



**UNHCR's MANAGEMENT RESPONSE MATRIX TO:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Evaluation of Emergency Transit Centres in Romania and the Slovak Republic</b>
<b>Reference</b>	<b>PDES/2016/02</b>
<b>Overall response to the evaluation</b>	<p><b>We welcome the attention that the evaluation has brought to the ETCs and hope it can lead to further discussions regarding the objectives and policy framework under which they operate. We agree with the overall spirit of the conclusions, in particular the acknowledgement that the current function of the ETCs is at variance with the initial purpose. We are of the view that this variance warrants further discussion and hope for further input from all relevant stakeholders.</b></p> <p><b>Of the 24 recommendations 10 are addressed to DIP who agree with 4, disagree with 3 and partially agree with 3. Thirteen recommendations are addressed to RRCE/UNHCR Romania who agree with 4, disagree with 2 and partially agree with 7 pending a rethinking of the purpose of the ETCs. One recommendation is addressed to DIP/RRCE/UNHCR Romania who agree with it.</b></p>
<b>Planned use of the evaluation</b>	<b>The evaluation will be used as the basis for a planned meeting of stakeholders to take place as soon as possible.</b>

**Recommendation 1 (Standard-setting/Guidance notes):** Formulate an annual planning process for the ETFs including protection and programming perspectives, and including clear objectives and measurable indicators. Prepare annual planning figures for the ETCs for different priority classifications/refugee profiles/resettlement countries, including time-frames for monitoring purposes.

**Management Response to Recommendation 1.**

**Responsible Service / Office : Resettlement Service/DIP**

Agree  Partially Agree  Disagree

If disagree, explain the reason why:

Actions Planned or Taken	Timeframe /Expected Completion Date
<p>In consultation with resettlement countries and other relevant stakeholders, DIP will work towards formalizing an annual planning process for the ETCs. As a prerequisite, DIP and RRCE are in agreement that there is a need to reassess whether the objectives and supporting policy framework of the ETCs, as set out during their establishment, are still applicable to their current use and, if not, how the objectives and framework should be modified to ensure they are fit for purpose. It was noted that the centers, in particular Humenne, have gradually shifted towards case processing more generally, rather than true emergency situations. With this shift in usage, it was suggested to invite resettlement countries using these facilities to a stakeholder meeting to discuss the current procedures, purpose and nature of these centres and to ensure that all necessary agreements, guidance documents and protocols are in place.</p> <p>Actions: DIP/RRCE to organize a meeting with BPRM and other relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>Late Sept/Oct (TBD)</p>

**Recommendation 2 (Standard-setting/Guidance notes):** Prepare a concept note on minimum standards for the ETCs, which includes measurable indicators in the fields of shelter, nutrition, non-food items and the provision of assistance.

**Management Response to Recommendation 2**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

We are of the view that such minimum standards are already available and articulated in several UNHCR guidance documents. They are also currently available in national and international legal standards, such as the EU Reception Directives.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 3 (Standard-setting/Guidance notes):** Prepare a comprehensive updated guidance note on the ETCs, including the profiles of refugees eligible for evacuation.

**Management Response to Recommendation 3**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

Agree  Partially Agree  Disagree

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

Although a guidance note on emergency transit facilities already exists, it will be reviewed and expanded drawing on past experiences and usages of the ETCs as well as lessons learned. In particular, and in consultation with key stakeholders, the guidance note will look more closely at the profiles of refugees eligible for evacuation to the ETC, with a view to improve the flow of case processing.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

TBD

**Recommendation 4 (Standard-setting/Guidance notes):** Considering the success of UNHCR in finding resettlement countries to take almost all of the cases rejected by resettlement countries after transfer, consider in certain circumstances the inclusion of emergency priority cases for transfer to ETCs without the prior identification of a resettlement country in the list of eligible refugee profiles.

**Management Response to Recommendation 4**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

Given the current number of denied cases and the troubling consequences that denial has had on physical and mental health of the individuals involved, as well as the struggle to identify alternative solutions for several years, DIP and the RRCE are in agreement that it should be no more risk are taken in this regard.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 5 (Planning):** Consolidate coordination efforts to strengthen the US pipeline for the ETCs.

