



Resettlement Newsletter

Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe

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For I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.

**Matthew
25:35b**



Karen refugees from Burma, in their traditional costumes, singing at the Ljusdal "World Day", (photo: Kenneth Forssell)

Time for Evaluation and Enhancing the Co-Operation!

Welcome the new volume of CCME' s Resettlement Newsletter!!!

...once again we will keep you updated for the next year on news regarding resettlement towards the Member States of the European Union. Our edition comes out while the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament (the working committee in the EP responsible for matters concerning Civil Liberties, Justice and Security) is preparing to vote on the European Commission's Proposal on the Establishment of a Joint European Resettlement Programme (JERP). The Committee's draftsman MEP Rui Tavares (GUE-PT), presented two draft reports: one on the Communication of the European Commission on the EU resettlement programme, and another one on the proposed amendments to the European Refugee Fund (ERF). With both reports, Tavares and the "shadow" rapporteurs of the other political groups seek to support the plans for an EU resettlement programme and call for more ambition in future EU activities.

In other – positive - news, Spain has formally committed for the first time to establishing an annual resettlement programme.

Against this background, CCME and its partners are completing the implementation of the ASPIRE Project (Assessing and Strengthening Participation In Refugee resettlement to Europe). The final series of national debate-events took place in France, Germany as well as Hungary. This newsletter will also be the last until further notice. In concluding the project, a coalition of NGO's, which constitute the ASPIRE Project Steering Group, met for a last evaluation in the framework of the project in Timisoara. As this meeting took place after the Working Group on Resettlement, it offered a chance to promote common views on resettlement policies at the global and European level.

It is now crucial to evaluate the current initiatives that have been undertaken during the last year in the EU, either in the framework of *ad-hoc* resettlement projects, or through the establishment of annual resettlement programmes. Through this evaluation, the major actors of refugee resettlement; governments, UNHCR and civil society, will be able to identify the best ways to enhance their co-operation so as to ensure continuity of existing schemes as well as to promote the establishment of more ambitious national programmes.

Enjoy the reading and farewell!

Best regards,

Torsten Moritz & Lilian Tsourdi

Spain: From a Potential to a Resettlement Country

On the 28th of January 2010 a new program of resettlement for refugees for the year 2010 was approved by the Spanish Council of Ministers (Acuerdo del Consejo de Ministros por el que se aprueba el Programa de Reasentamiento de refugiados en España para el año 2010),

(Continued in page 2)

Spain: From a Potential to a Resettlement Country

as an additional protection mechanism, under the framework provided by the recent and new Spanish Asylum Law dated on the 30th October 2009 (Ley 12/2009, de 30 de octubre, reguladora del derecho de asilo y de la protección subsidiaria).

These last legislative developments have been very much welcomed and have been qualified as very relevant by all the stakeholders traditionally involved. It should be noted, that even though Spain has been into resettlement practices and programmes since the 70s when the Spanish adhesion of the Geneva Convention in 1978 took place, either as first country of asylum or as a transit country (cases coming from Vietnam, Laos and Cuba for a temporary stay in Spain and cases of Polish, Romanian and Iranian nationals in order to facilitate their final resettlement in Canada, the United States and Australia), the character of those past practices were always only temporary or on *ad hoc* basis, in order to provide a possible protection for individuals, families or groups under special needs, risk and/or emergency situations responding either to particular international UNHCR calls and/or punctual direct referrals through UNHCR Spain and/or under the legal provision refer to the asylum claims through the Spanish Consulates.

Now we seem to face a new phase with a regular program sustainable over the following years where all the NGOs, UNCHR, IOM, as well as local municipalities expect to have the opportunity to collaborate and to be consulted along the process. In this first period 75 refugees are expected to benefit for the program along 2010. The selection will be accomplished through national selection missions composed by a

member-representative of the General Directorate of Internal Policy (Dirección General de Política Interior. www.mir.es), the Ministry of Interior together with the General Directorate of Integration of the Immigrants of the Ministry of Labour and Immigration supported by the Spanish Embassies and General Consulates. The subsequent reception and integration will be under the competence of the General Directorate of Integration of the Immigrants that will develop and manage the programs of orientation and integration that could be defined as necessary.

How will the new program be financed?

