterniceau that might be the reason why in Republic of Moldova the estimated number of illegal migrants are around 10.000.

To solve this problem there are plans to establish another Reception Center for people who are not allowed to stay in Moldova on the legal grounds.

At this moment there are 243 asylum seekers and refugees registered in Moldova. Most of them live outside the Reception Center.

The asylum seekers who live outside the Reception Center are, besides compulsory medical screening, only obliged to give their address to Main Directorate for Refugees and have no further obligations. They can be granted a monthly allowance if they are in need of subsistence support. The allowance per month is:

Maximum allowance in cash

#	Number of Applicants	%	Total amount, MDL Monthly
1.	Principal applicant	100	600
2.	Principal applicant + 1	175	1050
3:	Principal applicant + 2	250	1500 /etc.

- Subsistence support/monthly allowance will be provided up to 6 month.
- Only vulnerable persons³ can benefit of monthly allowances longer then 6 month. Each case has to be discussed individually every 3 month by the Social Assistance Committee⁴
- At the reception Center asylum seekers obtain: blankets, sheets, pots and pans, and towels.

In case of voluntarily repatriation, application form has to be issued by MDR.

Remarks

- It is not a custom to be assisted by neutral professional interpreters and lawyers during the first interview.
- There is no repatriation programme or supervision on departure for the rejected asylum seekers.
- Lack of integration programme for refugees with granted status.
- Lack of housing for vulnerable refugees outside the Reception Center.

³ Disabled, UAM's, single parents with children, elderly persons without family, invalid and seriously ill persons.

⁴ UNHCR, SC, CCR and MDR

Best Practice

- The short time in which the asylum seeker receives the final decision

THE RECEPTION CENTER:

The Reception Center is situated close to the Airport, approximately 10 km from the Capital of Moldova Chisinau. The Center is surrounded by a fence and guarded by a security officer. You are not allowed to enter the Center without having permission. The residents are free to leave and enter at any times, but they have to be back before 23.00 o'clock.

The Center is a two floor high building, and besides the accommodation has also the administrations offices. Next to the administration offices are guest's rooms we were both able to make use of.



The wing where the guests rooms are.



The sections where the asylum seekers and the refugees live

ACCOMODATION:

The Reception Center can accommodate 200 people and is at this moment inhabited by 73.

The Center accommodates not only asylum seekers but also refugees with granted status to stay, who are unable to provide for themselves. Immediately after their arrival the residents are informed about the house rules⁵, which they have to sign. As written before the building is divided into several wings. One of them is inhabited by the refugees and the other one by the asylum seekers.

The section which accommodates refugees is divided into units. The unit carries 4 rooms for the families and single women. The bathroom and the kitchen are shared.



Unit for the asylum seekers



Bathroom and toilet for refugees

⁵ Written in Rumanian



Kitchen for the refugees

The asylum seekers live in the second wing of the building. To their disposal are 4 or 3 person's rooms. The single men are placed on the first floor and the families and the single women with children on the other. Here again the kitchen and the bathrooms are shared.

All the common utilities in the whole Center are cleaned by the residents themselves in accordance with the house rules. In case of disobedience the residents receive a warning letter. Further disobedience is followed by a second letter where the resident is told to leave the Center within two weeks. The Center looks very tidy and clean. The buildings are recently renovated, except the building that is going to house the UaM's & the single women with children which will be renovated in the near future. According to UNHCR the renovation will be finished in 2008.

The facilities provided in the Center for the residents are:

Laundry, TV room, fitness room, classroom, computer- and the play room for the children.

In the garden are recreation and sport facilities and a place for smoking. Smoking is prohibited inside the Center which counts as well for the staff as for the residents.



Pregnant women and older people:

No special facilities and adjustments regarding accommodation

Disable people:

There are no facilities to accommodate physical handicapped people. Therefore they can be rejected if the Reception Center is unable to accommodate them.

Single parents with minor children:

Placed mostly next to the families.

Unaccompanied minors.

There is no such group in the Country.

Children:

Have a playroom and a playground outside the building to their disposal. There is a classroom⁶ and a TV room where cartoon are shown twice a week.

