**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Researcher on Municipal Housing Policies**

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| **Job title** | Researcher |
| **Duty Station** | Sofia, Bulgaria |
| **Start Date** | 1 November 2019 |
| **Contract Length** | 2 months (or until 31st December 2019) |
| **Contract Type** | Individual contractor – part time |

**Background**

*The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)* is entrusted by the United Nations General Assembly with the responsibility for assisting governments in seeking permanent solutions to the problems of refugees. Local integration represents one of the three durable solutions, alongside repatriation and resettlement, and is considered to be most relevant in the Bulgarian context.

UNHCR Executive Committee’s Conclusion on Local Integration underlines that the ultimate goal of integration is the achievement of a level of self-reliance which will contribute towards enhancing refugees’ protection and dignity, help refugees manage their time spent in exile effectively and constructively, decrease dependency and enhance the sustainability of any future durable solutions. Guaranteeing the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living is of primary importance to achieve this goal.

UNHCR in Bulgaria has been working closely with its counterparts to address the lack of a Government sponsored integration programme in order to improve the lives of refugees. Sofia Municipality is one of them. As the largest municipality in Bulgaria, it is at the forefront of both decentralization processes, but also hosting the largest number of refugees and migrants. In the context of a lacking National Housing Strategy, Sofia Municipality has developed a local Concept Note on Housing Policies in the Area of Municipal Housing Fund (dated 25/01/2018). It acknowledges the low affordability of housing from an economic point of view, but also the inaccessibility of municipal housing fund (which amounts to 3% of the overall inhabitable housing fund). It foresees the introduction of a new access model to municipal housing to be regulated in a new Ordinance on the Terms and conditions for Accommodation in Municipal Housing on the Territory of Sofia Municipality, which is to include new priority target groups and criteria for accommodation. This process is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

**Purpose and Scope of the Assignment**

In order to ensure the inclusion of refugees, especially those in a disadvantaged situation and at a serious risk of homelessness and social exclusion, as a priority target group under the new Ordinance, UNHCR aims to provide assistance with identifying working inclusion models for refugees in other European Union (EU) Member-States’ (MSs) local housing policies. Exploring good practices from other countries and local authorities will also shed light on the effective criteria for inclusion of refugees in the municipal housing policies in a non-discriminatory way.

**Key Deliverables**

A report (in Bulgarian and in English language) on available refugee-inclusive municipal housing policies in other EU MSs, including in Bulgaria, with a focus on good examples, including an overview of European strategic documents, trends and policies in the area of housing for migrants with a focus on refugees. The report should propose a number of concrete recommendations for legislative amendments, taking into consideration the national legislation in the area of municipal property, spatial planning and regional development, among others. It should also aim to identify good practices on a national level.

**Requirements and Experience**

The following qualifications are required from the incumbent of the position:

* Good knowledge of housing related legislation in Europe and in Bulgaria;
* Good knowledge of local legislation in Bulgaria;
* Scientific experience in conducting research of similar nature;
* Excellent writing, analytical, data processing skills;
* Excellent command of spoken and written Bulgarian and English;
* Completed master’s degree in law, international relations, social sciences, or related fields. A PhD in the above fields is an asset.

**Application**

Interested applicants should submit their [Personal History Form (P11)](https://www.unhcr.org/ceu/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2018/09/UNHCR_Personal_History_Form.docm)and its supplementary pages (if applicable), accompanied by a Letter of Interest by **7 November 2019** to bulso@unhcr.org with the subject line “**Application for Housing Research**”.

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified. No late applications will be accepted.

The UNHCR workforce consists of many diverse nationalities, cultures, languages and opinions. UNHCR seeks to sustain and strengthen this diversity to ensure equal opportunities as well as an inclusive working environment for its entire workforce.

Applications are encouraged from all qualified candidates without distinction on grounds of race, colour, sex, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

UNHCR does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process (application, interview meeting, processing, training or any other fees).