



ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΞΗΣ ΝΕΩΝ

Thessaloniki 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2016

## PRESS RELEASE

Conference on “PROTECTION OF REFUGEE MINORS”

8.12.2016

CULTURAL CENTER “ALEXANDROS”

1 Ethnikis Aminis str., Thessaloniki

09.00-18.00

The last few years Greece is a path for hundreds of thousands war-conflict victims from Syria, a large number from Afghanistan, and lower from Asia and Africa, who started as refugees in order to travel to Central and Northern Europe countries. Currently, thousands of refugees are within the Greek territory, the majority of them stays in camps, sometimes even without access to basic infrastructure or facilities. Based on the estimates of National Centre for Social Solidarity and UNHCR, about 2000 unaccompanied minors are currently among the general refugee population.

ARSIS, trying to help addressing the refugee crisis, having now a twenty-years experience in providing services to minors and more than ten-years experience to dealing with unaccompanied refugee minors, has already started from August 2015 to intervene in Idomeni. Today, ARSIS maintains child protection teams in the camps in **Cherso, Nea Kavala, Kalochori, Derveni** (Alexyl, Dion), **Softex** in Thessaloniki and **Elliniko, Skaramagkas, Amygdaleza** in Athens. Children at risk - including unaccompanied and separated from their families children - identified and supported through the information provision, psychosocial support, referral to other agencies and deemed appropriate services. Depending on the needs of the population in each camp, the ARSIS teams provide educational - creative activities for children and teenagers. Also, social action groups maintain in the camps at **Diavata, Filippiada, Goat, Konitsa** and **Dolian**. Finally, ARSIS has created and operates a «safe space» temporary protective custody of minors in the **Diavata** camp.

Through the daily work of ARSIS' teams in the refugee camps, also in 3 Residential Centers and 2 Transit Shelters for Unaccompanied Minors, the organization has detected the needs of unaccompanied minors, this extremely vulnerable group between an already vulnerable population, and moves on to address the conditions that inhibit their personal development and their access to basic goods and services.

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### ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

Πτολεμαίων 35 & Συγγρού  
T.K. 546 30  
T/F 2310 526150, 2310 552813  
infothes@arsis.gr

### ΑΘΗΝΑ

Μαυρομματαίων 43  
T.K. 104 34  
T/F 210 8259 880  
arsisathina@gmail.com

### ΒΟΛΟΣ

• Μακρινίτσα - T.K. 370 11  
T/F 24280 99939  
arsis.xenonas@hotmail.com  
• Πολυμέρη 142 - T.K. 382 22  
T/F 24212 15525

### ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥΠΟΛΗ

Κωνσταντινουπόλεως 34  
T.K. 681 00  
T/F 25510 38952, 25510 38947  
arsisalex@gmail.com

### ΚΟΖΑΝΗ

Αγ. Χριστόφορου 6  
T.K. 501 00  
T/F 24610 49799  
infokoz@arsis.gr





ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΞΗΣ ΝΕΩΝ

**The main aim of the conference** is to present the issues regarding the welfare, the development of services and the protection of refugee minors living in shelters or in other accommodation structures and the analysis of the phenomenon of children on the move.

At the conference will be presented the experience and the concerns of social services, of Greek and non Greek organizations which are active in the field of service development for children especially in residential centers and it is expected to become a comprehensive overview of issues related to the protection of refugee minors. Also, it is on purpose the exchange of the views, highlighting the good practices and identifying obstacles or challenges between professionals who work in the field of child protection and the networking among stakeholders. Finally, the conference aims to sensitize the society on the respect of child rights and the child best interest.

The conference is organized under the **Mario Project**, which aims the strengthening of the protection mechanism for the children on the move in Europe that are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and trafficking. The **Mario Project** is funded by the European Commission and the OAK Foundation.

For more information please contact:

**Valbona Hystuna tel. 6932855699**

**Ioulietta Kandyas, tel. 6972366297**

PS: Please, find attached the agenda of the conference.

☐ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

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Τ/Φ 210 8259 880  
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Τ/Φ 24280 99939  
arsis.xenonas@hotmail.com  
• Πολυμέρη 142 - Τ.Κ. 382 22  
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