



© UNHCR/Benjamin Loyseau- France.
French villagers welcome refugees resettled
from Chad and Niger (11/01/2019)

Summary of UNHCR Recommendations to the European Union

UNHCR RESETTLEMENT NEEDS, COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS, AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2023

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is issuing the following recommendations ahead of the 1 July meeting hosted by the European Commission. The meeting brings together Member States and key actors to discuss and launch the 2023-2025 pledging exercise for resettlement and humanitarian admission. The recommendations set out UNHCR's key asks to EU Member States and relevant European Union (EU) institutions as they consider their commitments to resettling and admitting refugees through complementary pathways in 2023.

UNHCR's recommendations are in line with the *Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways* (the Strategy), the *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030* (Roadmap 2030),¹ and the objective set out in the *Global Compact on Refugees* (GCR) to increase the number of resettlement and complementary pathways admissions globally. The Strategy foresees the resettlement of one million refugees and admission of two million refugees through complementary pathways by 2028.

¹ At the 2022 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, UNHCR and its partners presented the new *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030*, which provides an updated framework to achieve the long-term vision of the Strategy. Its publication is planned by the end of July 2022.

In the last two years, EU Member States have shown their capacity to respond to a series of challenges by working together and demonstrating solidarity. Despite the important impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on resettlement and complementary pathway admissions of refugees, EU Member States have remained engaged with UNHCR and other partners to find ways to ensure admissions. The EU stepped up following the events in Afghanistan in August 2021 and received tens of thousands of Afghan nationals evacuated from their country in addition to commitments for resettlement and other admission programmes to receive Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries.

Since February 2022, the war in Ukraine has forced millions of people to flee, becoming the largest refugee emergency since the end of World War II. From the onset of the emergency, EU Member States demonstrated remarkable solidarity with an unanimous decision to activate the Temporary Protection Directive providing protection, access to rights and assistance to millions of people. The EU has demonstrated its capacity to work together, providing emergency assistance in a very short period of time, and with an unprecedented mobilization of receiving authorities and host communities.

The *Projected Global Resettlement Needs* increased from 1,47 million in 2022 to more than 2 million for 2023. In this context, UNHCR urges Member States to maintain their commitments to refugees and provide solutions to those most at risk, and calls on the EU to:

MAINTAIN AMBITIOUS TARGETS FOR SUFFICIENT RESETTLEMENT ADMISSIONS OF REFUGEES IN NEED

- 1. Maintain ambitious targets:** while UNHCR acknowledges the great pressure in the past few months with the Ukraine emergency, it is essential to pursue the solidarity efforts and commitments to refugees worldwide. UNHCR recommends that the 27 EU Member States maintain ambitious resettlement targets, and resettle at least 40,000 refugees in 2023, in addition to a minimum of 8,500 places for Afghan refugees to keep pace with a five-year target of 42,500 resettlement departures.
- 2. Ensure the incremental growth of resettlement** as envisaged in the Strategy with EU targets increasing to a minimum of 44,000 in 2024 and 48,000 in 2025, in addition to an average of 8,500 places per year over the next five years in order to respond to the needs of Afghan refugees.
- 3. Adopt flexible case processing modalities** to increase the agility and resilience of resettlement and admissions under other legal pathways.
- 4. Increase the number of EU Member States participating in resettlement:** UNHCR is ready to support capacity building initiatives and work together with partners such as the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NGOs to meet this objective.
- 5. Increase EU funding for capacity building initiatives,** including through the CRISP² initiative to build solid and quality resettlement programmes and to advance complementary pathways.

KEY PRIORITY SITUATIONS

- 6.** Use the 2023 *Projected Global Resettlement Needs* and prioritize resettlement of refugees hosted in countries part of the following **five priority situations:** the Syria Situation, the Central Mediterranean Situation, the Venezuelan, the Afghan and the Rohingya situations.
- 7.** Dedicate at least 10% of their resettlement programmes to **urgent or emergency cases.**

² The *Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative* (CRISP) is a multi-stakeholder and global mechanism which aims to support States and other stakeholders with capacity building activities to grow resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways.

