The Danish resettlement programme at a glance

Resettlement quota and actors
Start of annual quota: 1979
Current quota: approximately 500 per year. 3-year flexible quota of 1,500 in place since July 2005 enables unused places to be carried over from year to year within a 3-year period. The current flexible quota period runs from 2011 to 2013.
Main national actors: Danish Immigration Service (DIS), Ministry of Justice, municipalities, Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

Resettlement numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ACCEPTED</th>
<th>ARRIVALS*</th>
<th>NATIONALITY ⇔ COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OF LARGEST GROUPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013 anticipated</td>
<td>516</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan ⇔ Nepal, DR Congo ⇔ Uganda, Colombia ⇔ Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>468</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan ⇔ Nepal, Burma ⇔ Malaysia, Colombia ⇔ Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>516</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan ⇔ Nepal, Burma ⇔ Malaysia, DR of Congo ⇔ Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>494</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan ⇔ Nepal, Burma ⇔ Malaysia, DR of Congo ⇔ Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>452</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan ⇔ Nepal, Burma ⇔ Malaysia, DR of Congo ⇔ Rwanda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Arrivals are not recorded in national statistics

2012 data, published by Eurostat in May 2013
UNHCR Submission categories considered for resettlement

- Legal and physical protection needs
- Survivors of violence and torture
- Medical needs
  - 30 cases under the Twenty-or-More (TOM) programme
- Women and girls at risk
- Family reunification
  - outside the quota
- Children and adolescents at risk
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions

UNHCR Priority levels accepted (with sub-quota where applicable)

- Emergency max. 7 days between submission and resettlement
- Urgent within 6 weeks between submission and resettlement
  - around 75 cases are allocated to emergency and urgent dossiers under the current quota
- Normal within 12 months between submission and resettlement

The resettlement quota is divided into four subquotas:

- Geographical category - approximately 395 places per year, primarily for refugees offered resettlement following in-country selection missions.
- Emergency and urgent category - approximately 75 places per year reserved for refugees who are at immediate risk of refoulement and/or assault in the country of asylum.
- Medical category - 30 places\(^{10}\) under the UNHCR Twenty-or-More (TOM) programme for refugees with special medical needs.
- Families category - family members accepted on a dossier basis who are accompanying a person accepted under the Twenty-or-More programme. Family members arriving in this category are counted in the geographical quota.

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\(^{10}\) In 2009 the Danish TOM programme was increased from 20 to 30 places.
Denmark’s Resettlement Programme

Legal Basis

Although Denmark has been involved in resettlement since 1956, the Danish resettlement programme was officially established in 1979. Section 7 of the Danish Aliens Act provides the legal basis for refugee status eligibility in Denmark. Section 8 (1-3) stipulates that a residence permit can be issued to a foreigner who arrives under an agreement made with UNHCR (or similar international organisation), and sets out the specific criteria that persons must fulfil for a permit to be issued. This section thus provides the legal basis for the Danish resettlement programme.

Resettlement Criteria

Basic Criteria
To qualify for resettlement to Denmark, the person must be recognised as a refugee according to the 1951 Convention on Refugee Status and the associated criteria set out in the national legislation. It is a precondition that resettlement to Denmark takes place based on an arrangement with UNHCR or a similar international organisation. Some criteria set out in the asylum legislation are not applied to emergency, urgent and medical cases or to those resettled under strategic resettlement operations.

Resettlement can also be offered to persons who would otherwise be able to obtain a residence permit in Denmark, such as those with humanitarian needs (for example persons who are seriously ill) or Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs). Denmark operates clauses that may exclude refugees from resettlement, based on article 1F of the 1951 Convention, including if persons constitute a threat to national security/public order and/or have committed a criminal offence. Persons with mental illness are not usually accepted for resettlement to Denmark.

Criteria related to integration

Denmark was the first European country to introduce criteria related to integration into the resettlement selection process. The following integration criteria are being applied:

- Language and literacy - a refugee should be literate, although illiteracy alone is not a reason for exclusion. Multilingual refugees may be given priority.

- Education and employment - those with educational qualifications or employment experience may be prioritised.

