

Expanding Resettlement across Europe: From Policy to Practice

SHARE Network Conference

Organised in cooperation with the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU 2019
At the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 21-22 October 2019

Concept Note

Introduction

Across Europe, and around the world, it is not an easy time for refugees and their advocates. With thousands relying on dangerous smuggling and sea crossings, borders closing and policies growing increasingly restrictive, the voices of welcoming communities can get lost. However it is more important than ever for this 'silent majority' to come together to combat negative narratives, celebrate successes, and – most critically – advocate for solidarity and human rights.

And indeed, even in difficult times, there are promising developments. In 2019, Europe will finalize the largest ever EU resettlement programme, welcoming 50,000 resettled refugees to 20 EU countries during the last two years. Many of these refugees are arriving to European cities and towns which are new to resettlement, and local actors and communities are playing a central role in welcoming and supporting them in their new homes.

Bringing together participants from European regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, refugee-led organisations and refugee leaders, as well as national governments, international organisations and European institutions, the conference will:

- Evaluate the 50,000 EU resettlement scheme and discuss future plans;
- Reflect on lessons learned from welcoming refugees to small-size cities and rural areas;
- Screen the *Small Places, Great Hearts* SHARE video series;
- Engage participants in thematic break-out groups to discuss promising practices;
- Explore innovative partnerships to local welcome, including community sponsorship;
- Offer an opportunity to advocate for safe and legal pathways and refugee inclusion.

SHARE Network Background

Part of the broader [European Resettlement Network \(ERN\)](#), the SHARE Network promotes partnerships for refugee inclusion in local communities across Europe. Established in 2012 and led by the Brussels office of the [International Catholic Migration Commission \(ICMC Europe\)](#), the [SHARE Network](#) provides a platform for mutual exchange and learning amongst local and regional actors working on or considering resettlement, and advocates for more and better resettlement in Europe. To date, the SHARE Network has engaged 3,000 stakeholders in 27 EU countries in dialogue and advocacy.

The [2018-19 SHARE Integration project](#) is implemented in collaboration with Caritas Austria, Caritas Europa, Caritas International (BE), Caritas Salford (UK), Consorzio Communitas (IT), Dutch Council for Refugees, the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (FR), Jesuit Refugee Service Portugal, Jesuit Refugee Service Romania and MigrAfrica (DE). The project is co-financed by the European Union under the AMIF and responds to Europe's expanded role in receiving refugees via resettlement and complementary pathways, particularly private sponsorship. The SHARE Network strengthens the capacity of actors newly involved in resettlement – especially in small-size cities and rural areas – by delivering tailored training, conducting research, developing and sharing innovative tools, and facilitating best-practice exchange.

International Conference in Brussels

ICMC Europe is organising the 2-day interactive conference (21-22 October) at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels and will welcome approximately 80 participants from across the EU. Participation will be open to mixed delegations of national, regional and local government, as well EU, UN and civil society stakeholders, including refugee-led organizations. Participants are encouraged to nominate their respective counterparts from national and local government and civil society to register, and, where possible and relevant, to sponsor the participation (i.e. travel and accommodation) of their fellow delegates.

The conference will focus on local inclusion for refugees who arrive via resettlement, relocation and other legal pathways. However, it will also look at the broader context given that many other refugees and migrants encounter – and overcome – similar challenges.

Registration

A form to register your interest can be found [here](#); **please register your interest to attend before 15 September 2019**. A full programme as well as logistical details will follow. For more information on the conference, as well as the SHARE Network, please contact Programme Manager Magdalena Boehm: boehm@icmc.net.

Content

The Skills SHARE Day conference will examine refugee resettlement and inclusion in Europe. What makes resettlement successful? How can policy makers, practitioners and communities ensure successful resettlement – and expand resettlement in the future? The conference content will include the thematic elements listed below.

Evaluating the 50,000 EU resettlement scheme

The largest ever resettlement scheme in the EU is coming to a close in October, thus the time is ripe to consider what has gone well and what must be improved. This EU scheme engaged new actors – both in countries that have long experiences with resettlement (i.e. the UK and France) and in those that are new

to resettlement or newly expanding resettlement quotas (i.e. Estonia, Bulgaria and Portugal). And indeed, given that plans have not yet been made for the future of EU resettlement after 2019, it is also an important moment to advocate for, and shape, future programmes.



Welcoming refugees to small cities and rural areas

From trainings in rural Romania and the suburbs of Amsterdam, research in the countryside of France and best-practice exchange with small towns in Sweden, the SHARE Network has drawn many lessons about inclusion of refugees in small-size cities and rural areas. The conference will examine these experiences with a particular focus on good practices which could be replicated in other areas.

Promising practices and innovative partnerships

Conference participants will engage in interactive activities and small-group discussions to examine good practices from pre-departure to post-arrival, including cultural orientation, preparing host communities, placement policies, regional coordination, labour market integration and entrepreneurship. Innovative partnerships including community sponsorship initiatives will also be explored.

Small Places, Great Hearts

The SHARE 'Small Places, Great Hearts' Film Series highlights refugee resettlement and inclusion in smaller municipalities across Europe. These short films allow communities a voice to present themselves directly to soon-to-arrive and newly-arrived refugees, as well as to other stakeholders. The series celebrates the benefits of receiving refugees not only for refugees, but also for hosting communities. The film series will be screened, together with a Q&A session with refugees and host community members featured in the films.

Advocating for safe and legal pathways

Finally, by bringing together a range of stakeholders from more than 15 countries across Europe, the conference offers an opportunity to gain inspiration and think outside the box with colleagues who face similar challenges in different contexts. And, importantly, it provides the chance to advocate for Europe to demonstrate its commitment to solidarity and human rights by increasing safe and legal pathways and ensuring refugee inclusion at the local level.