



## UNHCR NGO Regional Consultations 2018 - Regional Workshop for Western Europe

### Horizont Room

Session	<p><b>Establishing sustainable pathways of admission for refugees to access protection in Europe</b></p> <p>7 November 2018</p>
Countries	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Focal Points	<p><b>Moderators:</b></p> <p>UNHCR: Peter O’Sullivan (<a href="mailto:osulliva@unhcr.org">osulliva@unhcr.org</a>)</p> <p>NGO: Lena Donner (<a href="mailto:Lena.Donner@rescue.org">Lena.Donner@rescue.org</a>)</p> <p>Note taker: (to be completed by ECRE Secretariat)</p> <p><b>Speakers/Panellists:</b></p> <p>Petra Hueck, ICMC Europe (<a href="mailto:hueck@icmc.net">hueck@icmc.net</a>)</p> <p>Cécile Quéval, Forum réfugiés – Cosi (<a href="mailto:cqueval@forumrefugies.org">cqueval@forumrefugies.org</a>)</p> <p>Dr. Christian Hülshörster, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (<a href="mailto:huelshoerster@daad.de">huelshoerster@daad.de</a>)</p>
Background	<p>The Global Compact on Refugees, which UNHCR was charged with developing in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, is set to form the framework for global ambitions on resettlement and complementary pathways of admission (amongst other objectives) going forward. In the context of increasing global resettlement needs (1.4 million refugees estimated to be in need of resettlement in 2019 compared to 1.2 million in 2018) and decreasing places, it is a key policy priority for UNHCR to expand the number of States offering resettlement and complementary pathways of admission. However, providing these opportunities is not an end in itself – as reflected by the Global Compact on Refugees, they need to be quality programmes that are more systematic, organized, sustainable and gender-responsive, while containing appropriate protection safeguards. Though a number of countries in Western Europe have demonstrated a capacity to launch initiatives on resettlement and complementary pathways, continued commitments on resettlement are not guaranteed in all countries, while the approach to establishing complementary pathways of admission has been predominantly <i>ad hoc</i> (with some exceptions).</p>
Desired outcomes of the session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identification of <b>opportunities for more systematic engagement</b> between NGOs and UNHCR at the national and regional level on developing advocacy messages as well as more effective advocacy strategies/interventions to promote the development and use of quality resettlement and complementary pathways.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exchange of existing <b>good practice on establishing more regular forums for exchange in terms of both advocacy and practice</b> regarding resettlement and complementary pathways, both between UNHCR and NGOs as well as with government at the national level.</li> <li>▪ Exchange of views and experience regarding the <b>engagement of new actors</b> in advancing resettlement and complementary pathways of admission, including <b>potential strategies to support this</b>.</li> <li>▪ Identification of <b>opportunities to monitor the sustainability of programmes</b>.</li> </ul> <p>The abovementioned desired outcomes, where successfully enhanced, could also usefully inform the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR), including through the sharing of good practice.</p>
Methodology	<p>Plenary presentation of relevant developments and frameworks</p> <p>Brief plenary expert interventions</p> <p>Break-out sessions</p>
Agenda (Outline of the workshop)	<p><i>Introduction</i> (25-30 mins)</p> <p>Setting the scene: Content of the theme, with a brief overview of relevant developments (Peter O’Sullivan, UNHCR)</p> <p>Current challenges and opportunities: Brief overview of challenges in dealing with safe and legal pathways from both an advocacy and a practical perspective (Lena Donner, International Rescue Committee)</p> <p><i>Q&amp;A</i></p> <p><i>Breakout sessions</i></p> <p>Opportunity to discuss the issues presented, based also on the guiding questions (30 min)</p> <p>Reporting back (15 min)</p> <p><i>Coffee break</i></p> <p><i>Plenary expert interventions</i> (30 min)</p> <p>Three interventions on good practice or recent research results (5 min, with 5 min Q&amp;A each)</p> <p><i>Breakout sessions</i> (40 min)</p> <p>Opportunity to identify new ideas for more effective and sustainable cooperation between UNHCR and NGOs on establishing and consolidating pathways to protection (from an operational, advocacy and communications perspective); on more effectively engaging and influencing government; and in identifying strategies to engage with new stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Reporting back</i> (20 min)</p>

## ANNEX

### Overview of Resettlement and Complementary Pathways of Admission in Western Europe

#### Introduction

The adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the annexed Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in September 2016 by all Member States of the United Nations reflected renewed global impetus for progress on resettlement and complementary pathways of admission. The pending adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, which includes the development of a three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways of admission (2019-2021), further lends support to such momentum. One of the ambitions of the Global Compact on Refugees, besides efforts to enlarge the scope, size and quality of resettlement programmes, is to ensure that complementary pathways are made available on a more systematic, organized, sustainable and gender-responsive basis; that they contain appropriate protection safeguards, and that the number of countries offering these opportunities is expanded overall.