- Families with children - considered to integrate more easily than single people and so may be prioritised.
Family unity - considered as highly important to maintain even where all members of a family do not meet other supplementary criteria.

Social networks outside the family in the country of asylum - sociability in country of asylum may be considered as a positive indication of integration potential.

Age - single persons who are very old or very young are considered to integrate less easily, and may therefore be excluded.

Motivation to integrate - the individual refugee’s motivation for successful integration is of central importance. Before a final decision on resettlement is made, the refugee must sign a declaration\(^\text{11}\) that he/she has been informed of the conditions for resettlement in Denmark, and that, based on this, he or she wishes to be resettled. The declaration states the refugee’s willingness to integrate into Danish society, to learn the Danish language, and to participate in and complete a post-arrival integration course. Refugees also sign to confirm that they understand the limited access to family reunification for refugees in Denmark, and the level of financial and other aid offered by the Danish government.

Integration criteria are not applied to emergency, urgent and medical cases, or those resettled under strategic resettlement operations. Integration criteria are applied to families as a whole - each individual within a family is not required to meet the criteria.

After a loss for the Right in the Danish parliamentary elections of 2011, the new government announced plans to abolish the integration criteria for resettlement. At the time of writing however, there have been no changes to this effect.

**Identification and Selection**

Every year the Minister of Justice decides on the overall allocation of places and the geographical priorities for the Danish quota. All submissions for resettlement are made by UNHCR. The majority of the refugees to be resettled are identified during 2-3 selection missions each year, during which the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) interview refugees.

Denmark and Iceland are the only two European countries where NGOs participate directly in selection missions. Municipalities can participate in selection missions by delivering CO programmes, but must finance their own participation. Persons resettled as emergency/urgent cases and TOM

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\(^{11}\) Danish Immigration Service, Declaration regarding the conditions for resettlement (residence permit) in Denmark [https://www.nyidanmark.dk/.../ee5_conditions_for_resettlement.doc]
medical cases are selected by DIS based on dossier submissions from UNHCR. The DRC does not participate in dossier selection.

For cases selected during selection missions, processing time from submission to arrival in Denmark may take 5-6 months. Normal priority dossier cases average 3 months between submission and arrival.

**Refugee Status, Permanent Residency & Citizenship**

Refugees accepted for resettlement receive refugee status or other protection status included in section 8 of the Danish Alien Act. On arrival into Denmark, all refugees are given a 6-month temporary residence permit, which is automatically extended for further 6-month periods for up to 5 years from the date of entry. After 5 years, refugees must apply for further extension of temporary residence. Refugees are entitled to take up employment immediately upon their arrival.

All refugees in Denmark can apply for permanent residence after 5 years legal residence in the country. Applicants for permanent residence must not have received certain types of public benefits for a period of 3 years prior to submitting the application, have submitted a signed declaration of integration and active citizenship, have passed a Danish language test level 1 or higher and have held regular full-time employment or have been involved in an education programme in Denmark for at least 3 of the 5 years residency. Refugees may be exempt from general requirements after 8 years of residency in Denmark.

Denmark requires the longest period of residency in the EU - 8 years - before an application for citizenship is permitted. Citizenship applicants are required to pass level 2 of the national Danish language test.

**Family Reunification**

Refugees in Denmark may under certain circumstances be granted family reunification with their spouse, registered/cohabiting partners and unmarried children.

The following general requirements apply for the family reunification applicant residing in Denmark:
- At least 24 years old.
- Not dependent on public benefits.
- In employment or education.
- Passed national Danish language test Level 1.

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12 Other general requirements include:
- Qualifying for temporary residence
- Being over the age of 18
- No criminal record;
- No overdue public debt

13 The national framework for Danish language learning is set by the Danish Agency for Labour Retention and International Recruitment.
Demonstrating ‘tilnytningskrav’ (attachment to Denmark).

The extent to which general family reunification requirements are applied depends on whether the individual(s) joining the family member still risk(s) persecution in the country of origin or asylum. For example, as a general rule children joining family members must be younger than 15 years, but this may be extended to 18 years in high risk cases.

General family reunification cases are not included in the resettlement quota.

