



Safe Zone in RRC Sofia - Voenna Rampa
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CONTEXT

In 2023, IOM Bulgaria continued managing two Safe Zones for unaccompanied minors (UAMs) located in the State Agency for Refugees' (SAR) Registration and Reception Centres (RRC) in Sofia - Voenna Rampa and Ovcha Kupel, providing 24/7 care and support to the UAMs accommodated therein. Over 8,700 UAMs have been registered and accommodated in the two Safe Zones since their establishment in 2019 and 2020. Support provided by IOM includes: registration and accommodation; social, legal and psychological consultations; medical support; information sessions; distribution of non-food items; organisation of arts, sports and other recreational activities; organisation of informal educational activities; organisation of excursions to cultural, historical, and nature sites.

OVERVIEW OF OUR ASSISTANCE

Data for the period
1 Jan 2023 - 31 Dec 2023



2,569

Total number of UAMs accommodated in the two Safe Zones



541

UAMs who received medical assistance with financial support from IOM



175

Number of psychological consultations



29

Number of family reunifications of UAMs with relatives in the EU, UK and USA



530

Number of social consultations



118

UAMs who participated in excursions



2,015*

UAMs who participated in non-formal educational activities



151*

UAMs who participated in rituals and celebrations



2,845*

UAMs who participated in creative and arts-based activities



17,006*

UAMs who participated in sports activities

* UAMs have participated in more than one activity



UAMs during a theatre workshop
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HIGHLIGHTS

7th Harmanli Graffiti Festival



IOM Bulgaria organised the 7th edition of its flagship Graffiti Festival at RRC Harmanli. Over several days professional graffiti artists and UAMs collaborated to bring creativity and colour to the centre's walls.

Excursions to cultural and historical sites



IOM organized fifteen excursions for UAMs accommodated in the two Safe Zones to nature, cultural and historical sites, including Rila Monastery, Plovdiv, Starosel, Vitoshka and other destinations. These outings aimed to teach the UAMs about and facilitate their adaptation in Bulgaria.

Football tournament for UAMs



Two football tournaments were organised with UAMs accommodated in the two Safe Zones in Sofia and in RRC Harmanli. Children from the Bulgarian host community also participated in the two tournaments, whose aim was to bring migrant and Bulgarian children together for a couple of days of fun and games.

Photography storytelling workshops



IOM Bulgaria conducted two photography storytelling workshops for UAMs in the Safe Zone at RRC Sofia - Ovcha Kupel. Through capturing visual and emotional impressions, the workshop provided a platform for self-expression and connection, fostering engagement and creativity among the children.



UAMs playing cricket
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REFUGE-ED theatre project



In collaboration with Cermes, as part of the REFUGE-ED project, IOM Bulgaria participated in a theatre initiative for UAMs in the two Safe Zones. The project, funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme, aimed to enhance the well-being and social integration of refugee, migrant, and asylum-seeking children through innovative educational and psychosocial practices. During weekly meetings, the children actively participated in the creative process, designing their own costumes and expressing their emotions and ideas while developing characters and storylines with the support of the REFUGE-ED and IOM teams.

DONOR



In 2023 IOM managed the two Safe Zones with the financial support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021.

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