SOLIDIFY THE RESILIENCE OF RESETTLEMENT IN EUROPE - KEY POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

8. **Strengthen resettlement processing mechanisms and reception capacities:** with the increased humanitarian needs in several regions across the globe, UNHCR recommends for processing mechanisms and reception structures to be enhanced in a sustainable manner to ensure that resettlement commitments are protected against quota drops in emergency responses.
9. **Preserve the protection nature of resettlement in the EU:** UNHCR urges Member States not to use resettlement as a substitute to their obligations under international law to provide access to asylum. Resettlement should remain a protection tool and not serve migration policy objectives. When planning for resettlement and selecting refugees, Member States should apply protection criteria rather than considering integration potential. All actors should ensure that resettlement remains the primary means of admission for refugees in need of a third country solution and that complementary pathways remain additional to resettlement targets.
10. Show increased solidarity by considering a larger proportion of refugees with **high or medical needs** within resettlement programmes.
11. **Maintain close collaboration** between the EUAA, UNHCR, IOM and other involved stakeholders in order to avoid redundancies, and to ensure better planning and optimize resources management.
12. **Capitalize on the EUAA's work and efforts towards expanding programmes:** The EUAA can play a key role in building Member States capacity, re-engage previous resettlement states and work with emerging resettlement states willing to build programmes in the EU.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

13. **Preserve the right to family unity** and enhance refugees' access to established procedures. While the right to family unity is enshrined in international and regional instruments, many legal and administrative obstacles need to be overcome. UNHCR urges Member States to preserve family unity and to ensure refugees' access to existing procedures by making them protection-centred and responsive to the refugee context.
14. **Consider dependency** as the core criteria to establish family ties that are covered under the [Family Reunification Directive](#) and to apply this principle in Member States' domestic legislation.
15. **Ensure additionality:** When offering programmes to unify extended non-dependant relatives falling outside of the scope of the Family Reunification Directive, ensure that these are complementary and additional to other procedures and pathways.

COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS

16. **Expand pathways by strengthening existing ones and making them more accessible**, reliable and predictable for refugees. Programmes need to be built with adequate protection safeguards for refugees.
17. **Adequate funding, guidance and building expertise** will be crucial to expand programmes and ensure refugees have access to them.

Complementary Education Pathways

18. **Collaborate with all concerned actors**, including the Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways in order to build and expand sustainable programmes for refugee students; work with partners towards the goal of creating refugee specific scholarship places equal to that of 1% of international students who will be received in 2023, with a longer-term objective of 2% and above. Establish clear timelines for these goals in consultation with UNHCR, Member States, and stakeholders from the education sector.

Complementary Labour Pathways

- 19. Develop programmes** and follow the lead of those EU States already developing labour pathways for refugees; work with the employer sectors, NGOs and partners expert in refugee labour mobility, to identify and address legal and administrative obstacles, and to build scalable partnerships to match their labour market needs with the skills of refugees in need of a durable solution.
- 20. Ensure refugees have access to existing legal pathways** and include refugees in the revision of legal migration instruments and labour related initiatives. UNHCR encourages the EU and Member States to utilize the resources and expertise of, and actively support, the recently established Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility. Bridges between education pathways, vocational training and labour mobility schemes could be considered as part of a more holistic approach to complementary pathways.

Humanitarian Pathways

- 21. Maintain additionality:** UNHCR urges Member States that are implementing humanitarian pathways to remain committed to resettlement at the same time. UNHCR welcomes the opening of new humanitarian pathways, but wishes to reiterate that these do not equate to resettlement places which are dedicated to the refugees of all nationalities who are considered the most at risk in their country of asylum. Funding for resettlement should remain a priority and be separate from funding dedicated to humanitarian pathways.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMMES

- 22. Plan for a meaningful growth of community sponsorship programmes** that will enhance reception capacity and allow for an increased number of admissions. Welcoming sponsorship initiatives and pilot projects, UNHCR recommends to develop programmes with a clear plan for meaningful growth, with the view to shift from pilots to regular and established programmes. States should ensure to meaningfully involve refugees in the programme design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- 23. Explore and build partnership benefiting States,** host communities and refugees. Explore new approaches to enhance reception and integration of refugees and that can benefit all. UNHCR encourages States that have not yet piloted community sponsorship to use the current momentum in order to explore how community sponsorship can complement public reception systems for the expansion of third country solutions.