



Resettlement Newsletter

Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe

Volume II Issue IV

December 2007

Inside this issue:

Strengthening NGO-UNHCR Partnerships in Resettlement	1
Spain and Refugee Resettlement - an Emerging Country ?	3
News from the MOST Project	5
Palestinian Refugee Children die awaiting Resettlement in Iraq....	6
EU Expert Meeting on Resettlement	7
ICMC launches Resettlement Guide	7
FAQs....	6

For I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.
Matthew

2007—a year of progress in refugee resettlement ?

Welcome this year's last edition of CCME's Resettlement Newsletter!!!

...once again we will keep you updated on news regarding resettlement towards the member states of the European Union.

The overall picture at the end of this year is somewhat positive, still there also is reason for concern:

A number of EU member states this year expressed reinvigorated interest in resettlement: Portugal committed to an annual quota, legislation in countries like Hungary or Romania allows for resettlement and the UK is seeking to increase its annual resettlement quota.

However one of the most dramatic refugee crisis in recent years still unfolds in and around Iraq - with dire consequences for the most vulnerable refugees.

Both positive and negative news underline the continuing need to advocate for refugee resettlement to Europe—as an additional and integral tool of refugee protection and a sign of global solidarity towards those countries assuming the direct responsibility for refugee crisis situations in their neighbourhood.

CCME and partners will therefore also over the next months continue to advocate for refugee resettlement to the EU and coordination of national efforts by the EU.

Enjoy the reading!

Best regards and a blessed advent time

Torsten Moritz

Strengthening NGO-UNHCR partnerships in refugee resettlement

International workshop in Lisbon moves debates forward

Some 50 representatives of National NGOs, churches and government from 15 countries as well as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) met in Lisbon from 21st to 23rd November for an international workshop to discuss future areas of cooperation in refugee resettlement. The meeting took place a few months after Portugal, which currently holds the EU Council Presidency, had committed to a annual resettlement quota.

The Portuguese Council for Refugees CPR helped to host the event which concluded a series of events organised by the CCME project "Refugee resettlement – broadening the basis in Europe", The meeting was welcomed by José Magalhaes, Secretary of State and Assistant to the Ministry for Internal Administration. In his opening speech to the meeting, he underlined that Portugal considers civil society involvement as an essential part of its commitment to refugee protection.

The well-established cooperation between the state and civil society partners in the integration of refugees would therefore be continued in the area of refugee resettlement... (continued on page 2)

Welcome to Europe!

A Guide to Resettlement

A Comparative Review of Resettlement in Europe



The new ICMC Europe publication on resettlement "Welcome to Europe" (see page 7)

Strengthening NGO-UNHCR Partnerships in Resettlement

as Portugal is preparing for the arrival of the first resettled refugees.

During the two-day workshop, representatives of NGOs, churches and UNHCR discussed how to strengthen partnerships in a variety of different areas.

Cases of existing cooperation between UNHCR and civil society organisations in different EU member states as well as in non-countries, such as Canada or Iceland were presented and discussed in view of lessons to be learnt.

Thematic workshops focussed on the most central areas of cooperation, with issues ranging from advocacy to refugee integration as well as to case identification and referral and selection of refugees for resettlement.

Recommendations were developed for debates on a national level as

well as on EU level and towards the annual tri-partite consultation on resettlement.

The meeting also tried to address the shift in selection criteria for resettlement in a number of established resettlement programmes, in which integration potential was increasingly becoming important.

Discussions underlined that practice had shown that often those who were assumed to be facing difficulties in integration after resettlement did surprisingly well. Participants in general shared concerns how application of integration criteria might impact on the protection potential of resettlement.

Torsten Moritz

Opening panel (from right to left): Vincent Cochetel (UNHCR), Bjarte Vandvik (ECRE), Secretary of State José Magalhaes (Portugal), Doris Peschke and Torsten Moritz (both CCME)



CCME launches resettlement factsheets

As a response to the need to explain resettlement in an easily digestible format, CCME has produced a series of „resettlement factsheets“: The factsheets contain concise information on various aspects of resettlement :

- what is resettlement
- what is Europe’s role in resettlement
- who are the actors in resettlement
- what are the different steps of resettlement
- the personal story behind resettlement

Printed copies will be available in English, French and German, (5 A 4 pages per language, each printed on both sides).