A total budget of 2.927.399, 86 EUR have been assigned for the period 2010-2012, part of this amount 694.600 EUR could be financed by the European Refugee Fund (Decisión nº 573/2007/CE establece un Fondo Europeo para los Refugiados para el período 2008-2013), following the criteria established by the European Commission.

Considering the momentum and the way forward, ACCEM (www.accem.es) is at the moment on the process of publishing a national research to analyze the capacities and opportunities of a Spanish program on resettlement. The research will include a comparative revision of the central elements involved on the process and procedures in reference to the international and European examples, outcomes and best practices that could be transposed as well as a mapping of the actual reception and integration facilities as well as assistance services to vulnerable groups.

Reyes Castillo (ACCEM)

CCME resettlement factsheets

As a response to the need to explain resettlement in an easily digestible format, CCME has produced a series of „resettlement factsheets“:

The factsheets contain concise information on various aspects of resettlement :

- what is resettlement
- what is Europe´s role in resettlement
- who are the actors in resettlement
- what are the different steps of resettlement
- the personal story behind resettlement

Printed copies are still available in English, French and German,(5 A4 pages per language, each printed on both sides).

Pdf.-files with the Czech , Italian and Spanish translations are also available. (see: <http://www.ccme.be/secretary/NEWS/index.html>; enquiries at: info@ccme.be)



Debate on refugee resettlement in France



Round table with French Ministry of immigration

Round table on refugee resettlement in France: Positive political engagement has to be accompanied by improved selection process, adequate reception structures and stronger partnership with the NGOs

A round table on refugee resettlement to France, organized by Forum réfugiés and CCME on 15th December 2009, brought together some 50 representatives of the French government and administration, the representatives of the UNHCR, the European Commission, civil society and non governmental organizations.

The debate, first of this kind in France, took place in the perspective of second anniversary of the French annual resettlement program. Indeed, on 4th of February 2010 is going to be two years since France launched its first annual resettlement program with fixed quotas in partnership with the UNHCR. With this perspective, the round table seemed a suitable moment to inform about French resettlement policy and to try to assess, with the concerned partners, its outcomes. Beside an evaluation, the aim of this round table

was also to inform on the global resettlement needs (by Mr. Vincent Cochetel, from UNHCR Geneva) and to present the European Resettlement Program and a pilot project to relocate refugees from Malta (by Ms. Marie-Hélène Pradines, European Commission).

General context of resettlement in France

Olivier Brachet, former Director of Forum réfugiés and professor of Refugee law in France, underlined in his speech that France has significant experiences in resettlement. He pointed out the resettlement operations of Hungarian refugees in 1956, Chileans in 1973, Boat people from Indochina in 1975 and most recently refugees from Kosovo in 1999. However, it was only in 2008, and after persistent advocacy of a non governmental organization Forum réfugiés and UNHCR Office in France that French government launched an annual program with fixed quotas. This means that 100 "cases" should be examined yearly and allowed refugees under UNHCR mandate to be resettled in France and start with a "normal" life.

An overview done by Ms. Veronique Robert, from UNHCR France, confir-

med the political will of France to participate at a global refugee protection. Beside an annual national resettlement program, which by 20 November 2009 enabled 211 refugees to be resettled in France, France initiated another unilateral resettlement operation. This special operation, so called "l'opération Irak 500" started in June 2008 and it welcomed Iraqi refugees from the Middle East. Initially some 500 refugees' members of the threatened minorities and vulnerable groups of people had to be resettled to France in 2008. Finally, and according to Mr. Jean-Pierre Guardiola, at the time responsible of the Asylum service at the Ministry of Immigration, 1.200 persons from Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey should be resettled in France by April 2010 within this special operation.

To show solidarity with the southern countries of Europe, France launched in 2009 another special operation to relocate 95 persons who obtained international protection in Malta. The refugees mainly from Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea arrived in France in July 2009 and were received in specific structures in Oissel, Poitiers and Nanterre.

Positive dynamic needs to be accompanied by the adequate reception and specific integration program

Although the participants agreed on a positive dynamic of the French government in refugee resettlement, some interventions showed that much more can be done in terms of selection process and reception of the resettled refugees.

Ms. Petra Hueck, a project Manager from International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), showed the practices of several so called "traditional resettlement countries". Through cases of Netherlands, Finland and Sweden she illustrated how dependent are the well organized selection procedure and the success-

Debate on refugee resettlement in France

ful reception and integration of refugees in resettlement countries.

