



CCME Policy Paper:

Enhancing volume and impact of refugee resettlement to the EU 20.000 EU places and policy coherence for resettlement – by 2020!

Background

Refugee resettlement offers long-term protection to the world's most vulnerable refugees. It is understood as a process by which refugees who fled their country of origin and have found initial, but neither sufficient nor permanent protection in a second country, are resettled to a third country in which they find permanent protection. It is often the only hope for refugees who would be in danger of being sent back to torture and abuse or risk spending the rest of their lives in unbearable conditions without any future perspectives. Resettlement often does not only help those refugees resettled, but is beneficial for other refugees. This is for example the case when an offer of a substantial number of resettlement places encourages countries of origin to facilitate a safe and dignified return for some of the remaining refugees, or when it encourages host countries to accept local integration, or at least self-reliance. In some cases a resettlement offer may just motivate the host country of refugees to keep the border open for persons still fleeing conflict and persecution.

Out of the more than 100.000 cases submitted for resettlement by UNHCR annually in recent years, between 60.000 and 80.000 could be resettled thanks to the offer of 22 countries around the globe providing resettlement places. This means however also that tens of thousands of the most vulnerable refugees are every year left in miserable conditions without chances to rebuild their lives. Among them, many refugee families are stuck in refugee camps in the second generation.

Current situation of EU (member states') involvement in resettlement

Of the approximately 33,9 million persons of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) globally in 2010, only 4,06 million were to be found in Europe, one of the richest regions in the world. Europe's commitment to refugee protection therefore needs to extend solidarity to refugees who will never reach Europe and to countries outside Europe hosting large number of refugees. The EU's policy framework for asylum in Europe needs to be complemented by a considerable programme of resettlement into the EU.

Out of the available places for resettlement (in recent years between 60.000 and 80.000 per year globally) only some 4.-5.000 were committed by EU member states. While a number of EU countries have in recent years started new programmes with annual resettlement quotas, these have not contributed to a significant increase in the overall number of places made available by EU countries. Efforts by EU member states in

resettlement are still far too limited, particularly if compared to countries like the US, Canada or Australia.

However, activities such as the joint resettlement of 10.000 persons from Iraq following the Council conclusions of November 2008 have shown that the EU can mobilise beyond the existing regular resettlement quotas. In the course of this joint resettlement effort it has become clear that EU member states are perfectly able to resettle more refugees to the EU, in particular when acting in a coordinated manner.

The adoption of the common position on the joint EU resettlement scheme by the EU Council and Parliament in March 2012 offers the opportunity to enhance resettlement efforts by EU member states and receive EU funding to that effect in this and the next year. Increased allocations for member states resettling for the first or second time provide an excellent opportunity for member states to start a programme and to aim for meaningful quotas. Current discussion on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework also indicate that this funding opportunity will be available until 2020, thus enabling EU member states to commit more permanently to resettlement programmes. It is therefore high time to launch a debate how a more meaningful and ambitious contribution by EU members states to international refugee protection could be achieved until the end of this decade and how coordination by the EU could maximise impact.

Discussions should include debates on the **sharing of responsibilities** between member states government (on different levels), UNHCR and civil society. Experience of established resettlement states with large programmes (USA, Canada, Australia) show that involving civil society actors enhances both the impact and the success of programmes and builds public support for them.

Current developments in the external action and external cooperation of the EU also offer a chance for better coordination of the domestic side of resettlement with external actions of the EU. If for example the EU could commit to resettling 10,000 per year from region X over a period of 3 years through a joint process by 2020, preferably in addition to supporting countries in region X financially through humanitarian and development aid, the EU could assist UNHCR in negotiating other durable solutions for refugee protection in this region through its external action service – thus generating benefit for those refugees remaining.

Policy recommendations of CCME

Against this background, CCME would like to underline that the EU and its members states can and must do more to protect the world's most vulnerable refugees. The next years will be crucial in making a more meaningful EU involvement in refugee resettlement a reality.

- EU member states should agree on more ambitious targets for resettlement quotas. Between the then 28 (or more) member states, 20.000 places for resettlement into the EU should be the annual target by 2020 (see annex). While the figure of 20.000 places within 8 years is entirely realistic, preparations towards attaining these figures need to start now. As an expression of **global** solidarity these places should be offered excluding those places eventually offered for inner-EU relocation.

- Planning, implementation and evaluation of resettlement programmes should be undertaken in a concerted effort involving UNHCR, member states and civil society on EU and national level. These different actors should meet regularly on a **tri-partite basis** so that respective competences can be coordinated and refugees will be given the best chance to develop their full potential, e.g. through well-developed integration programmes. On EU level a regular exchange platform should be created feeding into the global tri-partite process and contributing to the quality and integrity of resettlement efforts of the EU and its members. Financial support of the EU for platforms of cooperation on EU and national level could support these processes. Churches in Europe as well as civil society organisations stand ready to make their contribution to the process.
 - To enhance the impact of EU resettlement, members states should commit on a voluntary basis to stronger common priority setting; the discussion on the MFF offers an excellent opportunity to advance discussions between the different EU institutions on best procedures of priority-setting. The European Commission in its work on resettlement and EASO should start efforts aiming at coordination with other actions by the EU.
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The attached sheet tries to illustrate how the number of 20.000 places EU wide could be achieved. For each EU member state, a broad range for a possible quota has been indicated. The range takes into account size and economic situation of the country as well as existing quotas and experiences with resettlement. The range is **indicative** rather than an absolute and final figure, as it can of course not take all factors into account which will prevail in 2020.

While some countries might not participate in resettlement by 2020 or might even find the lower range suggested for a quota too ambitious, it also shows that 20.000 might actually be too modest a figure. Yet, efforts need to be made to attain 20.000 and efforts need to start today.

20.000 by 2020!

Position adopted by the
CCME Executive Committee, Hannover, 30 March 2012

20.000 by 2020

Ranges broken down
by EU member states

COUNTRY	MIN	MAX
AT	250	1.000
BE	250	1.000
BG	250	1.000
CY	0	250
CZ	250	1.000
DE	2.500	5.000
DK	1.000	2.500
EE	0	250
EL	0	250
ES	1.000	2.500
FI	1.000	2.500
FR	2.500	5.000
HU	0	250
HR	0	250
IE	250	1.000
IT	1.000	2.500
LU	0	250
LT	0	250
LV	0	250
MT	0	250
NL	1.000	2.500
PL	250	1.000
PT	250	1.000
RO	250	1.000
SE	2.500	5.000
SK	0	250
SL	0	250
UK	2.500	5.000
TOTAL	17.000	43.250