

FACTSHEET: BETTER PROTECTING REFUGEES IN THE EU AND GLOBALLY

UNHCR's proposals to rebuild trust through better management, partnership and solidarity



2015 WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL YEAR

- Over 1 million refugees and migrants arrived by sea to Europe.
- The vast majority originated from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries, primarily Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Solidarity faltered, the European Union's (EU) ability to respond to exceptional but manageable arrival numbers was challenged, and gaps in reception and asylum systems appeared.

The EU needs a bold, imaginative and workable approach to overcome fragmentation and manage refugee movements effectively in accordance with international law. UNHCR is providing a vision for how this could be achieved both within the EU and globally. This can be achieved through a comprehensive EU asylum and refugee policy of the future, both in its internal and external dimensions. UNHCR's proposals can facilitate the development, over the longer term, of coherent EU-wide arrangements to address and respond to movements effectively. There is strong precedent for this kind of creative and forward thinking in Europe – no more evident than in the formation of the EU itself, which was founded on principles of respect for fundamental rights, responsibility, solidarity and trust.

4 PROPOSALS TOWARDS A UNION OF TRUST & PROTECTION

1 AN EU THAT IS ENGAGED

beyond its borders to protect, assist and find solutions by:

- ✓ Developing sustainable asylum systems
- ✓ Providing needs-based support for humanitarian operations
- ✓ Adopting a development-oriented approach to assistance
- ✓ Expanding opportunities for safe pathways
- ✓ Piloting a common, regulated approach to migration

HOW SHOULD THE EU ENGAGE GLOBALLY?

Globally, for the past couple of years, the number of people forced to flee their homes has been on the rise, including from countries in Europe's neighbourhood. Finding political solutions to the conflicts that drive people to flee remains critical, and Europe needs to be more engaged in these efforts. Countries hosting the majority of refugees need robust, predictable and sustained support to protect, assist, and provide solutions for them and create an environment where they can live in safety, and rebuild their lives. In light of this reality, it is important to invest in stabilizing the situation in these countries. Solidarity and responsibility sharing with these countries are key expressions of this support.

2 AN EU THAT IS PREPARED

to respond to possible future arrivals in significant numbers through:

- ✓ Assessment and planning
- ✓ Stand-by capacity at the national and EU levels
- ✓ Coordination mechanisms

HOW CAN THE EU BE BETTER PREPARED?

Coordinated contingency planning by the EU and its Member States will be essential to respond effectively to possible future arrivals in significant numbers. Ongoing conflicts and substantial gaps in support for refugees mean that displacement will continue. The EU would need to be prepared in the event of future arrivals of refugees. Regional and national support plans would need to be tailored to each specific country situation, while at the same time be aligned with overarching objectives. The response to Civil Emergencies in the EU provides both good practices and capacities that could be integrated into contingency plans for refugee emergencies. Throughout 2016, UNHCR, with partners and governments, has developed contingency and preparedness plans related to different scenarios of large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees arriving in the EU.

4 PROPOSALS TOWARDS A UNION OF TRUST & PROTECTION

3 AN EU THAT PROTECTS

through a well-managed common asylum system that ensures access to territory, and includes:

- ✓ A common registration system
- ✓ Prioritization of family reunion
- ✓ Accelerated and simplified procedures for asylum determination
- ✓ A distribution mechanism for EU Member States under pressure
- ✓ A common approach to unaccompanied and separated children
- ✓ Incentives for compliance with the new system
- ✓ An efficient system for return

HOW WOULD UNHCR'S PROPOSED ASYLUM SYSTEM WORK?

The events of the past year highlighted the need for a revitalized asylum system in the EU. This system would provide access to territory, register and receive new arrivals properly, allocate responsibility for asylum seekers among EU Member States, and ensure that EU Member States are equipped to meet the task.

Building on elements of the existing Common European Asylum System and some of the reforms proposed by the European Commission, UNHCR proposes a **simplified system that could also potentially save costs**. This system would guarantee the right to asylum, enhance security screening, and facilitate the efficient management of population movements.

4 AN EU THAT INTEGRATES

refugees in their communities through:

- ✓ Increased funding for integration programmes
- ✓ Predictable, harmonized integration services
- ✓ Fostering welcoming communities

HOW CAN SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION BE ACHIEVED?

Building social cohesion, stability and security requires that communities are well equipped to receive refugees, and that refugees are well supported to realize their potential in their new environments. **Integration involves a “two-way” process** between refugees and their host communities. The social contract between refugees and receiving States needs to be established properly to restore public and political trust. States need to ensure the **enjoyment of rights**, foster a **welcoming environment**, and address xenophobia. At the same time, refugees need to participate in integration programmes, and comply with the laws of their host State, including respecting core standards of human rights.

While integration may be a challenge for many States, it also presents an opportunity. The ability for refugees to live and build futures for themselves wherever they are in the EU can contribute to an effective asylum system and reduce pressures for onward movement.