**Management Response to Recommendation 5**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

UNHCR is already in regular communication with BPRM regarding the US pipeline for the ETCs, however, it is recognized that further efforts can be taken to consolidate the coordination to ensure that the pipeline moves more smoothly.

Actions: UNHCR will ensure that it maintains regular coordination meetings with PRM on the US pipeline for the ETCs to enable it to address any issues that arise during processing.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

On-going process

**Recommendation 6 (Coordination):** Review existing procedures related to coordination, approval and cross-checking, including templates used for information-sharing purposes, to develop and agree on more efficient procedures.  
 Clarify and provide further information about the responsibilities of UNHCR and IOM in relation to the logistical arrangements for transfer to ETCs to field staff of both agencies and to field staff of ICRC for the issuance of ICRC travel documents.  
 Develop comprehensive guidelines that clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders at the different stages of the identification and transfer process, including country-specific annexes.

**Management Response to Recommendation 6**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

<b>Actions Planned or Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe /Expected Completion Date</b>
<p>The Resettlement Service/DIP is in agreement with this recommendation. The suggested actions will only be able to occur after we have had the opportunity to consult with resettlement countries and other relevant stakeholders on the current procedures, purpose and nature of the ETC to ensure all parties are working according to the same understanding and pursuant to the same objectives.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

**Recommendation 7 (Advocacy and Communication):** Develop and implement an advocacy strategy on the different functions, potential use and responsibilities of different stakeholders of the ETCs for UNHCR staff and partners.

**Management Response to Recommendation 7**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

<b>Actions Planned or Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe /Expected Completion Date</b>
Once consultations have occurred with resettlement countries and other relevant stakeholders and common objectives regarding the current operation of the ETC are established, an advocacy strategy will be developed by DIP. In addition, a protocol will be developed in relation to the responsibilities of various stakeholders in relation to denied cases.	TBD

**Recommendation 8 (Advocacy and Communication):** Share regular updates about the ETCs with field resettlement and protection staff.

**Management Response to Recommendation 8**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

<b>Actions Planned or Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe /Expected Completion Date</b>
<p>In coordination with the focal points in the Resettlement Service, the distribution list for updates regarding the ETC will be revised to ensure that relevant field resettlement and protection staff are included.</p> <p>In addition, following the meeting with the stakeholders referred to in relation to previous recommendations, a fact sheet will be developed for wider dissemination.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

**Recommendation 9 (Assessment and Review):** Undertake a review of the profile of emergency priority resettlement referrals and current practices in their selection, management and resettlement processing.

**Management Response to Recommendation 9**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

At the planned stakeholder meeting the objectives of the ETC may be realigned as they currently are not primarily used for emergency cases. After the meeting, it will be assessed whether it is the selection, management and processing more generally that should be reassessed or only that in relation to emergency cases. Any overall changes to the definition of emergency cases would need to occur during a wider consultation as part of a revision to the RST Handbook.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 10 (Assessment and Review):** Conduct a review of the ETM in Philippines to ensure that lessons learned and good practices can be fed into policy and programming activities related to other ETFs.

**Management Response to Recommendation 10**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

Given the large differences between the ETCs and the Emergency Transit Mechanism in the Philippines (which has a short approval process, has no “centre” as such, and a very different political environment) it is unlikely that this could lead to transferable recommendations and policy development.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 11 (Human Resources):** Review the part-time nature and responsibilities of the ETC focal point function. Together with RRCE, examine management and coordination needs at the regional level vis-à-vis the ETCs to ensure a coherent approach. Consider options whereby one international position with sufficient seniority to liaise with States and donors combines these two dossiers, possible based regionally.

**Management Response to Recommendation 11**

**Responsible Service / Office :** Resettlement Service/DIP/RRCE

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

Actions Planned or Taken	Timeframe /Expected Completion Date
<p>Following the meeting between the RRCE and the RST Service, it has been jointly agreed that, in principle, the coordination of the logistics could be absorbed by RRCE, whereby the advocacy/planning/policy/management of denied cases will remain under the umbrella of the RST Service, which might be further review at the stakeholders' meeting.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

**Recommendation 12 (Human Resources):** Review UNHCR/UNOPS staffing in the ETCs to harmonize ETC-based positions, and ensure a greater coherence in approach.

