



EUROPEAN RESETTLEMENT NETWORK

Newsletter nr. 1- October 2012



German Ambassador Jens Plötner with Iraqi family leaving for Germany at Djerba airport

RESETTLEMENT NEWS

Germany resettles first refugees from Shousha camp

On Monday 3 September, 195 refugees departed from Shousha transit camp - located seven kilometers from the Tunisia-Libya border - to Germany to start a new life. The refugees had initially fled to Libya, before being uprooted again last year because of the civil war in Libya. The largest number of refugees originate from Sudan (Darfur), Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Most are single males between the age of 18 and 35, although there are also 20 families with children and 3 unaccompanied minors.

This group is the first to be resettled under the new German resettlement programme. Announced in 2012, the programme aims to resettle 300 refugees per year for the next three years (2012-2014). During 2009-10, Germany resettled 2501 Iraqi refugees from Syria and Jordan on an ad-hoc basis. In December 2011, and based on the success of this programme, the German government decided to participate regularly in UNHCR's resettlement programme by establishing an annual resettlement quota. The remaining 2012 quota of 100 was selected from the Iraqi refugee population in Turkey, and arrived in Germany during the first week of October 2012.

We are delighted to share with you our new European Resettlement Network newsletter. This is the fourth newsletter produced by IOM, ICMC and UNHCR in the framework of the 'Linking-In EU Resettlement' project, and the first official newsletter of the European Resettlement Network. Since the launch of the Network at the EU Skills Share Day in May of this year, we have continued to grow and develop the Network, engaging new members and actors and expanding the functions and content of the network website at www.resettlement.eu.

We are also delighted to present to you our new network logo:



We are now asking you all to join your colleagues from across Europe by becoming an official member of the European Resettlement Network. Information on how to join, who your fellow network members are and the goals of the network, can be found on page 3-4 of this issue.

Also in this issue we highlight the pilot activities we are developing in the framework of the 'Linking-In EU Resettlement' project and the new online resources now online at the network site. We are currently working on new website sections and tools that will offer you – the Network members – a platform to share resettlement resources and the means to contact and discuss your work with one another.

We look forward to welcoming you to the growing 'resettlement family' in Europe!



RESETTLEMENT PLACES NEEDED FOR REFUGEES IN SYRIA

Despite the current situation in the country, Syria is still hosting many refugees

Due to the continuous conflict in Syria, over 300,000 Syrians have fled abroad and another 1.2 million Syrians have been displaced in the country. Also, there are thousands of refugees from other countries in Syria who are caught up in the conflict. Together with partner organizations UNHCR is doing its best to assist the displaced and the refugees within Syria. In addition to the Palestinian refugees ex-Iraq, approximately 8,000 non-Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers are registered with UNHCR Syria. They originate from more than 40 different countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. The majority of them are originally from Somalia (2,668), Afghanistan (2,000), Sudan (981) and Yemen (247) and some 130 refugees from various African countries. Among this population, 1,144 refugees are female, the majority from Somalia (708), Afghanistan (181), Sudan (126), Iran (28), Eritrea (27) and Ethiopia (27). They are urban refugees and live mainly in Damascus and its suburbs.

UNHCR Appeal: 500 Resettlement places for non-Iraqi refugees

With the increasingly difficult security situation in Syria, refugees have high hopes for resettlement as a way of reaching safety. This is not only the case for the refugees from Iraq for whom there is ongoing resettlement, mainly to Australia, Canada and the US. UNHCR continues to seek durable solutions, including resettlement, for the non-Iraqi population for whom return to their own countries of origin is not a viable option. However, quotas made available for non-Iraqi refugees in Syria have been limited, partially due to the priority that has been given to Iraqi refugees since 2007. Since the beginning of the civil unrest in Syria in March 2011, and the suspension of major resettlement programmes out of the country, the possibility for this refugee population to find a durable solution through resettlement has in practice disappeared. UNHCR in Damascus has therefore appealed to resettlement countries to make up to 500 resettlement places available for this increasingly vulnerable population.



Somali woman with daughter at UNHCR in Damascus. UNHCR Bassam Diab 2012©

Why are the non-Iraqi refugees in Syria particularly vulnerable?