A good example of the partnership and involvement of the NGOs in the selection procedure was presented by Ms. Anne La Cour from the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). In Denmark, where a national resettlement program exists since the 70s, the DRC participates together with the Danish Immigration Service at the selection missions. This partnership between the government and NGO sector does not (yet) exist in France. For the time being only Ministry of Immigration sets the selection criteria and decides by its own on a dossier basis which "case" will be resettled to France.

That the stronger partnership and information sharing should be restored between the French government and a civil society, proved also Ms. Fardous. A testimony of this Iraqi refugee who was resettled in France from Jordan in September 2008, pointed out several deficiency of a French national resettlement policy. For Ms. Fardous and her daughter their resettlement was troubling as they did not receive sufficient cultural and linguistic orientations, information on their obligations and explanations of administrative steps to be undertaken upon their arrival in France, especially with regard to the procedure of "reconfirming" their refugee status. Even today their situation is still not very easy

as their integration was not planned well enough to be suited to their specific needs.

The difficulties that were encountered by the resettled refugees were also observed by the two biggest NGOs working with refugees and asylum seekers, Forum réfugiés and France Terre d'Asile. Raphaëlle Goyet (for Forum réfugiés) and Matthieu Tardis (for France terre d'asile) insisted that the improvement of the French national resettlement policy will come with well prepared pre-departure linguistic and cultural courses, less complex procedures for reconfirming the refugee status, specific reception accommodations and specific integration programs for resettled refugees.

What are the perspectives of the French resettlement policy?

According to Mr. Guardiola, France will in 2010 guide its resettlement policy in accordance with the selection criteria set in the European fund for refugees. Therefore, it is expected that France welcomes in the future more vulnerable groups of refugees, in particular the one arriving from the countries of Regional Protection Programs. Mr. Guardiola shared with us that first refugees who should be resettled in France in 2010 are most probably to be Palestinians from Al Waleed camp, which is located in Iraq, near the Syrian border.

But what should be the future objectives of the French resettlement policy, beside the numbers of resettled refugees? This round table showed

that the real challenge for the French government is to improve the quality of its resettlement process and integration measures. France should go further in its endeavors and in that try to be inspired by good practices of countries with long experiences in resettlement, in particular our Scandinavian neighbors.

In the context of the necessity to improve French resettlement program, the NGOs consider they have also an important role to play. Forum réfugiés invites the French government to continue to strengthen its relation with the NGOs working with resettled populations. The first step has been already done. In order to provide resettled refugees with liable information about their "settlement" in France, Forum réfugiés together with IOM and the Ministry of Immigration has published an information guide. This brochure which is now distributed by IOM to refugees to be resettled in France was translated in English and Arabic and it gives necessary information on the trip, the reception conditions, the administrative procedures, the integration and life in general in France.

And this partnership has to go further. That is why Forum réfugiés will shortly publish the first report on resettlement in France. Beside the description of the three existing "resettlement" operations in France (the annual resettlement program, the special operation for Iraqis and the relocation from Malta), the aim of this report was to identify the present difficulties of the resettlement and to propose concrete solutions for an improved resettlement in France.



Round table in Paris:
sharing civil society perspectives

Suzana Crassard & Raphaëlle Goyet
(*Forum Refugiés*)

What perspectives for emergency resettlement ? "Spring" working group on resettlement analyses mixed results

This year's "spring" working group on resettlement signalled a historic moment in the life of the group, which usually meets twice a year between the annual tripartite consultations. For the first time ever, the group met outside Geneva. Timisoara, host to the emergency transit centre (ETC, see CCME resettlement newsletter of October 2009), was the venue for the meeting on 10th and 11th March. The host city of the ETC was a fitting location for discussing the current situation and future of emergency resettlement. In the high-level opening of the working group the Romanian Prime Minister Boc, the Minister of the Interior and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs underlined Romania's humanitarian commitment in hosting the ETC.

The Romanian Prime Minister, Dr. Emil Boc, addressing the plenary of the spring Working Group in Timisoara.