Remarks

- The residents are not informed about complaining procedure regarding accommodation or working methods of the staff.
- Playroom is closed when the staff member leading the activities is not present⁷.
- No special facilities for disabled and older people.
- No focus on the need of privacy for disabled, older people and single parent with children.
- No place for religious practices
- No attention the safety issues regarding children, single parents with children, and single women.
- As it has not occurred no policy on detention regarding accommodation and allowance.

Best Practise

- The asylum seekers are allowed and able to live independently outside the Center and provide for themselves.
- The involvement of the residents in the cleaning process at the Reception Center is to be recommended.
- Tidying up of the surroundings of the Center twice per year, on the voluntarily basis is to be recommended.
- No smoking and exposing to smoke in the living area.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE⁸:

Within 10 days after applying for asylum, the adult asylum seeker is obliged to do the medical screening. They have to take test on TBC – HIV – Syphilis, and deliver the results to the Main Directorate for Refugees. Asylum seekers may await the results at the Reception Center.

There are no checks up on the mental health.

Asylum seekers who live outside the center are helped by a General Practitioner. They have to provide for a General Practitioner themselves. The residents at the Reception Center have access to the GP of the Center daily except in the weekends. In the weekends the have to call the first aid.

At the Reception Center the basic medical aid is available for all the residents. Officially asylum seekers are supposed to pay themselves for any further treatment which is needed. The costs are not covered by insurance as the asylum seekers are not insured in Moldova. In such cases NGO's refunds the costs. When any specific medical aid is needed, the General Practitioner is obliged to apply to the either the UNHCR or to NGO's to fund the necessary treatments.

Pregnant women:

She will be followed carefully, and the number of check ups will depend on her health conditions. During the pregnancy the UNHCR is paying for the consultations. Giving birth is free of charge and the consultation for the child is free of charge too.

Older People:

Residents with the status of refugee are accommodated at the Center, when they are unable to take care of themselves. Older people are not offered any specific help and social services. They are granted the same amount

⁶ The classroom is also for adults.

⁷ The children have access to the playroom, if their parents open the playroom. This does not happen often.

⁸ The medical assistance is also available at the center of Save the Children.

of money as the asylum seekers. The diet of older people are not monitored. Older people provide for themselves with food and clothing.

Disable people:

There are no facilities to accommodate physical handicapped people and therefore they can be rejected if the Reception Center is unable to accommodate them. The funding for treatments for physical handicapped people is difficult to obtain.

Mentally handicapped and traumatized people, can be hospitalized if needed and join further rehabilitation programme. In this situation they are provided by the State.

There are at the Reception Center, at this moment, no records of residents who are victims of Torture, Rape, Trauma and Violence (according to Mr. Peter Wijninga, representant of UNHCR organization in Moldova, UNHCR develops cooperation with the recently set up center for Victim of Trauma in Chisinau)

Single parents with minor children⁹.

No specific treatment of medical services for this category.

Unaccompanied minors.

There is no such group in the Country.

Children:

Have access to all kind of treatment. The basic aid is free of charge in Moldova, any specific treatment, is paid by Save the Children.

Remarks

- During medical consultations interpreters are not present. If translation is necessary, the social worker or some of the residents are asked for help. This matter can course lack of privacy especially concerning personal files and medical files.
- It would be beneficial to employ gender- matched doctors and nurses.
- There is not any psychological or psychiatric support for any of the groups at the Reception Center.
- Community support is not available.
- The residents do not receive information/counselling about sexual health and family planning.
- There is no access to contraception.

EDUCATION:

The children of the residents start to go to kindergarten when they are 2 years old and they can continue until they are 6 years. Next step is a primary school which they attend until they are 16 years old. These two forms of education are free of charge.

Children who attend the kindergarten are provided with food 3 times a day, but in school they take their own lunch with them ore pay for the food. The school materials are paid by NGO's.

The pedagogue at the Reception Center is responsible for signing children in at the kindergarten and the school. He is the person who controls the absence, visits the school and the parents if necessary. The pedagogue is also the one who gives the children extra lessons when it is needed in order to reach demanded level (remedial teaching). Next to that he organises after school activities for children and adults.