Most non-Iraqi refugees are easily identified as foreigners due to physical and cultural differences. This has significantly increased their exposure to protection risks during the current period of unrest, impacting on their coping mechanisms and making them more vulnerable. Many are also perceived as government supporters due to their nationality or religion and are therefore seen as part of the on going conflict. Most non-Iraqi refugees live in lower-rent areas which have been affected by the clashes between government and anti-government forces. With the increase in lawlessness there have been several serious incidents including harassment, theft and killings. Another significant protection risk for the non-Iraqi population is lack of documentation, which leads to various other protection risks including limited access to legal entities, authorities and services, difficulties in renting accommodation, lack of work opportunities, and heightened risks of detention and exploitation. A large percentage of the non-Iraqi population has entered Syria illegally and is unable to provide valid documentation. Due to their particular vulnerability, resettlement is the only way to assure that these refugees can be protected, which makes this call particularly urgent. Amongst the European countries that have responded to the Appeal to resettle non-Iraqi refugees from Syria are Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands.

Processing refugees for resettlement out of Syria is currently a challenge. UNHCR therefore suggests countries that are able to provide quota places for this population to consider them on dossier submission, to conduct video-conference interviews or to consider a transfer through an existing ETF. Several European countries, such as the Netherlands and the UK have been using the Emergency Transit Facility in Timisoara to evacuate refugees from Damascus.

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INTRODUCING: THE EUROPEAN RESETTLEMENT NETWORK

The **European Resettlement Network** is an inclusive network that supports the development of resettlement in Europe by connecting a variety of actors involved in refugee resettlement. Network members have a shared commitment to refugee resettlement and refugee protection, to ensuring the provision of durable solutions for refugees, and to ensuring refugees resettled to Europe receive integration support that provides them with the tools to become fully participating citizens'.



Who are the members of the European Resettlement Network?

Network members are both organisations and individuals working in resettlement and integration policy and practice, at different levels and in a variety of sectors. They include those from national, regional, local government, international organisations, civil society, volunteers, academics and others working in all stages of the resettlement process –selection and identification, pre-departure assistance and orientation, travel, reception and integration in the resettlement country. The network membership also includes refugees previously resettled to Europe, whose unique experiences and expertise can contribute to enhancing and developing European resettlement programmes and practice.

What does the European Resettlement Network do?

The EU Resettlement Network provides a platform to exchange information and expertise on resettlement priorities, processes and practices. It offers support, resources and solutions to actors seeking to start, expand or improve resettlement programmes

The **goals of the network** are:

- To promote cooperation amongst resettlement actors and stakeholders, thereby building capacity to increase and improve resettlement efforts.
- To gather and disseminate information, research, data and practices about and relating to refugee resettlement and refugee integration, and so increase mutual learning on refugee resettlement.
- To provide a platform to launch initiatives developed by the network membership.
- To support the development of resettlement and integration policy in EU Member States.
- To facilitate sustainable transnational cooperation in resettlement, beyond time-limited projects and initiatives.

The network particularly focuses its **current support** on new resettlement countries, including Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany and Spain, to facilitate their efforts in establishing and consolidating annual quota resettlement programmes.



INTRODUCING: THE EUROPEAN RESETTLEMENT NETWORK

The central tool for the network is the **website** - www.resettlement.eu - launched by the 3 partners in early March 2012 and currently being developed to include a resource library, a directory of resettlement policymakers and practitioners, online discussion groups, opportunities for online consultations and mutual learning via an online community of practice. The **information-sharing activities** of the network -both the website and network newsletter- inform members about developments and trends in global refugee situations and European resettlement policy and practice, in addition to highlighting opportunities to participate in the network and its activities.

New resources – available online now!

- **News Digest** - a bi-weekly news digest covering the most recent news in refugee resettlement and integration in Europe, and resettlement highlights from news media across the world. The digest is also circulated by email to all those in our contact database.
- **Country sections** - information and resources about refugee resettlement programmes in individual European countries. Information in this section is based largely on [ICMC's 2009 'Welcome to Europe' publication](#), which draws on discussions with representatives from relevant governments and non-governmental organisations, relevant publications, websites and other resources. Additional sources are noted within individual sections. The individual country profiles, data and resources included in this section will be updated during the remainder of 2012, and we invite your comments, suggestions and additional resources (in any European language) for inclusion.
- **Understanding resettlement** – key documentation on the resettlement process, from identification and selection of refugees in third countries to reception and integration support and initiatives in countries of resettlement.
- **Stories to be told** – resettlement stories from around Europe.

The 2020 campaign:

A number of EU Resettlement Network member organisations have joined together to launch the 'Resettlement Saves Lives – 20,000 for 2020' campaign. Led by a coalition of NGOs and IOM, the campaign advocates an increase in the total number of resettlement places provided by European countries, to reach 20,000 resettlement places every year by 2020. You can host the campaign banner on your organisational website, and pledge your support for the campaign goals directly via the [network website](#).

