

CCME Press Release of 25th June 2007

Refugee Resettlement to new EU Member States: Improved integration prospects essential for lasting success

Representatives of Churches, NGOs, governments and UNHCR from the new EU member states in Central and South East Europe met for a seminar in Prague to discuss refugee resettlement to the region. The seminar was part of the project "Refugee resettlement: broadening the basis in Europe", which is coordinated by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). It took place at a time when a number of the new EU member states in Central and South East Europe are working on legislation, which would allow them to receive refugees, who have fled their country of origin and found only temporary protection in another country, for permanent settlement in their country through referral by UNHCR.

Representatives of the Czech Ministry of Interior reported about their experiences of receiving refugees from Uzbekistan and Cuba in recent years through ad-hoc resettlement initiatives, while their Romanian counterparts shared insights into the new legislation, which provides the basis for refugee resettlement to Romania. Hungarian NGO representatives reported about proposals for a new asylum law in their country, supposed to be adopted this week, which foresees a small quota for resettling refugees into Hungary.

Experiences from all three countries underlined that a broader debate would be needed to achieve full benefit of refugee resettlement for both refugees and receiving countries. Despite considerable differences within the region, participants agreed that improved integration prospects for refugees would be essential for a lasting success of resettlement programmes. Father Cristian Popescu, Director of the Czech NGO SOZE and member of CCME's Executive committee explained: "It is good that countries in the region are beginning to do more for refugee protection by starting resettlement. However, if our countries are to become a real new home for those refugees, we need to do more to improve integration conditions for them."

Note to editors:

Refugee resettlement is the process by which refugees who have to flee their home country and find initial, but insufficient or temporary protection in another country, are resettled into a third country and find permanent protection and a durable, sustainable solution there. While around one hundred thousand refugees are annually resettled to the US, Canada and Australia, resettlement is since the 1960ies scarcely used in Europe: currently only six EU member states carry out resettlement, resettling around 3.500 refugees annually. The churches' Commission for migrants in Europe is since 2004 actively promoting resettlement as an additional tool for refugee protection in Europe. For more information contact Torsten Moritz at +32 2 2346800 or info@ccme.be



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The views expressed and information provided by the project and the partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the European Commission and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission.

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. Members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches and Councils of Churches as well as church-related agencies across Europe. CCME formally cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.