



“Linking in EU resettlement”

Linking the resettlement phases and connecting (local) resettlement practitioners
A joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project

Project summary

The implementation of the joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project “Promotion of resettlement in the European Union through practical cooperation by EU Member States and other stakeholders” is currently in its final phase. A range of joint activities have taken place, including the local practitioners’ training in Sintra, multi-stakeholder meetings in participating countries, a pilot on video-resettlement interviewing at the ETC, visits to study the reception and integration programs of the UK and Sweden and a mission to the UNHCR Resettlement Hub in Beirut to share good practices on the dossier submission process.

In order to ensure continuation of the project, IOM, ICMC and UNHCR have submitted a project proposal for a follow-up project that will build upon the results and achievements of the current project. The European Commission has now confirmed it will fund this new project “Linking in EU Resettlement”. The continuation of the project is important to support the cooperation in the Joint EU Resettlement Programme and to feed into the EASO which is taking up its responsibilities. The new project will continue to promote the linking of different phases of resettlement, by connecting those persons involved in resettlement selection with those working in the reception and early integration of refugees. The project will also further develop the cooperation and knowledge-sharing between governmental institutions, UNHCR, IOM, municipalities and civil society in the countries. Over 40 of these organizations are already participating in the current project from 10 Member States (BE; FR; HU; PL; RO; NL; PT; SE; SK; UK). The new project will include more Member States as project partners (governmental authorities from AT, DE, ES and IT have already confirmed, other EU MS are still welcome) and to engage most other Member States in a number of project activities. The national governments will continue to play a central role in the project, but the project will also aim at promoting further cooperation between municipalities in the EU, that are engaged or plan to engage in resettlement, all in cooperation with existing networks of cities and regions.

The emphasis of the activities in the project will shift from cooperation in the selection and travel phases of resettlement to the reception and integration phases at a local level. The main objective of the follow-up project is to strengthen the capacity of municipalities and civil society actors to facilitate the integration of resettled refugees, as the success of resettlement is to a large extent dependent on their role. The project will facilitate the sharing of promising practices and of lessons learnt in the reception and integration of resettled refugees. It will also aim at enhancing the resettlement capacity of host countries, by awareness-raising around specific refugee groups, and by promoting volunteer-schemes, private sponsorship programmes and other funding mechanisms.

Main activities

The main event of the follow up project is the “**European Resettlement Skills Share Day**”, which will bring together representatives of all participating states, municipalities and civil society. During this event which is scheduled to take place in February 2012, the participants will be able to showcase promising practices and share challenges in a market place format, which will allow them to choose workshops and presentations of their interest. An example of these good practices is the involvement of host communities in the entire resettlement process (e.g. through information sessions towards receiving municipalities and civil society and the involvement of bicultural trainers in cultural orientation). Also, an important challenge in resettlement is the lack of housing for resettled refugees. At the skills share day municipalities, civil society and housing agencies will meet up in a workshop on this issue. Among others, the “Bolton at Home” Housing Agency in Manchester could share its good practices in ensuring housing for hundreds of refugees per year. At the meeting the project partners will also present the **general activities** which will take place in the project, as well as possible **pilot activities**, in which the participating stakeholders can participate during the project period. These activities will explore further implementation of identified promising practices in the reception and integration of

resettled refugees or innovative means of engaging the host communities. The pilot projects are different from the main project activities, in the sense that each will only involve a few participating countries, dependent upon expertise, interest and potential.

General project activities

The general project activities which will involve all/ most participating states include the following:

- The project aims at organising a second round of **national multi-stakeholder meetings**, which bring together national governments, civil society, IOM and UNHCR, as well as representatives of municipalities that are active or are planning to be active in resettlement.
- The development of a **Website on Resettlement**, which will offer an introduction to resettlement that complements the Resettlement Handbook, outlining the resettlement criteria, the resettlement process (among others, selection, cultural orientation, medical assessment, and travel) and basic information on reception and integration. It will focus on the involvement of the host community and refugee communities in resettlement and on ways of linking the resettlement phases. Possibly, part of this website will contain a tool with limited access for resettlement stakeholders only, where they can share information and good practices with regard to reception and integration.
- Enhancing awareness and expertise of local and national **media** and promoting positive stories about resettlement in the media. This would be done through awareness-raising activities with media representatives, using existing refugee stories and producing new refugee case studies, preferably by refugees themselves. The project could identify and support resettled refugees and other supporters of resettlement in cities, who can advocate for resettlement at national and regional meetings. **Internet based media** such as Facebook, Twitter could also be explored further as a way to engage a variety of audiences.
- Organization of a **workshop on funding mechanisms**, on how to use the European Refugee Fund for resettlement (among other the UK approach), but also alternative funding schemes such as private sponsorship (Canadian, US example).
- Three “**local practitioners’ trainings**” for both emerging and experienced resettlement countries will be organized for three regions. The trainings will build on the experiences of existing resettlement countries, to enable detailed planning for resettlement in the new relocation/resettlement countries planned during 2011-2012. The trainings will offer modules on specific issues to be addressed (e.g. housing, engaging host communities and the media) and will facilitate networking and exchange of good practices of local practitioners.
- **Partnering and study visits** will take place between different partner countries to create and foster multi-disciplinary partnerships between local communities and stakeholders.
- The project will also allow ICMC to update and publish the “**Welcome to Europe Guide**”.

Pilot activities

The pilot activities will be presented in an “à la carte set up”. The activities will not involve all stakeholders, but only those wishing to work on a specific pilot activity, as chosen from the menu of activities, which will be developed in the kick-off meeting. Among others, the following pilot activities could be undertaken:

- This project will facilitate the cooperation between cities in a project to **mobilize host communities**. It will promote the engagement through volunteering and campaigning schemes which exist on a large scale in Canadian and US models and in municipalities in UK, SE and DE.
- The development of a **private sponsorship project involving universities** and university students in 2 or 3 countries. This pilot activity would build on the experiences with the UAF-led project ‘resettlement of higher educated refugees’ in the period 2009-2011 and the Student Refugee Program of the World University Service (WUSC) in Canada.
- A pilot activity could be to address **housing problems** in a resettlement country with the support of another resettlement country and following the workshop on this issue.
- **Awareness-raising** on European resettlement and priorities (such as refugees from the Horn of Africa and promote the increase the number of resettlement places through advocacy and engagement of local level and regional actors (Bundesländer, Regions).
- Projects to **engage private businesses in resettlement**, through sponsorship, training, mentoring - taking stock of existing successful partnerships which engage private business in resettlement (e.g. Swatch and Manpower).