UNHCR had in a discussion note highlighted the success of emergency transit facilities (with Slovakia and the Philippines hosting smaller facilities in addition to the ETC Timisoara), but at the same time expressed concern that still only a very limited number of emergency resettlement spaces are offered by resettlement countries. The discussion paper also voiced regret about lengthy procedure, which even "emergency" resettlement often entailed. Discussions focused on possibilities and limits of expanding emergency resettlement, with regrettably only few states willing to reconsider their current practice. NGOs underlined the need to have sufficient spaces and speedy procedures for those refugees for whom emergency resettlement literally often was a question of life and death.

In other business sessions, the working group discussed the future format of the annual tripartite consultation and working group on resettlement. A number of delegations had expressed some reservation about continuing the meetings in the current format, as it had outgrown its initial size: while the growth signaled a success of the meeting as such, it had become increasingly difficult to maintain a momentum of interactive co-operation.

The meeting of the working group also provided space for networking on the fringes: a joint IOM-UNHCR-ICMC on practical cooperation on resettlement was launched prior to the working group, (<http://www.icmc.net/article/icmc-europe-undertakes-new-project-with-iom-unhcr>), an expert meeting on refugees with medical needs as well as the ASPIRE project reference group met after the working group event.

Torsten Moritz (CCME)

Why should Europe resettle more refugees?

- 1) Resettlement can provide protection to those in greatest need: the most vulnerable and those in protracted refugee situations.
- 2) Resettlement is a way for Europe to demonstrate its solidarity and take its share of its responsibility in the provision of this durable solution to the world's refugees.
- 3) Resettlement provides access to Europe for refugees.
- 4) Resettlement provides the opportunity for good, co-ordinated and quality reception and integration programmes to be developed.
- 5) Resettlement is an important means of facilitating public understanding of all refugees, their plight and the situations they flee.

(CCME, based on ECRE's "Way forward")

Roundtable on Refugee Resettlement in Hungary



Dr. Marta Pardavi, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Dr. Torsten Moritz, CCME and Mr Silviu Turza from the Romanian Immigration Office during a panel session

A debate on refugee resettlement to Hungary on 1 March 2010 in Budapest brought together representatives of the Hungarian government, the UN refugee agency UNHCR, civil society organisations and other EU member states.

The Hungarian national roundtable on resettlement was held on 1 March 2010 as the last event in a series of debates on refugee resettlement to Europe. The event was co-organised by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) in the framework of the ASPIRE project.

The Hungarian event took place in a setting largely influenced by the recent discussions on an EU resettlement programme, in particular the respective proposals currently debated in the European Parliament.

Mr Gottfried Köfner, UNHCR Regional Representative for Central Europe, in his keynote speech highlighted the history of refugee resettlement in Europe and how resettlement is a tool to expand protection space for refugees in Europe. Köfner recalled that the 200,000 Hungarian refugees, having fled the country after the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, also found new lives due to an effective resettlement programme.

Speaking about the prospects of Hungary becoming a resettlement country, the representative of the

Hungarian Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement, Ms Petra Jeney expressed doubt that Hungary would commit to an ongoing resettlement programme on the short term, due partly to the lack of politically driven initiative and an integration strategy as well as the current bleak economic climate. However, she did not exclude participation on a project-based approach for smaller groups of refugees. Hungary's participation in the intra-EU relocation project from Malta was referred to as an example of involvement in EU-led initiatives.

The roundtable debate also looked at the interplay of national policies and EU cooperation in selection, reception and integration of resettled refugees. Representatives of the embassies of Sweden and Belgium shared insights on their countries' national resettlement pro-

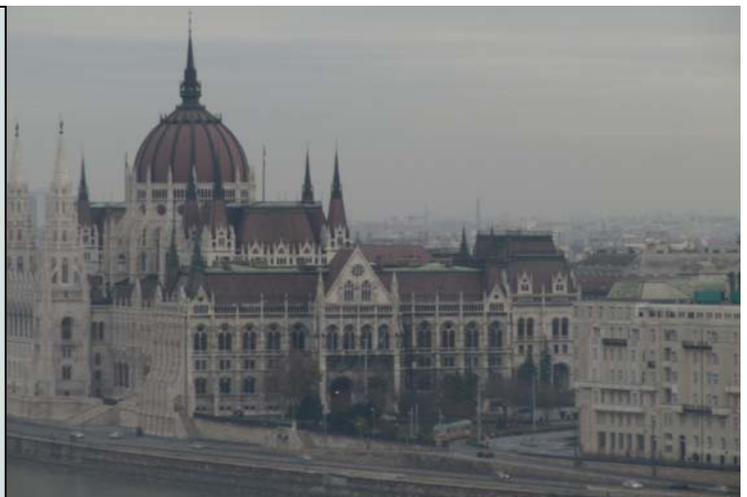
grammes and underlined the importance which resettlement had and has in their recent and upcoming EU presidencies.

