

Timisoara, 11 March 2010

For immediate release

## **ICMC, Working Group on Resettlement meet in Timisoara**

TIMISOARA, 11 March 2010—ICMC joins governments, UNHCR and twelve other NGOs for targeted discussions towards strengthening and enhancing common efforts on refugee resettlement during the annual meeting of the Working Group on Resettlement.

For the first time since its establishment in 1994, the Working Group met outside of Geneva. Gathered in Timisoara, Romania, the meeting gave participants a chance to visit the Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) where they were briefed by the Centre's staff on the operating procedures and the services provided for refugees.

“The Centre enables refugees to undergo personal interviews required for resettlement, in the safety of a stable environment rather than in a war zone or in sites where access is very challenging,” explains ICMC Europe Programme Manager, Petra Hueck. Jointly managed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Romanian Government and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the ETC was established in Timisoara in 2008 to provide a solution for refugees needing emergency evacuation. The centre provides a temporary safe haven for refugees pending final resettlement to a third country.

“Emergency procedures are a vital component of EU resettlement,” explains Hueck. “Europe has a great tradition in emergency resettlement and countries like Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, and Sweden can directly receive such cases within one week on a ‘dossier’ basis. Dossiers are case files sent by UNHCR to governments, which can accept these cases without needing personal interviews with the refugees. Other countries, including Canada, the UK and the US, can resettle emergency cases through the new ETC and organise for interviews there. Refugees still have to wait a considerable amount of time at the Center, however, and governments can still do more to speed up the process.

ICMC is working with various stakeholders from across Europe as part of a new project on practical cooperation, which looks at how more governments can be encouraged to use the ETC, in addition to taking urgent and emergency cases directly.

Fewer than one percent of the world's refugee population is given the opportunity to seek a new beginning in a safe third country. Nonetheless, refugee resettlement remains an important protection tool and source of hope that allows many of the most vulnerable to rebuild their lives, reunite with family after years of separation and regain a sense of hope for the future.

For more information on ICMC's work in refugee resettlement, please visit us online at [www.icmc.net](http://www.icmc.net).