Pdf. files with the Czech, Dutch, Italian and Spanish translation are also being made available. (order at: info@ccme.be)

CCME factsheets: cover



Spain and Refugee Resettlement– an Emerging Country ?

by Reyes Castillo

On the 27th September the Spanish NGO ACCEM co-organised a conference under the title *“The Future Of Resettlement Of Refugees In Spain – The Role Of Different Actors”* as part of the project *“Refugee resettlement – broadening the basis in Europe”* which is coordinated by the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). The general objective of the conference was to encourage next steps as Spain emerges as resettlement country. Some forty representatives of national NGOs, churches, national and regional government as well as EU and international organisations met to discuss future perspectives of Spain as a country receiving refugees through resettlement.

Ms. Julia Fernandez as ACCEM Director opened the Conference and welcomed the interest of the audience stressing the fact that a group of Spanish NGOs (ACCEM, CEAR, Spanish Red Cross and Rescate) during the last decades have been continuously promoting the entering into force of a regular national resettlement programme in Spain. The idea is to move forward from the past and existing national system where only ad hoc resettlement cases have been processed heading to a regular annual quota and commitment to guarantee sus-



The conference’s opening panel

tainability in a medium and long term.

Mr. Roberto Amurrio as General Deputy Director of Social Integration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs insisted on the need of reaching a consensus among the different Spanish ministries and authorities that will be involved on the resettlement process. He made reference to the existence of a feasibility study on the establishment of a national resettlement programme containing several options related to stakeholders involved and legal and social procedures to be set up.

Mr. Julian Prieto, Ministry of Interior refers to the Spanish legal option of putting forward asylum applications in the overseas Spanish embassies and qualified them as resettlement and ad hoc resettlement. He emphasized the fact of having the necessary resources available. He was asked about the Spanish future national asylum law reform and the reference or not to resettlement but no concrete an-

swer was provided on that sense.

When the representatives of both the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Interior expressed their views, they agreed on a positive position from the governmental institutions towards the establishment of such a program although the pending situation may be strongly influenced by the analysis of the right political momentum to introduce it. They declared that resettlement should not be implemented to respond emergency situations like Iraq one, and stress the importance of accomplishing a proper integration process. Additionally they questioned to what extent the structure of consolidates resettlement countries could be compared to those to be established in emerging countries like Spain. However there was a total consensus on the central role to be played by UNCHR.

Then and after going through the national picture the programme moved to a global perspective through Mr. Agni Castro’s intervention, representative of UNCHR Spanish office who referred to resettlement not as a UNCHR “property” but emphasising that UNCHR is only an United Nations agent

Spain and Refugee Resettlement—an Emerging Country?(cont.)

whereas resettlement should be and is part of the States' international protection policy and responses to emergency humanitarian situations. *"UNCHR propose the States decide"*. It should not be forgotten the human rights defence perspective on tackling the resettlement issues. He did stress their concerns and implications of the phenomenon of mixing of terms and concepts.

Then it was the time for closing the morning session with a European perspective provided by Mr. Raimon Obiols I Germa, Spanish MEPs, and Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and of the Subcommittee on Human Rights who declared that we should be aware that the governments act if the society pushed them enough. That's why he encouraged civil society agents to continue pushing forward on that direction as well as asking the Spanish government to take further steps in committing to resettlement. He outlined that *"resettlement is something which is necessary, worthwhile and manageable. It is something where national and European policies can go hand in hand. We should not end up in a situation where the EU waits for member states and member states for the EU, but both should move forward together in this area."*

The afternoon session was opened by the intervention of Ms

Monica Farinha from the Portuguese Refugee Council in the context of being a neighbouring and emerging resettlement country and because of the announcement along 2007 by the Portuguese government on the introduction of a national resettlement quota. But she expressed that no concrete proposal was at that time put forward yet and furthermore the different approaches and solutions as well as the lack of a legal framework, used in every occasion when the Portuguese government has resettled a group of persons giving an ad hoc response to an emergency situation provokes uncertainty regarding future policies and practices to be developed and the role Portuguese NGOs and civil society will have on it.