Considerable attention was devoted during the event to taking stock of the particular situation of newer EU member states engaging in resettlement: senior civil servants from the Czech and the Romanian governments reported about the resettlement programmes, which their countries had started in the last two years. While the Czech Republic's participation in resettlement is "a drop in the ocean", explained Mr Petr Novák from the Ministry of Interior, it carries a symbolic value and shows the country's solidarity with refugees and victims of human rights abuses. Mr Silviu Turza from the Romanian Immigration Office gave an overview of the Romanian legal framework for resettlement, explaining the processes for selection, reception and integration of the group of Burmese refugees to be resettled from Malaysia to Romania in early 2010.

The participants expressed their appreciation for the event, which presented an opportunity to discuss resettlement and practical experiences with colleagues from both within Hungary and abroad.

Marta Pardavi (*Hungarian Helsinki Committee*)

View of Budapest, venue of the Hungarian Roundtable on Resettlement



World day in Ljusdal, Sweden – a practical example of meeting between different cultures

The small municipality Ljusdal is located in the middle of Sweden and has some 19 000 inhabitants. Ljusdal has no long tradition of migration, but has since 2003 received more than 330 refugees. Over 250 of those are resettled quota-refugees who have arrived directly to the local community. Today Ljusdal has over 100 people with origin from Burma, and over 60 Afghans as well as some 15 Iranians. Several people from different countries in Africa have also been resettled in Ljusdal, for instance around 15 persons from Sudan, 20 persons from Somalia and also a smaller number from Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In addition, many people from Thailand and some Kurds from different countries have chosen to move to Ljusdal. All together, one can hear over 40 different languages spoken in Ljusdal today.

Over the last five years, the Refugee Section of the Ljusdal municipality has, together with other organisations, developed a well-functioning method for equipping the newly arrived refugees with “tools” for handling their own situation and their own daily life. This method contains massive societal information-both practical and theoretical-, language classes and vocational training. However, in my opinion, this is not enough for shaping real integration, because the two-way-process of integration requires actual face to face meetings between people. The Refugee-Section therefore tries to encourage all sorts of meetings between people and cultures.

When city developer Daniel Swärd at *NärLjus*, the local economic political foundation responsible for the overall framework of city development, came up with an idea to have a *World-day* in Ljusdal, the Refugee Section instantly took the opportunity to make its contribution to that. After some deliberations, the goal for the *World-day* was set: to show to the general public the variety and unique character of the several cultures that co-exist in Ljusdal municipality by mixing the local culture with all the new inputs from refugees and other migrants. We wanted to give possibilities for all existing cultures in Ljusdal to show their food, singing, dancing, craftsmanship and their traditional costumes: Every organisation, authority or NGO that would agree with this goal was then welcome to join in and make this day a real meeting between cultures and between people.

The practical organisation and preparations for the event were made by several persons working in the following organisations: **Ljusdal municipality** (Refugee-Section, Cultural Section), **NärLjus** (Ljusdal in the Center – Business Foundation), **VIF** (Friendship and integration society), **Vuxenskolan** (Adult Educational Association), **Solhuset** (Local Fair Trade house and society) and **Red Cross Ljusdal**.

The event took place at the market square in central town Ljusdal on Saturday 29 August, from 10.00 in the morning until 15.15 in the afternoon. Fortunately, the weather kept steady and the event could take place as planned. The cultural programme for the day included songs, dance and play performed by Burmese Chin, music from Afghanistan/Turkmenistan, rap-musicians from Sudan and Spain, songs and dance from Burmese Karen, as well as Swedish singing and dancing.