**Management Response to Recommendation 12**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

The answer to this recommendation is on hold pending the stakeholders' meeting defining and agreeing on the purpose of the centres and the way forward (Please refer to the reply to Recommendation 1).

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 13 (Human Resources):** Review staffing and services provided by NGOs in ETCs in order to harmonize capacity and services to ensure a coherent approach, while taking into account needs of the different and diverse refugee populations, and the different operating environments. This should also take into account adherence to minimum standards and the increased capacity of the ETC in Humenné.

**Management Response to Recommendation 13**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE/CO Romania

Agree  Partially Agree  Disagree

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

**Timeframe /Expected Completion Date**

The ETCs are included in the annual planning exercise, AGDM assessments etc. which inform the decisions on the services provided to refugees. These decisions also take into consideration the ETCs existing infrastructure and the diversity of the refugee population.

Considering the very limited predictability of the pipeline and the little advance information on the profile of refugees staying in the ETCs, activities other than those already planned for, will be tailored by the Partner upon arrival after conducting a basic assessment. These activities will have to take into account the responsibilities/constraints deriving from the ETC Agreement.

The Partner staff has been kept relatively flexible and is the result of consultations with the Partner and the refugee community.

**Recommendation 14 (Standard Setting):** Review the current capacity in Humenné in light of the discussion on minimum standards to decide on maximum operational figures with respect to the number of refugees accommodated in the centre at any point in time.

**Management Response to Recommendation 14**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

The answer to this recommendation is on hold pending the stakeholders' meeting defining and agreeing on the purpose of the centres and the way forward (Please refer to the reply to Recommendation 1).

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 15 (Standard Setting):** Support the implementation of a strengthened community development approach by involving refugees more in the day-to-day running of the ETCs.

**Management Response to Recommendation 15**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE/CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

<b>Actions Planned or Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe /Expected Completion Date</b>
<p>The community is involved in the day-to-day running of the ETCs, with some exceptions where the people concerned clearly express the desire not to be involved.</p> <p>Refugee men and women are involved in several areas such as the distribution of food/non-food items, medical issues for those with a medical background, education for those with language skills, recreational activities and maintenance of the ETC premises (living quarters and surrounding areas).</p> <p>UNHCR and its partners will further explore diversified ways of increased involvement of the community into the daily life in the ETCs.</p>	<p>on-going process</p>

**Recommendation 16 (Standard Setting):** Examine options to use external school rooms to give children a sense of normalcy and possibly alleviate the burden posed by an increased capacity in the ETC in Humenné.

**Management Response to Recommendation 16**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

The answer to this recommendation is on hold pending the stakeholders' meeting defining and agreeing on the purpose of the centres and the way forward (Please refer to the reply to Recommendation 1).

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

***Recommendation 17 (Assessment and Review):*** Request a technical expert mission to review the educational and life-skills activities and vocational training offered by the NGOs in the ETCs (taking into consideration the content of cultural orientation training) and provide recommendations to strengthen these in light of integration needs. This should include a review to examine (a) if and to what extent CrossRoads training duplicates some of the components of existing cultural orientation courses; b) explore the more systematic use of this training package on life skills to all refugees; and c) explore the willingness of donors to support such training as well as other training activities to prepare refugees for integration.

**Management Response to Recommendation 17**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

The answer to this recommendation is on hold pending the stakeholders' meeting defining and agreeing on the purpose of the centres and the way forward (Please refer to the reply to Recommendation 1).

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 18 (Advocacy and Communication material (for refugees)):** 18.1 Review information needs of refugees departing to the ETCs and UNHCR country offices in countries of asylum and update videos on the ETCs, PowerPoint presentations and briefing notes. 18.2 Together with field staff in countries of asylum, ensure refugees receive necessary information about the ETCs before departure from country of first asylum. 18.3 Together with field staff in countries of asylum, provide more up-to-date information about countries of resettlement to manage expectations at an early stage.