To end the Conference the final intervention went around how other continents managed the resettlement policies and how Europe could learn from that taking the Argentinean Example as a reference for the new resettlement policies in the Latin American Countries. Ms. Adriana Cristina Alonso on behalf of the National Directorate of Migrations of the Argentine Republic Ministry of Interior analysed the reality on the region and the type of migration coming to Argentina as country of destination and explained the procedure as well as the positive experience

on the involvement of national NGO on the selection missions and the referral of the resettlement cases. She expressed her future expectations of an increasing resettlement programs at national and regional basis with the promotion of exchange experiences among Brazil, Chile and Argentina and the follow up of the principles and ideas stated by the Mexico Plan and MERCOSUR agreements that were at the same time the origin of those initial programmes on the region.

As a conclusion it could be highlighted the dangerous unbalance between those in need of international protection and the ones that formally could finally have access to it as well as the need and relevance of a proper consensus and coordination among the different actors involved. The importance of NGOs participation on process. It should not be forgotten the possibility of benefiting from the fact of resettlement being planned on ahead with good consequences and benefits for the refugees and the host society what it could be linked to the discussions on how to make the publicity of such a programs and how to communicate them to the society and the communities to ask them later for a proper reception and involvement on the refugee integration and reception process.

The MOST project – Improving Refugee Integration: an update by Tiina Järvinen

The MOST - *Modeling of Orientation, Services and Training related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees* is a transnational project funded by the European Refugee Fund. It commenced in December 2006 and will conclude in January 2008. The project is led by the Ministry of Labour in Finland and also involves partners from Sweden, Ireland and Spain. The project is implemented in cooperation with the UNHCR, IOM and ECRE.

The overall purpose of the project has been to develop comprehensive models for quicker and better integration of refugees. During the project each partner country developed a series of specific tasks related to the project and learning was shared at transnational seminars held in each of the countries. All project results are to be presented at the final conference in Madrid in November 2007.

In Sweden the Integration Board undertook a consultation process, which focuses upon quota refugees' experiences and expectations upon arrival and introduction in Sweden. Results from the consultation process show for example that the overall picture of resettlement points at continued dependence throughout all phases and that an overall picture of resettlement is beneficial in order to discuss refugees' conditions for life in the third country. The results from Sweden complement beautifully

the work done in Ireland. The focus of the work in Ireland has been threefold, namely: 1) the review and development of models of pre-departure orientation; 2) the review and improvement of post-arrival orientation programmes and 3) establishing systems to help the integration process, specifically focusing on mentoring programmes.

In Finland the project has aimed to develop ways of integrating immigrants into the Finnish society and labour market more efficiently right from the beginning. This has been achieved by organizing language training with the co-operation of public and private sector employers. Refugees who have participated in the training have been offered two days of language training and three days of work-based training per week. The practice has already showed good results. The participants have had a chance to use in every-day situations at work places the language they have learned during language training, they have increased their knowledge about Finnish society and working life and got social contacts from the work place.

The participation of Spain in the project related to fact-finding missions for representatives of the

Spanish government. They participated in selection missions in conjunction with the Finnish partners to Rwanda and with the Swedish partners to Jordan. Spain will also be hosting the final conference of the project.

During these last months our main challenge is to utilize the outcomes of the development tasks in order to create practical and transferable models. The findings and models created during the project will be published in a book in January 2008.

More information about the project can be found under: www.mostproject.fi.

Why should Europe re-settle more refugees?

- 1) Resettlement can provide protection to those in greatest need: the most vulnerable and those in protracted refugee situations.
- 2) Resettlement is a way for Europe to demonstrate its solidarity and take its share of its responsibility in the provision of this durable solution to the world's refugees.
- 3) Resettlement provides access to Europe for refugees.
- 4) Resettlement provides the opportunity for good, coordinated and quality reception and integration programmes to be developed.
- 5) Resettlement is an important means of facilitating public understanding of all refugees, their plight and the situations they flee. (CCME, based on ECRE's "way forward")



Palestinian refugee children awaiting resettlement die in Iraq

Two sick Palestinian refugee children waiting for resettlement from Iraq died in the last two weeks, one of them in Al Waleed refugee camp at the Iraq-Syria border and the other one in Baghdad. Another refugee, a 50-year old man, also waiting to be resettled, died earlier last month in Al Waleed refugee camp. So far seven people have died there, including three young children, since Palestinian refugees started to arrive at the border in March 2006 fleeing violent attacks against them.