While acknowledging the increase in the number of European States resettling as well as the overall numbers being resettled to Europe; ongoing negotiations on an EU-level Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework; EASO's tasking to support the piloting of private/community-based sponsorship with interested Member States; and the EC's recently completed feasibility assessment on private/community-based sponsorship, it is now key that Europe does more to demonstrate its commitment to the objectives of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the yet-to-be-adopted Global Compact on Refugees.

In the Western European context, the vast majority of countries have annual resettlement programmes or have resettled in the recent past. Nevertheless, the possibility remains to contribute even more to global resettlement needs, also in the context of much-reduced commitments by the United States, for example. However, those programmes that are developed must be sustainable, predictable (e.g. multi-year, entrenched in legislation) and protection-centred.

#### Country overview

Between 2014 and 2017, **Austria** received 1,900 Syrian refugees from Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan over the course of three consecutive Humanitarian Admission Programmes. All stakeholders involved, including the government, agree that the programmes were a success. However, Austria has not made any commitment to receive refugees through resettlement or any other pathway of admission in 2018 or beyond. Despite continuous advocacy by UNHCR, IOM and NGOs, there is presently no political will on the part of the Government of Austria to do so in the near future as the focus is, firstly, on closing external EU borders and reducing spontaneous arrivals. UNHCR Austria is now targeting municipalities and cities as well as church leaders in its advocacy, and has developed a short brochure on resettlement for this purpose in an effort to move beyond this impasse.<sup>1</sup>

Under a structural resettlement scheme established in 2013, **Belgium** was scheduled to resettle 150 persons in 2017, which was gradually increased to 1,150 persons. However, rather than the foreseen 1,150 persons, Belgium stepped up its activities during the year and resettled 1,309 persons in 2017. There is a commitment to resettle 1,150 persons in 2018. However, the lack of specific legislation on resettlement entails unpredictability and unnecessary delays in the procedure. Two *ad hoc* private sponsorship schemes were established in 2017-2018, through which 150 vulnerable Syrians and five Chechen LGBTI were granted humanitarian visas through the support of faith-based organizations and an umbrella LGBTI organization. However, in general, there is little transparency on the criteria to obtain a humanitarian visa.

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://bit.ly/2On9EPj>.

**France** committed in October 2017 to resettle 10,200 refugees up to 2019, which marks a significant increase on its traditional annual quota of 100 cases. In addition, in March 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Protestant Federation of France, the Federation of Protestant Mutual Aid, the Conference of Bishops of France and Catholic Relief-Caritas France for the establishment of a “humanitarian corridors” programme. This will see 500 Syrians and Iraqis arrive to France via Lebanon. The faith-based organizations finance the reception of those arriving, while the State facilitates the granting of visas and the recognition of refugee status or subsidiary protection. As of June 2018, 160 people had arrived under this programme. In addition, various scholarship programmes have been established in recent years, including a programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development for Syrian students residing in Lebanon. In general, implementation of the resettlement quota has been slow and is reflective of a relatively long time-frame. There are delays in the selection process and departure, while access to rights are often too long and slow the integration process. Nevertheless, several improvements have been noted in order to reduce existing delays. It is also noted that an increasing number of refugees resettled from the Middle East and North Africa are granted subsidiary protection.

In **Germany**, various legal pathways are in place, such as a regular resettlement programme, a humanitarian admission programme, private sponsorship and family reunification. Moreover, a pilot for a new community-based sponsorship scheme is currently under development, while 500 refugees will be admitted to Schleswig-Holstein under a new admission scheme in 2019. In the period 2018-2019, Germany will resettle 10,200 refugees, while through humanitarian admission programmes for Syrian refugees, 20,000 visas were issued between 2013 and 2016; 4,456 Syrian refugees were admitted from Turkey in 2017 and 2018 (up to July 2018); while 23,631 visas for entry were issued from autumn 2013 until May 2018 under the private sponsorship programmes of the German Laender. The issue of family reunification has been a sensitive point of discussion in recent years. Following a suspension of family reunification from March 2016 to July 2018 for persons with subsidiary protection, from August 2018, a subsequent regulation allows family reunification for 1,000 individuals per month for relatives with subsidiary protection. There were also sensitive political discussions on the reunification of minor refugee siblings, the reasonability of obtaining relevant documents, and several other legal and practical challenges, such as the local responsibility of German embassies, and the narrow definition of the term “family”, amongst other issues.