Resettlement in practice

Linking Phases

How is information transferred between selection and reception of refugees in order to prepare for their arrival?

☑ Briefing stakeholders after selection through missions or dossiers
DIS informs municipalities and NGOs (DRC, Church Integration Service (KIT), Red Cross) of the arrival of new groups and discusses findings during selection missions.

☑ Forwarding pertinent information from Refugee Referral Form (RRF) to municipalities
Refugees sign a release that allows DIS to transfer RRF data on special needs to municipalities. Information concerning the asylum claim is not included in this communication.

☑ Sharing of information gathered during Cultural Orientation (CO)

How is information transferred for specific needs (medical or other)?

☑ Transferred to the municipality via the RRF, as above.

Pre-departure

☑ Cultural Orientation: A 5-day pre-departure CO programme is delivered by DIS and language instructors directly after each selection mission. The programme provides 10 lessons on Danish society and 10 Danish language lessons.

☑ Medical Exam: IOM fit-to-fly assessments

☑ Travel arrangements: IOM

Integration in Practice

Reception

Refugees arriving at Copenhagen airport are welcomed either by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) or the receiving municipality. Those arriving at other airports are welcomed by the receiving municipality.
Placement policies

To ensure an even dispersal of all refugees throughout the country, refugees (both resettled and others) are assigned to municipalities according to a distribution key. For resettlement, the host municipality is identified by DIS according to available quota, local integration capacity and the personal profiles of refugees (social network, education, employment skills and any special needs). DIS discusses potential cases for resettlement with the municipality before placement is confirmed. Many municipalities that receive resettled refugees have done so for several years, and have participated in briefings, selection mission or CO sessions. Many subsequently offer expertise in dealing with specific refugee profiles and/or groups. Financial support is provided by the central government to the municipalities.14

Most refugees are resettled to smaller municipalities in the more rural part of the country, where housing is more readily available and less expensive. Refugees can move between municipalities, but the prospective receiving municipality must accept the financial responsibility of the integration programme, including payment of the individual cash allowance, for the refugee(s) in question before the move takes place (see below).

Integration services & support

Length: 3 years

Components: The 1999 Integration Act provides guidelines for integration for all newly-arrived foreign nationals in Denmark. The municipality is responsible for providing housing, which comprises a mixture of social and private housing. All newly-arrived refugees and any family members arriving via family reunification must participate in a 3-year mandatory introduction programme. The municipality organises all

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14 Support received by municipalities for resettlement-related activities is included in overall financial distribution from central government to municipalities, and exact amounts for resettlement are therefore not known.
phases of the programme although it often contracts NGOs or other private organisations to implement activities. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Danish Red Cross and KIT are the principal NGOs assisting refugees in the integration process. The DRC is particularly involved in resettlement via government contracts at both a national and municipal level, in addition to coordinating a national network of volunteers assisting refugees.

Integration assistance in Denmark begins with the creation of an integration contract based on an assessment of the person’s particular skills. The integration programme includes a minimum of 30 hours of activities a week comprising 15-18 hours per week\textsuperscript{15} Danish language classes, courses on Danish society and employment advice. Refugees are placed in one of three language classes depending on their language ability and educational background.

During the introduction programme and until employment is found, resettled refugees and their reunified family are entitled to a cash benefit from the Danish Social Services the same as that received by Danish nationals. The cash benefit may be reduced if a refugee fails to participate in the integration programme. Refugees risks reduction or termination in their financial allowance and the interruption of the integration programme if he/she moves to a different municipality without the approval of the new local authority, potentially also jeopardising a grant of permanent residency in the future.

\textsuperscript{15} There is no precise limit in terms of hours mentioned in existing legislation. In May 2013, the government agreed to extend the period during which free Danish language classes could be attended from 3 to 5 years, but this decision had not been implemented at the time of writing.
INTEGRATION IN FOCUS:
Network families
The Danish Refugee Council’s volunteer network matches refugee families with a Danish ‘network family’ that can provide both practical and social support in refugees’ everyday lives. The network family functions as a kind of ‘good neighbour’ providing friendship, support and information on various aspects of Danish culture, systems and society. They assist refugees in learning to get around in Denmark, to navigate the extensive associations and organisations in Denmark, understand educational options, deal with the authorities and access the job market. While network families decide how often they want to meet with the refugee family they are matched with, DRC stipulates that they find time for their refugee family at least twice a month. If the family has just arrived in Denmark, DRC may ask for more contact during the initial reception period. Additionally, network families are expected to be available to answer questions by telephone or e-mail. DRC has published an information brochure providing advice and guidance on how to become a network family.

