ERN+ Webinar Series on Complementary Pathways of Refugee Admission in Europe

Enhancing Humanitarian Admission in Europe

Webinar 23 March 2017

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The European Resettlement Network

- European Resettlement Network: [www.resettlement.eu](http://www.resettlement.eu)
- Supporting the development of resettlement in Europe since 2010 by connecting a variety of actors involved in refugee resettlement
- 3,000 stakeholders from national, regional, local government, international organisations, civil society, volunteers, academics, refugees, and others working in all stages of the resettlement process

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ERN+ Project

• Exploring complementary pathways of refugee admission to Europe
• Developing examples of models on complementary forms of admission in consultation with all relevant actors
• Identifying possibilities for the implementation of pilot projects in selected European countries

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Resettlement and the need for Complementary Pathways

- Record numbers of displaced persons worldwide
- 1.2 million refugees in need of resettlement in 2017, according to UNHCR’s Projected Global Resettlement Needs
- Contribution of the European Union to global resettlement remains modest
  - Approximately 28,000 submissions to European resettlement countries in 2016 of a global total of 160,000

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Complementary Pathways

- Potential to develop alternative forms of admission to address the needs of refugees globally
- Pathways can include private sponsorship programmes, student scholarships as well as other forms of humanitarian admission programmes, such as enhanced family reunification
- Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI)
  - Government of Canada, UNHCR, the University of Ottawa, the Radcliffe Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations

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Webinar Programme

PART I - An introduction to Humanitarian admission programmes

• What are the core components of Humanitarian Admission Programmes? by Jo De Backer, IOM RO Brussels Resettlement and Relocation Specialist

• How can visas issued on humanitarian grounds for protection seeking purposes facilitate humanitarian admission? by Kristiina Lilleorg, IOM RO Brussels Immigration and Border Management Specialist

• The Austrian HAP programme, by Barbara Kurz, Integration, Migration und Asyl expert at Caritas Austria; ARGE Consortium - Project Coordinator for HAP

• Humanitarian admission programmes in Germany for beneficiaries of protection from Syria, by Janne Grote, German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

PART II – Visas on humanitarian grounds as a tool for admission

• Issuance of visas for asylum by French authorities, by Séverine Origny Fleishman, Deputy Head of Department, Asylum and Protection Law, French Ministry of Interior, Directorate General for Foreign Nationals in France.

• SRC Counseling Services on Humanitarian visa for entry to Switzerland by Judith Huber, Migration Specialist, Swiss Red Cross, Department of Social Integration and Migration

• With further contributions from UNHCR on other relevant considerations to be taken into account

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Humanitarian admission schemes as a pathway

• Potential to offer a save and legal pathway for those in need of international protection
• Complement - and not a replacement - to States’ traditional resettlement programmes
• May be used for specific groups of refugees such as vulnerable persons, extended family members or individuals with medical needs
• Expedited mechanism granting (temporary) international protection depending upon a State’s legislation

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Humanitarian admission schemes as a pathway

• Safeguards need to be in place to ensure clear legal status, protection needs - including psycho-social well-being of refugees - are met.
• Existing and past examples, with many recent initiatives focusing on Syrians
• Diverse in nature, eligibility criteria, length of residence granted, support provided etc.
• Within such programmes, visas issued on humanitarian grounds (for protection-seeking purposes) could facilitate refugee admission

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Core components of Humanitarian Admission Programmes

• Use of identification and referral sources other than UNHCR including through Churches, NGOs, family members in receiving countries and self-referral by Syrian refugees at embassies in countries of first asylum

• Consideration of cases other than those submitted on the basis of UNHCR submission categories, though on the basis of vulnerability criteria
Core components of Humanitarian Admission Programmes (2)

- Family reunification (sub)places going beyond reuniting with nuclear family; providing access to the territory through visa instruments, often having a sponsorship component; time-limited application period and few considerations for individual vulnerability.

- **Need for protection-centered programmes**, not substitute existing protection places; and include a number of protection principles such as non-discrimination, family unity, do not harm and give access to rights, services and integration support.
Use of visas issued on humanitarian grounds for protection-seeking purposes

- EU legislation (LTV Visa 90 days) vs. National legislation (individual provisions)
- Persisting gap in regional & national legislation allows for inconsistent entitlement (individual discretion of MS, unclear definition “humanitarian grounds” and lack targeted procedures specifically for those in need of protection under EU law)
- Tool to access the EU MS border, not necessarily granting entry <-> protection programme
- Meant to complement existing schemes (including resettlement, humanitarian admission and others) to ensure safe, legal access
- Introduction to examples of MS using humanitarian visas for protection-seeking purposes

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PART II: Specific examples - visas issued on humanitarian grounds

“Issuance of visas for asylum by French authorities”

Presentation by Séverine Origny Fleishman,
Deputy Head of Department, Asylum and Protection Law, French Ministry of Interior, Directorate General for Foreign Nationals in France.

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Other considerations to take into account

Concluding remarks by David Watt,
UNHCR Bureau for Europe

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