

A Joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project

“Promotion of practical cooperation in EU resettlement”

Update July 2011 – 18 months into the project



The implementation of the joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project “Promotion of practical cooperation in EU resettlement” is currently nearing its conclusion.

The project that is funded by the European Refugee Fund and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (**IOM**), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**) and the International Catholic Migration Commission (**ICMC**), promotes multi-stakeholder practical cooperation in EU resettlement. In the project, established resettlement countries (Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK)) worked together with countries that have started in resettlement more recently (France, Belgium, Romania and Portugal) and with countries that have not engaged in resettlement yet (Hungary, Poland and Slovakia).

The main objective of the project was the promotion of cooperation and sharing of good practices by all resettlement actors, both at national and local levels, in all stages of the resettlement process, from joint selection missions to exchange of best practices in the reception and integration of resettled refugees. Particular attention was given to possible activities at the Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) in Timisoara, where one of the meetings of the project took place in March 2010.

One of these activities involved the video conferencing tool (VCT), which UNHCR has installed at the ETC as part of the project. The Dutch government has used the VCT for a pilot on conducting resettlement selection interviews by video link. The pilot took place in February 2011, when a Dutch delegation travelled to the ETC to select refugees for resettlement - part of them via selection interviews in situ and part of them through interviews via video link with a team in the Netherlands. The Hungarian government joined the selection mission as observers. The pilot was considered a success and the Dutch government intends to conduct more resettlement interviews by video-link. The UK government is also planning to use the videoconferencing equipment at the ETC, possibly for resettlement interviewing and/ or as part of the cultural orientation process: a Q&A session will take place between refugees in the ETC and NGOs and previously resettled refugees in the receiving communities in the UK.

ICMC organized a training for local resettlement service-providers in reception and integration in Sintra, Portugal in June 2010. Over 45 participants and facilitators from 13 different countries from across Europe and from Canada gathered for three days of knowledge-sharing and exchange of practices around the reception and integration of resettled refugees.



The training was followed by national multi-stakeholder meetings, which were organized by ICMC and the UNHCR country offices. These meetings are intended to improve the coordination between all stakeholders in the pre- and post-arrival phase of resettlement. The national multi-stakeholder meetings have been organized in Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, UK, Hungary, the Netherlands and most recently in France and Belgium. Stakeholders from a variety of different organizations participated: UNHCR, IOM, Governments, NGOs, local authorities, churches, housing organisations, police, health and social services as well as other actors that can play a role in the reception and integration of resettled refugees. The meetings dealt with different specific issues depending on the national needs.

The project facilitated several study visits that were open for participation by all interested project partners. In December 2010 a study visit took place to the reception and integration programme of the UK- *implemented by local authority – NGO partnerships in Sheffield and Manchester, with participation* of governments and NGO representatives from Romania, Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

In April 2011, a study visit took place to the LANDA project in Gävle, Sweden by government and NGO representatives from Belgium, Hungary, Portugal, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and the UK. The LANDA project covers cooperation between actors in the three phases of resettlement, leaving, landing and living and is a project run by the County of Gävleborg and the Swedish Migration Board. The study visit allowed for an exchange of practices on the involvement of local authorities and the receiving communities in all phases of the resettlement processes.

In May 2011, Portugal and Belgium visited the UNHCR Hub in Beirut to prepare for accepting refugees through dossier submissions and to guarantee good cooperation and communication between the governments of Portugal and Belgium and the UNHCR field office in Beirut. Representatives of the Swedish Migration Board joined the study visit to share its good practices with regard to processing time and acceptance rate of dossier submissions.

Last but not least, ICMC has collated promising practices, interviews and experiences on the reception and integration of resettled refugees in Europe, but also including some practices from Australia, Canada and the US, in a handbook: "Paving the Way". This Handbook, was published and launched at the final conference of the project, which took place in Brussels on the 6th and 7th of June 2011.

The handbook introduces resettlement, integration concepts and the basics in service provision. It is then structured into key thematic areas on integration – community, housing, cultural orientation, education, language, employment and health. Within these key areas there is simple guidance and information on the topic, and then a number of practical examples of projects in the relevant area. The manual can be found at: <http://www.icmc.net/pubs/paving-way-a-handbook-reception-and-integration-resettled-refugees>.

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