**Question no.1**

According to the provisions of art.3 of the G.E.O no 194/2002, regarding foreigners regime in Romania, republished, as amended and supplemented, foreigners that live in Romania enjoy general protection for persons and their wealth, guaranteed by the Constitution and other laws, as well as rights stated in international treaties that Romania is a part of. Also, foreigners with residence or domicile in Romania can benefit from social protection measures from the state, in the same conditions as the Romanian citizens.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, measures were taken to prevent and limit possible infections for everyone, including asylum seekers, beneficiaries of a protection form, foreigners that reside illegally, and Ministry of Internal Affairs staff.

Thus, based on legislation and proactively, based on projections regarding the virus spreading, a plan of measures was developed by the General Inspectorate for Immigration, Ministry’s of Internal Affairs specialized unit, that was applied during the state of emergency. In developing this plan, there were constant consultations with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other NGOs that activate in this field. Also, after the state of emergency ended, a new plan was developed, adapted to the new measures taken at a national level.

The measures taken concerned limiting and preventing the spreading of COVID-19 cases, the foreigner's right to seek a form of protection was not restricted under any circumstance during the state of emergency and the state of alert. Also, the process of analyzing international protection requests in the administrative state was never interrupted, additional measures of protection were implemented in this regard. As well, rights regarding medical assistance, free treatment in cases of chronic and acute diseases, counseling, and psychological assistance.

Since the start of the state of emergency at a national level, the process of receiving requests (and issue/renew documents) formulated according to G.E.O no.194/2002 and G.E.O no.102/2005 regarding free movement on Romanian territory of citizens of EU states, European Economic Area, and Switzerland was suspended except for urgent situations, justified, as well as requests for issuing hiring/detachment notices, formulated according to G.O no.25/2014 regarding employment and secondment on Romanian territory and for modifying and completing some legal acts regarding foreigners regime in Romania. In May 2020, the activity of taking requests in person, at a counter was resumed, for a request for issuing/renew documents for foreigners.

Among the measures taken, we mention: handing protection items (masks, gloves, digital thermometers, disinfectant substances, installing protection panels in spaces where the activity of registering, fingerprinting, and interviewing takes place, organizing training sessions for accommodated foreigners, as well as for the center s personnel regarding measures of personal hygiene, social distancing and limiting interaction with others, limiting access for visitors and others that do not work in the centers, the obligation of wearing a mask by both staff and foreigners, checking the body temperature when entering the centers, informing foreigners in different languages in various forms, including on the centers TVs, daily medical exams for accommodated persons as well as medical evaluation 24/7 when arriving at the center or any other activities such as effective accommodation, acquiring disinfectant devices.

Also, all the spaces are daily cleaned and disinfected by a specialized cleaning firm.

For registering asylum requests and conducting or the medical investigations related to the Covid-19 pandemic special spaces were organized, taking into consideration social distancing, only one foreigner being present at a time, excepting cases when the presence of another person is needed (lawyer, parent, legal representative, etc.).

In the case of identifying a person that is suspect of being infected with Covid-19 as a result of the medical evaluation or the clues following the completion of a form regarding their traveling and contact with others, the specialized institutions are informed to take specific measures.

Measures in the field of public health temporarily, in situations of epidemiologic and biologic risk, to prevent and limit the spreading of contagious diseases on Romanian territory are mentioned in Law no.136/2020 regarding establishing measures in the field of public health in cases of epidemiological biological risk, republished, as modified and amended. These measures are applied only to protect public health, concerning fundamental rights and liberties of citizens and public order. All the measures taken according to the aforementioned legal act are proportional to the situation that determined them, limited in time for that specific situation, and apply equally to everyone, Romanian citizens or foreigners.

Regarding the vaccination of foreigners on Romanian territory, asylum seekers, beneficiaries of a form of international protection, and foreigners taken into public custody are included in the Strategy of vaccination against Covid-19 in Romania. These provisions apply also for EU citizens, European Economic Area citizens, and Swiss citizens, and for foreigners who legally stay on Romanian territory.

Also, activities for informing and awareness were conducted regarding the benefits of vaccination through implementing the Plan of measures regarding Covid-19 vaccination for asylum seekers, beneficiaries of an international form of protection, and foreigners accommodated in public custody centers.

Furthermore, alongside UNHCR, the Ministry’s of Internal Affairs specialized unit, the General Inspectorate for Immigration elaborated information materials translated in 12 languages, for assuring access to information regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and the vaccination process and to respond to the most frequent questions addressed by asylum seekers and beneficiaries of o form of international protection on Romanian territory. As concerning foreigners taken into public custody, they are informed by the medical staff at the centers regarding the national program for vaccination.

**Question no.3**

Asylum seekers are not included in the category of persons that have their right of free movement limited in any way, they have the right to move freely outside the centers in which they are accommodated, according to the national legislation (art.20, par.1, Ministry of Internal Affairs Order no.130/2016 for approving the Regulation of internal order for regional centers of procedures and housing of asylum seekers) and the European law (art.7 par.1 Directive no.2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and Council for laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Also, there were no cases of asylum seekers placed in closed spaces specially designed in regional centers.

The activities for removing from national territory illegal migrants were hindered by the pandemic context, especially by the measures taken to prevent the spreading of the virus.

**Question no. 6**

The person’s right to seek a form of international protection was never restricted during the state of emergency and state of alert. Also, the process of analyzing requests for international protection in the administrative stage was never interrupted, it continued with the implementation of further protection measures.

For foreigners that entered into Romania with a staying visa, long or short, as well as for those who own residence permit in Romania and their documents expired during the state of alert and because of objective reasons cannot leave Romania or request the prolonging of the right to stay, can stay in Romania without any sanction or restrictive measure until the state of alert is lifted.

Also, work notices issued during the state of alert, as a result of a request, maintains their availability for 90 days after the state of alert is lifted.

**Question no.8**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs works closely with the UNHCR Representative in Romania as well as with NGOs to identify the best solutions to prevent and limit the spreading of Covid-19 cases among asylum seekers and beneficiaries of a form of international protection.