For everyone that came to participate to the events that day, it was obvious that this was nothing but a huge success! Over 100 Burmese people from different ethnic groups showed up in their traditional costumes, and many Burmese from surrounding communities came to attend the event. Afghan/Turkmen Sahi Khan, dressed traditionally, played excellently an instrument from his region, Du-tar. The Afghan participants had cooked a variety of traditional dishes, so that everyone could have a taste. Also Sudanese food, Thai food and Burmese traditional food was available for free. Another noticed attraction during the day was the exhibition arranged by the Karen Swedish community (KSC). The Swedish element of the day consisted of amongst others: craftsmanship, different art exhibitions, presentation of locally produced products-for instance honey, singing from youth/children and different kinds of exhibitions from several NGO's. Swedish missionary Ingvar Skeppstedt and his wife Ewa shared their experiences of six years of humanitarian work in the Karen area at the Thai/Burma border. During the day, many curious local people came to see what all the music and singing was about. An estimated more than 700 people visited this event, which is very good for being little Ljusdal. The atmosphere was relaxed and many people made new friends during that day.

The event was a good example on how to give insensitive to the local community to get actively involved with resettled refugees. This meeting between different cultures showed that refugees truly enrich communities and that local societies can benefit from their presence. Host societies have many things to learn, not just to teach. At the end of the day several people I talked to spontaneously said the same thing: This was so much fun. Let us make this a tradition in Ljusdal. Let us have this World day every year!

Kenneth Forssell, *Refugee-Coordinator, Ljusdal*

ASPIRE Project: Report, Evaluation and Future Challenges



Participants at a plenary session during the CCME-UNHCR co-organised Expert Seminar on Refugee Resettlement, which took place in Riga, 11-12 May 2009

Portuguese Refugee Council), France (with Forum Refugies), Germany (with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Protestant Church in Germany-EKD) and Hungary (with the Hungarian Helsinki Committee). The debates took stock of the particular national context and they provided a space for reflection on ways to mobilise political will for countries that had not yet established resettlement programmes and evaluation and experience-sharing for countries that were just beginning to engage in resettlement. Participants included governmental officials and representatives of municipal authorities, as well UNHCR and NGO representatives.

In addition, an Expert Seminar in the Baltic States was organized together with UNHCR and an EU-wide Conference on Resettlement was organized together with the Church of Sweden and the Swedish Council of Churches. The first event prepared the ground for a future involvement of all 3 Baltic States in resettlement. The conference in Stockholm-Sigtuna at the beginning of the Swedish EU Presidency helped to provide input on the development of the EU "Stockholm Programme", which makes clear reference to resettlement and asks for progress reports on it. Moreover, it offered the opportunity to various stakeholders to dis-

Project Objective and Intended Impact

The ASPIRE (Assessing and Strengthening Participation In Refugee resettlement to Europe) project, coordinated by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), was completed in mid-March. The project sought to enhance knowledge, information and public debate on policies as well as practice of resettlement. The intended impact of the action was to build support for resettlement in more EU Member States and stabilise support in countries which have recently committed to resettlement, while at the same time encouraging involvement of all actors in resettlement. In addition, it aimed at broadening the basis for an EU-wide coordination of Member States' resettlement activities. This was achieved by a two-fold approach that was adopted throughout the duration of the project. It included, on the one hand, the sharing of existing information on resettlement policy and practice – both in a more comprehensive form (brochures, factsheets) and in an updated form (newsletter). On

the other hand, it consisted of the organisation of national debate-events of experts and multipliers in a number of selected EU Member States.

Project Outputs

Throughout the duration of the project six national debate-events were organized by CCME and its project partners in Romania (with ARCA), Belgium (with Flemish Refugee Action), Portugal (with the



Mr. Razvan Samoila, Director-ARCA, Mr. Machiel Salomons, UNHCR representative in Romania and Dr. Torsten Moritz- Executive Secretary, CCME, at the debate-event, which took place in Romania on the 30th April 2009

ASPIRE Project: Report, Evaluation and Future Challenges



A family-choir of refugees resettled to Lulea/Sweden, at the opening plenary of the EU-wide Conference "Towards the European Resettlement Scheme", which took place in Sigtuna 25-28 August 2009

discuss the current developments regarding resettlement in Europe and deliberated on the details around an emerging European Resettlement Scheme. Regarding the information-sharing aspect of the project, the "Resettlement Newsletter" appeared five times; it was sent to some 250 persons as e-mail and/or print-out. Furthermore, around 600 copies of the existing publications on resettlement (Factsheets on resettlement) were distributed to multipliers at events and on request. Finally, the Project Steering Group, chaired by ECRE, met 3 times and evaluated the progress of the project at different stages.