Further education at a college of university is paid¹⁰. The asylum seekers who want to continue with their education at that level have to apply for the refund of their costs to NGO's or UNHCR. Evening courses are

⁹ Look under Children.

¹⁰ In 2008 this will change and the education at the University will be free of charge for the Refugees. It will be paid by the UNHCR. This is a better situation than for the residents of the Republic of Moldova. They have to pay if they want to study at the University.

also available. There are also short courses available such as: language courses (English and Romanian), driving licence course and several handcraft courses. All of them are organised and given by NGO's in cooperation with a social worker at the Reception Center, and free of charge.

Pregnant women:

No special course or counselling for this group.

Older People:

There are no courses organised for this group.

Disable people:

There are no courses or counselling.

Single parents with minor children:

Single mothers have the possibility to follow short courses; children can attend a kindergarten or school.

Unaccompanied minors.

There is no such group in the Country.

Children:

Attend a kindergarten or a school.

Remarks:

- When the pedagogue is absent there are no activities for children and adults at the Reception Center. There is no replacement.
- There is no professional remedial teaching neither at school nor at the Reception Center.
- "The monthly allowance doesn't allow parents to buy school uniforms and school materials for their children. Even though there are funds to provide children with needed materials, there are still children¹¹ at the Reception Center who don't have the necessary equipment"¹².
- The single parents with children attending school don't get additional financial support.
- More attention should to be paid to such issues as cooperation with volunteers in the municipality, cooperation with the schools etc.

Best practice:

- Children are able to attend a kindergarten and a school outside the Reception Center.
- Save the Children and the staff at the Reception Center is aware of discrimination towards the children of asylum seekers and refugees and takes necessary precautions.

RECREATION:

At the Reception Center trips are organized for all the residents to interesting places such as: museums, theatre and the ZOO. There're also parties and celebration such as Christmas – Eid celebration at the end of the Ramadan month - New Year – Day of the Refugee – and the Protection day of the Children. In the summertime the Reception Center organizes summer camps for the children. The activities are organized together with Save the Children. The residents have opportunity to join activity programmes such as fitness, swimming pool, football, etc. However these costs are not refunded.

¹¹ These children are in a special situation, as they are born in Moldova. From November - NGO Save the Children - changes their policy on this matter and will provide Moldovian children at the Reception Center, with the same as what the refugee children get.

¹² "": One of the residents in the Reception Center.

Best practice:

- Both, as well the Save the Children as the staff of the Reception Center try to approach all the nationalities by organising parties and celebrations for most of the them, in accordance with their tradition and religion. By doing so the residents of different origin are getting more acquainted with each other way of life and way of thinking and learn to understand it and deal with it.

WORK:

“MDR has the responsibility to ensure the right to work to asylum seekers and the refugees in the procedure longer than 6 month.

The social worker at the Reception Center, who is also employed by MDR, will facilitate the process of employment of asylum seekers and refugees through job counselling and providing information in job opportunities.

Save the Children will provide additional job counselling/job placement to refugees and asylum seekers in the procedure longer than 6 month”. (Paper hand out – UNHCR)

Best practice:

- The possibility to work helps asylum seekers and the refugees to maintain their independence, keeps them active and has positive influence on the integration process.
- Although the asylum seekers have got their own income they can still obtain the allowances’ from the MDR.

DISPERSAL:

As there is only one Reception Center in The Republic of Moldova, the asylum seeker and the refugees are not transferred.

STAFF:

We experience the staff at the Reception Center and at the MDR as very motivated and enthusiastic.

All of the employees we have met were very open about their work and working methods and eager to know about different approach and experience. It has been very pleasant to share with them our knowledge and exchange information about reception process in all its aspects.

We have noticed that the staff members at the Reception Center have fine relationship with the residents.

The residents are approached in a friendly way and with respect. Thanks to that the atmosphere at the Center is pleasant. In one of the interviews, one of the residents said: “we feel here highly respected by the staff members and we really like them”.

Remarks:

- The staff members are well educated but they don’t have pedagogic or social worker background (except one). Trainings and seminars for all the staff members would be beneficial on this field.
- Trainings and exchange programmes (for example ENARO) should be offered to all of the staff members. (learning on the job)
- It would be advisable to preserve the knowledge and gain experience by preventing

the staff members from leaving their job in order to find a better paid one.