Join the European Resettlement Network:

To **join the network**, please register yourself and/or your organisation via the www.resettlement.eu network website or by [clicking here](#).



PILOT ACTIVITIES – LINKING IN EU RESETTLEMENT

The 'Linking In' project partners have developed a number of small pilot activities designed to explore innovative approaches to resettlement, and to extend the range and type of actors involved in European resettlement programmes.

Volunteering pilot

European resettlement programmes have long benefited from the contribution of volunteers, and practitioners have developed extensive expertise in enhancing resettlement activities by incorporating volunteers. One of our pilot activities focuses on collating the resources that document and evaluate these approaches, and disseminating them to network members via our www.resettlement.eu website. As many of the resources have been produced in national languages other than English, we have focused on translation and subtitling of resources in English to ensure they are as widely accessible as possible. This work is ongoing, and the resources will be available in the second half of November 2012.

Roundtable meeting on engaging private business in refugee resettlement – 12 December 2012

A second pilot project focuses on engaging private businesses in a discussion about their potential role as employers of resettled refugees. We have produced a brochure highlighting the skills and abilities of resettled refugees, and presenting best practice examples of recruiting, training and employing resettled refugees both from within and outside of Europe. A meeting in Brussels in early December will involve large companies to discuss the opportunities for expanding their involvement in European resettlement programmes with members of the Network. The brochure, outcomes of the meeting and recommendations for future action will be published on the network website by end 2013.

The role of universities in refugee resettlement

In the final pilot project, the project partners will work together with the University Assistance Fund (UAF) in the Netherlands to explore the role of universities in refugee resettlement. The resulting study will draw on UAF's current and previous work with resettled refugees, Dutch students and universities, and outline other models of university involvement again from other Member States and programmes outside of Europe. UAF will produce a series of short film clips detailing the experiences of resettled refugee students and practitioners working in the field, and both these and the study will be made available on the network website in early 2013.

COMING SOON

Communities of practice – forums on the website and sharing of good practices and resources

On the www.resettlement.eu website resettlement practitioners and policymakers will be able to contact each other through the directory and have online discussions on resettlement and integration, share information and good practices and set up meetings. The website will offer a space with restricted access where members of the Network can have thematic discussions and in the future possibly discuss through videoconferencing.



RESETTLEMENT STAKEHOLDERS MEETING – 6 SEPTEMBER - SPAIN

Discussing resettlement of refugees from Shousha Camp

On July 17th, a group of 80 refugees from Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia who stayed for nearly a year in Shousha camp in Tunisia, arrived in Madrid, Spain. The groups consist of 22 men, 25 women and 33 children from Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia. Spain responds to a UNHCR resettlement request, under its new asylum law, which allows for the resettlement of 80 refugees annually.

To discuss the reception and integration needs of the quite varied group, a stakeholder meeting was organised in Madrid on the 6th of September, including UNHCR, the Ministry of Employment and Security, Spanish reception centre managers, IOM, NGOs and municipalities. Caseworkers from all centres and NGOs reflected on how to best respond to the needs of some very vulnerable refugees, offering Spanish language training, education, medical and psychosocial assistance.



Refugees resettled to Spain will be supported by the government for a period of maximum two years. They receive the same services as refugees and asylums seekers in the country. The refugees will stay for up to 6 months in the centre and thereafter be provided with integration support in the municipalities, by the Spanish NGOs: ACCEM, CEAR and Cruz Roja.

As is the case for all Linking-In co-organised meetings, representatives of other resettlement countries joined the debate to offer new perspectives. Caritas Belgium, reported on their recent experiences with the reception of refugees from Shousha and the Danish government presented how they organise their programme in close cooperation with municipalities.

Before the end of 2012 refugees will leave the centres and move to municipalities. They will receive financial assistance to rent their own accommodation and to support themselves. Participants agreed on the need for continued stakeholder exchange and monitoring of the new situation in municipalities.



The economic and financial situation in Spain is now at its worst. It will therefore not be easy for these refugees to find employment and become independent. That said, after more than a year in extreme tough conditions and hardships in Shousha camp, the refugees are safe in Spain and finally able to start their new lives.

Linking-In EU Resettlement Calendar 2012

- National stakeholders meeting in the Czech Republic: 6 November
- Local practitioners training on reception and integration in Germany: 14-16 November
- National stakeholders meeting in Portugal: 16 November
- National stakeholders meeting in Italy – in November, date to be confirmed
- Roundtable meeting on private business engagement in employment of refugees 12 December, Brussels

A joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC Project- LINKING IN EU RESETTLEMENT - Linking the resettlement phases and local resettlement practitioners

