

*For immediate release*

## Resettlement training offers fresh perspective on reception, integration



Participants gather in Sintra to discuss the reception and integration of resettled refugees.

Sintra, Portugal, June 2010 ©ICMC/H.Williams

**SINTRA, PORTUGAL, 16 June 2010—Over 45 participants and facilitators from 13 European countries gathered in Sintra last week for three days of networking and targeted knowledge-sharing on the reception and integration of resettled refugees.**

With the assistance of the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR), the three day training was organized by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) as part of a joint project carried out by ICMC, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on practical cooperation for EU resettlement with Member States and other stakeholders. The training aimed at facilitating the exchange of best practices between NGOs

and municipalities around the reception and integration of refugees, while also increasing the capacity of resettlement service providers.

“While the countries contexts are very different, the refugees with whom NGOs and municipalities work are experiencing similar challenges in integration and developing a variety of approaches and solutions in response. Many, if not all, of these can be shared and applied across Europe,” stated ICMC Resettlement Coordinator, Hazel Williams.

Presentations covered topics ranging from the initial reception phase, to community integration and personal stories from refugees themselves, and were given by representatives from the European Parliament, UNHCR, IOM, NGOs from Europe and Canada, and by resettled refugees. Among others, these included a presentation on integration support given by Chris Friesen of Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia—a Canadian NGO based in Vancouver, B.C. that oversees the resettlement of 800-900 government assisted refugees annually—regarding the Canadian model of reception and integration, and Sabe Amthor Soe from Burma Centre Prague, sharing her experiences of resettlement in the Czech Republic for the first time. Resettled and recognized refugees Diaby Abdourahamane and Alexander Kweh presented on their experiences of arriving in Portugal and trying to set up a Refugee Community Organization, while Htoo Wah, a Karen refugee, told his story of resettling from Thailand to Sheffield, United Kingdom.

Cultural orientation, a key component of resettlement, was discussed at length, and included a presentation of a cultural orientation model linking the pre and post-arrival of resettled refugees by IOM and LANDA Project Sweden.

“The three day training session provided many levels of insight, and together, we were able to agree on key principles for reception and integration which will hopefully go towards forming an agreed charter,” stated ICMC’s Williams.

Resources and materials from the meeting can be found on [www.icmc.net/activities/ERF-project](http://www.icmc.net/activities/ERF-project).

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