CONCLUSIONS:

Our stay in Moldova has been very meaningful to us and very pleasant.

We have learned very much about the country and about the reception of asylum seekers in particular. The life conditions of the citizens in The Republic of Moldova drew our attention. We were surprised by the rate between the living costs and the average income of the citizens. We were unable to understand how people can manage in such circumstances. The life conditions of asylum seekers and refugees don't differ from the citizens' of Moldova.

The precarious economic situation, however, doesn't enable for implementation of long-term programmes which will target finding durable solutions of refugees' issues.

The asylum system in Moldova is a pretty new one. The Law on the Status of Refugees was adopted in July 2002 and entered into force on the 1st of January 2003. The construction of the Reception Center for asylum seekers and recognised refugees has followed and the Reception Center was opened in October 2003.

The staff members of the Main Directorate for Refugees when asked about their experience answered: "we have still very much to learn". Our response to their words was: "yes, but you are learning very fast". The MDR together with UNHCR and the employees of the Reception Center managed to establish in such a short time a well functioning Reception Center close to international standard. Taking part in international exchange programmes, such as ENARO programme, by the staff members will be beneficial and will improve - in our opinion - the quality of reception and working methods at the Reception Center (learning on the job).

It needs to be stressed that the supportive work which is done by Save the Children organization towards the families and especially the children is of a great value and makes the work, done by the staff of the Reception Center, complete. This has to be seen as a best practise and be implemented in our countries.

The asylum system which allows asylum seekers to live independently and outside a reception center prevents them from becoming dependent and passive. Although asylum seekers are still seen as vulnerable group they are - by implementing this method - recognised as a capable to provide for themselves and their children. Seeing our experience on reception of asylum seekers in our countries and its results we consider this practice as the best one.

We would like to thank ENARO programme for giving us the opportunity to taking part in this exchange and make special thanks to the staff members of the Reception Center for their hospitality and entertainment, for providing us with any information we needed and bringing us in contact with employees of The Main Directorate for Refugees, UNHCR, Law Center of Advocates and Save the Children.



Entrance at the Reception Center.

	o'clock) <input type="checkbox"/> obligatory permanent presence in asylum facility <input type="checkbox"/> detention
Services provided:	
Types of catering:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> individual cooking <input type="checkbox"/> catering provided <input type="checkbox"/> combined
System of provision of financial and material aid:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/> payment in kind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> combined
Asylum seeker's access to the labour market:	<input type="checkbox"/> no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, specify conditions: The social worker at the center helps them to get jobs. This help is legal.
Lessons of local language available:	<input type="checkbox"/> compulsory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> voluntary <input type="checkbox"/> none
Vocational training available:	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no
Extent of health care provided:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> standard – same as health care provided for citizens <input type="checkbox"/> different, specify:
Obligatory initial medical examinations:	<input type="checkbox"/> none <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lung X-ray (TB) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> venereal diseases <input type="checkbox"/> taking of biological material samples <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other, specify: HIV
Vulnerable groups:	
Definition of vulnerable groups – please indicate the categories which are considered vulnerable in the reception system:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaccompanied minors <input type="checkbox"/> Single women <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant women <input type="checkbox"/> Families with children <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elderly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incomplete families (single women with minor children) <input type="checkbox"/> Mentally handicapped <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physically handicapped/disabled <input type="checkbox"/> Victims of trauma and other people with mental health problems <input type="checkbox"/> Others, specify
Please indicate number of asylum seekers for each category a) the whole country b) the reception facility – when available a) 243 b) 73	
Unaccompanied minors	0
Single women	There is not such a statistical survey
Families with children	There is not such a statistical survey
Elderly	There is not such a statistical survey
Incomplete families (single women with minor children)	There is not such a statistical survey
Mentally handicapped	There is not such a statistical survey
Physically handicapped/disabled	There is not such a statistical survey
Victims of trauma and other people with mental health problems	There is not such a statistical survey
Others, specify	There is not such a statistical survey