**Guidelines: Refugee Advisory Board (RAB) in Bulgaria**

Are you actively engaged in advocating for refugee rights? Are you a refugee advocate or working in a refugee led organization? Are you interested in deepening and broadening your knowledge and expertise for advocacy on asylum and integration? And interested to motivate other refugees to be active and give them a voice?

**Then this is for you!**

**Purpose and Priorities of the Bulgarian Refugee Advisory Board**

The **Refugee Advisory Board (RAB)** is a new project supporting the leadership of refugees in policy development that directly impacts the inclusion and wellbeing of these communities, with a focus on urban integration. The Board will function with the support of and under the supervision of UNHCR Bulgaria.

**General Background**

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, leads international action to protect people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) calls for refugees to be directly involved in the pursuit of the GCR’s objectives. The proposed project aims to set up a Refugee Advisory Board in Bulgaria consisting of a diverse group of settled refugees who are trained, active and interested to undertake a number of advocacy activities. The project aims to strengthen UNHCR’s accountability to affected populations in Bulgaria, build on the skills and capacities of forcibly displaced people and actively pursue innovative ways to amplify their voices.

Forced migration has preoccupied policy makers and administrations, and prompted enormous policy reform, yet refugees are themselves often excluded from this policy debate and formulation, particularly those in more recent refugee and migrant populations. The RAB responds to this need by creating a platform for refugees with demonstrated track records of working for/with refugee communities. The aim is to improve integration through stronger participation of and consultation with refugee and migrant communities. In addition, it will provide training and professional development for its members. Over time, the goal is that all members will become a cohort of experienced and recognized leaders who represent refugee communities, benefitting the individual, the refugees and the receiving communities more broadly.

**Experience and skills**

* Experience working in Human Rights, advocacy or civil society, governmental or inter- and non-governmental organizations;
* The ability to prepare rigorous, clear, succinct written analysis, including providing advice and actionable recommendations to policy-makers;
* Good knowledge of international relations, European and/or national policies and practice on refugee protection, migration and related issues;
* Fluency in written and spoken English is essential. Knowledge of other languages is a strong advantage, especially proficiency in Bulgarian (as one of the main aims is to provide the opportunity to work directly with relevant Bulgarian institutions).

**Eligibility Criteria**

1. **Residence and personal documents:**
* Legal residence (asylum-seeker, beneficiary of international protection, including those who have obtained Bulgarian citizenship.
* Мinimum period of legal residence in Bulgaria of one year.
1. **Intentions and commitments**
* Willingness to remain in Bulgaria in the foreseeable future.
* Strong desire to work in support of the refugee community and for its empowerment.
* Previous experience in supporting refugees is an asset (e.g. employment in the humanitarian sector; volunteering; personal initiatives; etc.).
1. **Professional background and skills:**
* Basic computer skills are an asset.
* Experience in the Bulgarian labour market is an asset.

As part of the selection process UNHCR will take into account the diversity and equal representation of various refugee groups within the RAB in terms of:

* **Gender balance;**
* **Age groups;**
* **Specific needs;**
* **Country of origin.**

The application and members selection schedule is as follows:

* Application closes: April 15, 2020
* Short-listed interviews: By mid-May, 2020
* Refugee Advisory Board start: June, 2020

The first RAB will be between 12 and 18 months in duration.

RAB all Members will engage in the following initiatives:

•  **Advocacy:** The Refugee Advisory Board will advise the involved organizations/institutions and its members with the goal of developing and launching policies and initiatives that are successful in addressing the inclusion of migrants and refugees and that will be acknowledged and utilized by the beneficiaries. In order to increase its efficiency, the Advisory Board will be directly involved in the discussion of policymaking.

•  **Community outreach**: all RAB Members will reach out to and closely work with refugee communities with the aim to identify their needs, ensure their representation, refer them to available support and inform proposed policy and advocacy initiatives. They will be seen as legitimate and reliable intermediaries between the community and the institutions and organizations working on their behalf and/or providing support.

The main tasks and commitments of the **Refugee Advisory Board** will be to:

* Design ToRs of the RAB with the assistance of an external expert and UNHCR;
* Attend all the trainings provided by a specialized training institution;
* Develop one-year Action Plan of the Refugee Advisory Board;
* Jointly carry out a refugee needs assessment.

**What we offer:**

This is a voluntarily basis involvement as well as a unique life changing experience.

* You will **collaborate with UNHCR Bulgaria** and external stakeholders to create and work together on initiatives that reflect your field of expertise and experience, as well as the needs of the community you are working with.
* Being a member of the Advisory Board will provide you with the opportunity to have an impact on local, national and international policy by advising on existing policy, and proposing ways to improve refugees and migrant lives. Participation in the RAB will offer you an opportunity to expand your networks at the **national and EU levels**.
* You will have the unique opportunity to participate in a **tailor-made training programme** with a focus on leadership, advocacy, communication, decision-making skills and refugee protection and integration for free.
* The opportunity to **propose an independent project** that aims to improve refugee and migrant integration policy or practice at the city or regional level. The implementation of the independent project requires prior approval by UNHCR. Members will be encouraged to continue to work closely with their team as well as existing experts in the field, such as community groups, organizations, or associations.
* All members will receive a symbolic honorarium.
* Your travel & accommodation costs for participation in all activities under the RAB will be covered by UNHCR, whenever necessary.

For further details please contact **Emiliya Bratanova van Harten** at bratanov@unhcr.org or 0877 258 513 or **Iva Partsaleva** at lazarova@unhcr.org or 0878 435 883.

Each application will be reviewed. Finalists will be interviewed by an international selection committee. Applicants must submit their applications using our online application, available at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSebgxMuntQAL2GGt_2UWSqHlzrXalbnRK3e1SkVCHhpCjOfhA/viewform?usp=sf_link>