**Ireland** has committed to resettle 600 refugees in 2018, which includes over 250 refugees from the 2017 caseload. This is the largest pledge that the State has made for resettlement in a calendar year since the national resettlement programme began in 2000. However, there have been a number of delays in meeting quotas in 2017 and 2018, including for reasons of the prioritization of relocation as well as a lack of housing availability. The *Irish Refugee Protection Programme Humanitarian Admission Programme 2* (IHAP) is additional to these resettlement commitments and complementary to existing rights and entitlements to family reunification under Irish law. The scheme will see up to 530 family members of Convention refugees, Programme refugees, subsidiary protection beneficiaries and Irish citizens come to Ireland as part of the overall Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP). Moreover, on the anniversary of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2017, the Irish government announced that it is developing a community sponsorship programme for refugees, which will be within existing resettlement commitments. Work in piloting a community sponsorship programme is now at an advanced stage, with plans to launch in Autumn 2018.

**Luxembourg** has resettled 306 Syrian refugees since 2014, including 206 under the EU-Turkey agreement (the total pledge under the agreement was for 194 persons). The remaining 100 Syrians were resettled from Jordan and Turkey as part of Luxembourg’s *ad hoc* resettlement pledges, an EU-level pledge and an annual resettlement programme. The annual resettlement programme was foreseen in the 2013 governmental programme and established in 2014, with the aim of resettling 15-20 refugees per year. However, this annual

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quota has only been achieved in 2014 as, since that time, Luxembourg has been concentrating all its efforts on meeting the aforementioned EU pledges. During his annual speech on foreign policy delivered to Parliament on 13 March 2018, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced that Luxembourg would resettle 200 refugees by the end of 2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs later specified that refugees would be resettled from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, Niger, Chad, Mali and Uganda. It is expected that this commitment will remain despite the legislative elections of 14 October 2018. There is no progress regarding the establishment of complementary pathways of admission to Luxembourg, although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has repeatedly advocated for the development of such pathways.

In **the Netherlands**, the resettlement quota was increased from 500 to 750 places annually from 2018, which was part of the current governing coalition agreement. Further increases are dependent on proposals at the EU level and are linked to a decrease in the number of irregular arrivals in the country. In addition, the Netherlands has indicated the availability of 1,750 resettlement places in the context of the EU-Turkey Statement as well as for refugees in countries along the Central Mediterranean route. In total, this will amount to 3,000 places over an approximate two-year timeframe. A roundtable on developing higher education scholarship opportunities as a pathway of refugee admission was co-organized by the European Resettlement Network and UNHCR the Netherlands in October 2017 in The Hague. The roundtable was followed by a publication on the feasibility of such programmes, incorporating a case study of the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in June 2018, UNHCR co-hosted with the Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands, the Advisory Council for Migration (ACVZ), the Maatschappelijke Alliantie, and the Social Economic Council (SER) a roundtable under the auspices of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) to advocate for the introduction of community-based sponsorship programmes in the Netherlands. Among the participants were senior policy makers, NGOs and representatives of academia, philanthropic foundations and municipalities. Further advocacy has begun to gain support for these initiatives from policy makers.

Since 2013, **Switzerland** has launched three consecutive resettlement programmes for refugees from the Syrian situation for a total of 3,500 places (up to August 2018, approximately 2,500 resettled refugees have arrived). The latest programme will end in 2019. A humanitarian admission programme temporarily allowed Syrians with provisional admission to bring their core family members to Switzerland. It comprised of 500 places, all of which have been used. There is some interest in continuing the resettlement programme into 2019. However, given the current composition of the Federal Council, it is not clear whether it will have sufficient support. Moreover, a parliamentary initiative intends to move decision-making on resettlement to Parliament, which would make a continuation of the programme even less likely.

The **United Kingdom's** resettlement programme has expanded more than ten-fold on an annual basis since September 2015. This is as a result of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), which will admit 20,000 refugees fleeing Syria up to 2020, and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), which will admit 3,000 refugee children at risk and their families from the MENA region, also up to 2020. As a result of these schemes, the UK was the second largest resettlement country in terms of submissions by UNHCR in 2017. In addition, the United Kingdom launched a community-based sponsorship scheme in July 2016. This scheme, the targets for which are within the United Kingdom's pledge under the VPRS, has been a positive initiative. However, it has been slow to get going as the government builds support, training and safeguard measures. More generally, sourcing appropriate and cost effective accommodation has been a challenge in the United Kingdom (as in many resettlement countries), while there is concern around preferential support for refugees according to their mode of arrival (i.e. resettled refugees have access to more comprehensive integration support than those arriving spontaneously).

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<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://bit.ly/2IY5CXJ>.