Future Challenges

The project has considerably contributed to the discussion on resettlement across the EU and managed to take up some national dynamics in other member states. It has also demonstrated the potential of more EU-wide coordination and managed to create a forum for cooperation of a diversity of stakeholders. It has, in this way contributed to the advancement of resettlement at both national and EU level.

However, the project implementation revealed a number of challenges that are still lying ahead and will influence resettlement policy and practice in the near future. Firstly, unforeseen factors, namely the economic crisis, had a deep impact in the debate and will continue to affect national policies in the following years. This is particularly the case for emerging resettlement countries, but it will also mean effectively dealing with "cuts" in the budget of established programmes. In addition, although a moderate programme in terms of

numbers is perhaps a good way to go about during the first phase of the establishment of a national programme, if Europe is going to show effective solidarity to third countries and in order for co-ordinated action to have an impact we need to achieve the establishment of more ambitious national programmes. Furthermore, tripartite structures are not a given and should be promoted also in the emerging resettlement Member States. In this aspect it is important to promote the benefits and added value of NGO involvement as exhibited by the existing experience. Moreover, internal relocation is gaining momentum. The difference between the two concepts needs to be highlighted and it has to be ensured that existing national quota will not be used for internal relocation, thus limiting further the quite moderate numbers of resettled refugees to the EU. Finally, another important challenge is the potential use of resettlement as an "alternative" to offering access to asylum procedures. The need to safeguard the possibility for asylum seekers who arrive spontaneously to claim asylum at the border should be stressed and the concept of resettlement, which is a complementary form of protection should be distinguished.

Reflections by: Torsten Moritz & Lilian Tsourdi (CCME)

Participants at the opening session of the conference "Resettlement in Portugal: Challenges and Opportunities", which took place at the Portuguese Parliament on the 27th of May, 2009





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CCME office (red building on the left) in front of the European Commission Headquarters (Berlaymont)

FAQ—frequently asked questions....

1) What is CCME?

CCME, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, refugees and asylum, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. CCME members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, diaconal agencies and Councils of Churches in presently 19 European countries. CCME is in the process of becoming a commission of the Conference of European Churches and cooperates with the World Council of Churches.

2) What is ASPIRE ?

The ASPIRE project ("Assessing and Strengthening Participation In refugee Resettlement to Europe") enhances knowledge and political debate in EU member states to engage in refugee resettlement - as an additional instrument of refugee protection.

It includes activities to

- *Analyse in which member states debates suggest an openness towards resettlement*
- *Promote existing policies and best practice in these member states (through sharing of materials and knowledge)*
- *Bring governmental and non-governmental actors in member states with a recent interest in*

resettlement into debate with one another on selected issues on resettlement

- *Provide continued updated information on resettlement to non-specialised public which is generally interested in refugee protection*
- *Provide a forum of discussion and exchange for governmental actors, civil society actors and UNHCR to explore the role, structure and added value of a European resettlement scheme*

3) What is Refugee Resettlement?

It's one of the 3 traditional durable solutions for refugees, along with the local integration in the country of asylum and repatriation. Basically, it's a transfer of refugees from their country of first asylum to a third country that has agreed to admit them with a long term or permanent resident status. Resettlement provides protection for refugees whose safety is immediately at risk and it is a tool of international protection in a context of burden sharing among states.

4) What Resettlement is not...

Resettlement is not the same as seeking refugee status through the asylum system, nor is it a more legal process for accessing asylum

rights and can never substitute a spontaneous request of asylum.. Resettlement is not synonymous with "Temporary protection" classifications.

Resettlement cannot become a system of profiling refugees in accordance to their nationality or religion in order to create more or less valuable categories of refugees. Resettlement is based exclusively on the protection needs of the refugees.

5) Which are the Resettlement countries?

The countries that traditionally host resettlement programs are : Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and USA. Those countries are called the "traditional ones". Countries such as Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal and UK have in recent years started programmes. Others, among them several EU member states, are currently considering or starting them...

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

General info on resettlement

<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/3bb2eadd6.html>

On the CCME project

<http://www.ccme.be/secretary/NEWS>



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