A 3 year-old Palestinian boy died a few days ago in Ramadi hospital and was buried in Al Waleed, where the family had been living since fleeing Baghdad in September last year. He had been suffering from rickets, a bone disease caused by lack of vitamins and minerals. He also suffered from pneumonia. Another Palestinian child whose resettlement approval was pending, a 14-year old suffering from Hodgkin's disease, died in Baghdad last week.

The UN refugee agency has spoken on various occasions about the serious difficulties faced by Palestinian refugees in Iraq, many of whom are stranded at the border, unable to cross into Syria. Earlier this year, HCR appealed for specific support and urgent medical resettlement for vulnerable and sick children in Al Waleed

camp, as specialised medical treatment is difficult to find in Iraq.

So far, UNHCR has helped resettle one family of eight with several sick children from this camp to Norway last August. Another 11 medical cases submitted for resettlement are awaiting approval. Meanwhile, UNHCR has continued to identify other Palestinian medical cases, such as cancer patients and children with birth defects, who need urgent care. UNHCR continues to urge resettlement countries to make rapid decisions and facilitate the departure of those most in need.

An estimated 2,000 Palestinians are living in desperate conditions in refugee camps along the Iraq-Syria border, unable to cross into Syria, a country already straining to cope with hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees. A steady flow of Palestinians have fled Baghdad since March 2006, when intimidation, forced evictions and attacks against their community began mounting. UNHCR has sought solutions for the whole group since last year and has only received positive indications from Sudan and Chile. Earlier this year

**Resettlement—
protecting the most
vulnerable among
refugees**

Brazil took 107 Palestinians who had been stuck in Jordan's Ruweished camp for four years.

Meanwhile, some refugees continue to return to Iraq. UNHCR staff in Syria noted an average of 600 Iraqis returning to their country daily over the past week. Many of them said that they had run out of money and their visas had expired. On Tuesday an Iraqi government-organised convoy brought home an estimated 800 Iraqis, in a journey which took some 45 hours. We have not yet had a chance to talk to these returnees.

UNHCR welcomes any improvements to the security situation and stands ready to assist people who have decided or will decide to return voluntarily. Iraqis themselves are the best judges as to how secure they feel. However, HCR still does not believe that the time has come to promote, organize or encourage returns to Iraq. That would be possible only when proper conditions are in place - including material and legal support and physical safety.

According to government estimates, there are some 2.2 million Iraqi refugees - including some 500,000 in Jordan and up to 1.5 million in Syria. An estimated 2.4 million are displaced inside Iraq.

Source: UNHCR briefing notes
30.11.07

ICMC launches resettlement guide

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) is proud to present its guide to resettlement: *'Welcome to Europe! A Comparative Guide to Resettlement in Europe'*, which was launched in Lisbon on 21 November 2007. The publication has been elaborated in the framework of an ERF project "Practical Cooperation for a European Resettlement Network" implemented by ICMC with co-funding of the European Commission.

The guide has been elaborated in collaboration with UNHCR Resettlement Service and with much appreciated inputs from the relevant government bodies from: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as with the inputs from our project partners: Consortium of Refugee Assisting Organisations (Czech Republic), Finish Red Cross (Finland), Consiglio Italiano per i Refugiati (CIR) (Italy), VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (The Netherlands), Asociación Comisión Católica Española de Migraciones (ACCEM) and Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR) (Spain), and Caritas Sweden (Sweden).