Use of the European Refugee Fund (ERF)

Under the 1992 Edinburgh Agreement, Denmark agreed several ‘opt-outs’ - or exceptions - to the Maastricht Treaty, including in the area of Justice and Home Affairs. As such, Denmark does not participate in the European Refugee Fund (ERF).

Evaluations

While there is no overall evaluation of the Danish resettlement programme or the integration of resettled refugees, several studies on refugee integration practice and outcomes have been completed.

In May 2011, the Ministry of Refugee Immigration and Integration published a study on good practices in refugee reception in municipalities\(^\text{16}\) for use as a tool to disseminate practice and share recommendations to those working on integration at the local level across Denmark.

Also in 2011, the Danish Research Centre for Migration, Ethnicity and Health, the Department of Public Health and the University of Copenhagen carried out a thematic evaluation of

health outcomes for resettled refugees in Denmark.\textsuperscript{17} Based on outcomes of surveys in all Danish municipalities that had received resettled refugees since 2007, the study found that around 70\% of municipalities had no specific healthcare policy for the reception and long-term integration of resettled refugees. By contrast to asylum seekers, who can access healthcare at reception centres, resettled refugees travel directly to municipalities and receive the large part of their support from caseworkers who are not health professionals. Health outcomes for resettled refugees therefore varied considerably, and the risk that the healthcare needs of resettled refugees would in some circumstances not be met was considerable.

**Strengths and Challenges**

**Strengths:**

- The Danish programme is characterised by close cooperation and coordination among government, local authorities and NGO stakeholders, with clear definition of tasks and division of responsibilities among actors in both the pre-departure and post-arrival phases.
- The Danish programme consistently fills all places within the quota, in large part because of strong cooperation and partnerships, and also because municipalities are obliged to receive resettled refugees and the three-year quota model provides flexibility to fill unused places from year to year.
- The Danish quota responds efficiently to urgent and emergency protection needs, and enables refugees with specific medical needs to access life-saving treatment in Denmark.

**Challenges:**

- Resettled refugees are not granted permanent residency on arrival into Denmark, and the challenging language requirement for obtaining permanent residency due to language requirements causes many refugees to remain as temporary residents for long periods.
- The integration of newcomers in Denmark has become highly politicised in recent years, and negative perceptions in this regard have created challenges for integration policy and for individual integration in some municipalities.
- Balancing placement of refugees in areas where housing is available with those where there are opportunities

\textsuperscript{17} Hanne W. Frederiksen, Allan Krasnik & Marie Nørredam ‘Policies and practices in the health-related reception of quota refugees in Denmark’, in Danish Medical Journal (Dan Med J 59/1), January 2012
for employment and/or higher education is challenging in the current context. Employment opportunities are also very limited for refugees who are illiterate and/or who have limited educational experience or vocational skills, and the financial crisis has further depleted their availability.

New developments

Planned changes in the national approach to integration in Denmark were foreseen as part of the 2011 government’s general plans for reform, which set out revisions in the field of immigration and integration, including the rules on eligibility for family reunification, permanent residence and nationality. The government has since implemented a number of amendments to both the Aliens Act and the Integration Act, including new rules for family reunification, permanent residence and naturalisation, and mainstreaming social support for ‘foreigners’ (including resettled refugees) into the general social security system. From July 1st 2013, municipalities must provide all refugees and their family members with an Integration Plan, covering social initiatives and healthcare, school and education for children in the family, Danish language tuition, employment promotion and activities aiming to encourage and strengthen active citizenship. Municipalities must also offer a preliminary health and mental health examination/evaluation for all newly arrived refugees and their families within 3 months of arrival, and follow up on the outcomes of the examination as needed. The evaluation should look at both physical and mental health.