**Management Response to Recommendation 18**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE/CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

<b>Actions Planned or Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe /Expected Completion Date</b>
<p>18.1 Actions taken: - PowerPoint presentation updated; Actions planned: - producing a short video presentation;</p> <p>18.2 Information on the prevailing ETC conditions is regularly shared with Resettlement Service/HQs, regional Hubs and sending operations, ensuring that colleagues concerned with briefing pre-departing refugees have necessary updates.</p> <p>18.3 Resettlement counselling to all ETC residents is regularly provided by UNHCR staff. Resettlement countries or their delegates provide cultural orientation classes in accordance with an agreed curriculum and UNHCR partners provide basic information on the countries of resettlement through their organised educational activities, such as geographic location, population size, and languages spoken. Caution is required since it is not guaranteed that refugees will be accepted by any given resettlement country.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

***Recommendation 19 (Data management & monitoring):*** Install ProGres in the ETCs in cooperation with DPSM.  
 Review and strengthen the design of the ETCs-based data management systems to correspond with data needs for planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes, with input from DPSM if necessary.

**Management Response to Recommendation 19**

**Responsible Service / Office :** RRCE/CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

<b>Actions Planned or Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe /Expected Completion Date</b>
<p>We welcome the implementation of ProGres. Follow-up was conducted with the Resettlement Service/HQs with regards to the implementation of this data base at the ETC.</p> <p>UNHCR Romania will coordinate with RRCE/DPSM in this regard.</p>	

**Recommendation 20:** Advocate with the Government of Romania to provide more freedom of movement in Timisoara to refugees under agreed conditions, while still respecting the provisions of the Tri-Partite Agreement.

**Management Response to Recommendation 20**

**Responsible Service / Office :** CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

UNHCR could attempt to simplify the actual exit procedures of refugees from the ETC, in the understanding that the Tri-Partite Agreement itself should not become a matter of renewed negotiations. The general political atmosphere in Central Europe has undergone radical changes with strong anti-refugee sentiments. This trend is rapidly catching up in Romania as well.

In the present climate, renewed negotiations on the Tri-Partite Agreement could lead to negative counter demands on the part of the authorities.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 21:** Review existing arrangements with respect to ensuring accountability and controlling the movements of the refugee population to alleviate, at a minimum, the responsibilities of the partner in these areas, and consider inviting the General Inspectorate for Immigration to take on such responsibilities at the ETC entrance gate.

**Management Response to Recommendation 21**

**Responsible Service / Office :** CO Romania

Agree  Partially Agree  Disagree

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

Please refer to comment made under recommendation 20 above

To the best of our understanding, at the time of negotiating the Tri-Partite Agreement in 2008, UNHCR accepted certain limitations in the freedom of movement of refugees in the ETC. The agreement reached is that refugees could exit the Center under the supervision of the Partner.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 22:** Consider a more flexible use of budget lines, to the extent possible, to enable the partner to respond to unforeseen needs of the refugees, considering fluctuations in population numbers, profiles and needs.

**Management Response to Recommendation 22**

**Responsible Service / Office :** CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

The budget has been kept as flexible as possible and is usually proposed by the Partner, reviewed and discussed with UNHCR. Where the Partner identifies unforeseen needs of the refugees, such needs have been included in the partners' budget.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

**Recommendation 23:** Undertake regular consultations with the Government of Romania to ensure due consideration to UNHCR's minimum standards for ETCs when renovating the identified building for the new ETC.

**Management Response to Recommendation 23**

**Responsible Service / Office :** CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

UNHCR Romania provided the authorities, at their request, with proposals on the lay-out/requirements to be included in the plan for the new building refurbishment. Their plan will be going through the Ministry's internal approval process and then published for expression of interest by Architect Offices. The latter will be able to confirm /modify the requirements discussed by UNHCR and authorities based on the potential of the building to support envisaged requirements.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**

End 2018

**Recommendation 24:** Continue to invite the partner to provide inputs into the design of the new ETC building based on their experience.

**Management Response to Recommendation 24**

**Responsible Service / Office :** CO Romania

**Agree**  **Partially Agree**  **Disagree**

**If disagree, explain the reason why:**

**Actions Planned or Taken**

UNHCR Romania has been engaging the Partner in all consultations regarding the lay-out of the new premises and has held joint-visits to the premises. In this spirit, UNHCR Romania will continue to invite its Partner to consultations in the matter and count on their expertise as well.

**Timeframe  
/Expected  
Completion Date**