The Resettlement Guide has been elaborated following the first European Resettlement Training for resettlement practitioners and policymakers from selected European countries, which took place in Spain in June 2007. The Guide offers a complete overview of all

phases of the resettlement process: an overview of the UNHCR framework for resettlement, field experiences, perspectives and the knowledge of a number of European NGOs and government staff working in resettlement programmes, a country-by-country description of existing resettlement programmes, partners and practices in the countries currently conducting resettlement in Europe, an overview of reception and integration practices in EU resettlement countries and throughout the guide a number of case studies recognised as best practices in their specific country context followed by a number conclusions and recommendations relating to future resettlement programming in Europe.

It is the first time that much of the information regarding resettlement throughout Europe is gathered in such a comprehensive way and presented in this manner offering comparative analyses with data, statistics and facts sheets. We hope that you will enjoy reading the Guide and that it can serve as a useful tool for furthering resettlement in Europe.

CONTACT:

The guide can be downloaded from the ICMC web site:
<http://www.icmc.net/e/index.htm>

For more information, please, contact: ICMC Europe at: secretariat.be@icmc.net

In short:

EU experts' meeting on resettlement

Experts from EU member states met in Brussels on 27th November for an informal expert meeting on resettlement.

The meeting, which was convened by the European Commission, focused on existing best practice and models of transnational cooperation on resettlement.

UNHCR highlighted the global perspective on resettlement as well as current resettlement needs.

Government representatives from the UK, as well as Sweden and Denmark gave input on how they encourage cooperation on resettlement.

An evaluation of EU member state's responses to the green paper on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) highlighted general interest in more cooperation between member states on resettlement.

The meeting also served as a forum for exploring specific areas of future cooperation between member states on resettlement. A presentation of the MOST project highlighted cooperation on integration as an area of interest.

Different European projects which aim at encouraging resettlement were introduced, among them the Dutch twinning project with the Czech Republic and involving Romania.

CCME and ICMC in a joint presentation on their respective projects underlined the importance of civil society involvement and advocacy for resettlement.

TM/CCME



Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

EDITOR:

CCME

Rue Joseph II, 174

B-1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel. +32 2 234 68 00; Fax +32 2 231 14 13

Email: info@ccme.be



CCME office (red building on the left) in front of European Commission Headquarters (Berlaymont)

FAQ—frequently asked questions....

1) What is CCME?

CCME is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, refugees and asylum, and against racism and discrimination in Europe, CCME members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, diaconal agencies and Councils of Churches in presently 16 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.

2) What is "Resettlement - broadening the basis in Europe"?

The CCME project "Resettlement - broadening the basis in Europe" enhances knowledge and political debate in EU member states to engage in refugee resettlement - as an additional instrument of refugee protection.

It includes activities to

- broaden policy debates on resettlement in EU member states
- broaden information on it and provide it in accessible format
- broaden public-NGO partnerships for resettlement

3) What is Refugee Resettlement?

It's one of the 3 traditional durable solutions for refugees, along with the local integration in the country of asylum and repatriation. Basically, it's a transfer of refugees from their country of first asylum to a third country that has agreed to admit them with a long term or permanent resident status. Resettlement provides protection for refugees whose safety is immediately at risk and it is a tool of international protection in a context of burden sharing among states.

4) What Resettlement is not...

Resettlement is not the same as seeking refugee status through the asylum system, nor is it a more legal process for accessing asylum rights and can never substitute a spontaneous request of asylum.

Resettlement is not synonymous with "Temporary protection" classifications.

Resettlement cannot become a system of profiling refugees in accordance to their nationality or religion in order to create more or less valuable categories of refugees. Resettlement is based exclusively on the protection needs of the refugees.

5) Which are the Resettlement countries?

The countries that traditionally host resettlement programs are : Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. Those countries are called the "traditional ones", Countries such as Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, and UK have in recent years started programmes. Others, among them several EU member states, are currently considering them...

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

General info on resettlement

<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/3bb2eadd6.html>

On the CCME project

<http://www.ccme.be/secretary/NEWS/CCMERR2006The%20projectshortpublic.pdf>

On the ICMC project :

http://www.icmc.net/e/programmes_operations/europ_network.htm

The project "Resettlement - broadening the basis in Europe" is co-funded by the European Refugee Fund of the European Commission.

The views expressed and information provided by the project and partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission.