



**Good Practice Guide
on the Integration of Refugees
in the European Union**

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgements

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The six Good Practice Guides which make up this publication are as follows:

Good Practice Guide on Community and Cultural Integration for Refugees

Good Practice Guide on Housing for Refugees

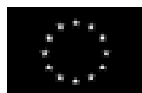
Good Practice Guide on Health for Refugees

Good Practice Guide on Education for Refugees

Good Practice Guide on Vocational Training for Refugees

Good Practice Guide on Employment for Refugees

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Commission DG V



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de la Commission
Européenne DG V

Good Practice Guides on Integration of Refugees in the European Union

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General Introduction

The ECRE Task Force on Integration

The Good Practice Guides on Refugee Integration in Europe have been produced by the **ECRE Task Force on Integration**, a partnership of 7 refugee assisting organisations working under the auspices of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, (ECRE). From November 1997 we have been carrying out a European project aimed at improving the integration of refugees in the 15 Member States of the European Union. The project is co-funded by the European Commission under the budget line B3-4113 “Actions to promote integration of refugees”. This budget line was established in December 1996 as a result of a vote by the European Parliament, and “pilot projects” have been selected for funding on an annual basis since November 1997. The ECRE Task Force on Integration does not work on an operational level with refugees, but is a European level project which through various networking activities has been promoting the exchange of information between organisations working in the field of refugee integration, developing policy recommendations and identifying “Good Practice”. The partner organisations in the ECRE Task Force and their responsibilities in the project are outlined briefly below.

The European Council on Refugees & Exiles (ECRE) is an umbrella organisation established in 1974 to facilitate co-operation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned with refugee issues. The main objective of ECRE's work is to promote a humane and generous asylum and refugee policy in Europe. ECRE has currently more than 60 member agencies throughout Europe. The member agencies are serviced and represented by the ECRE Secretariat, which has offices in London and Brussels. ECRE's principal activities include policy development, legal analysis, advocacy, networking, training and information exchange.

ECRE has overall responsibility for the work of the Task Force on Integration. It is also responsible for policy development and, through its Brussels office for advocacy on issues relating to refugee integration at European Union level. In October 1999, the ECRE Position on the Integration of Refugees in Europe was published and is attached as an Appendix to the Good Practice Guides. The policy recommendations contained in the Position have been developed by the ECRE Integration Policy officer, drawing in part on the research of the partners in the Task Force, and in consultation with the ECRE membership.

Overlegcentrum voor Integratie van Vluchtelingen (OCIV) is the Flemish umbrella organisation for integration of refugees. OCIV's usual activities include providing legal information for social

organisations and volunteers working with refugees and asylum seekers, providing information to the public and the press about refugee issues, research and policy work regarding refugee legislation and reception of asylum seekers, integration projects promoting refugee employment and refugee community organisations. OCIV is responsible for the coordination of the ECRE Task Force on Integration and for maintaining a coherent approach to the research, aims and presentation of the results of the work. This includes chairing regular management and research meetings in which all partners are present, to agree on the overall direction and objectives of the project; and managing the website.

The **Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)** advocates for the cause of asylum seekers and refugees through the provision of legal counselling, direct psycho-social and material assistance to refugees aiming at self-sufficiency and social integration, advises and facilitates refugees seeking repatriation or resettlement, operates inter-cultural community centres which facilitate the collaboration between refugees and the local community, and undertakes advocacy and awareness raising work with authorities and the public.

GCR is the lead agency in the Task Force on community and cultural integration of refugees. The Good Practice Guide focuses on : initial adjustment, community relations and development, enrichment and refugee empowerment.

VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (VWN) is a national organisation founded on the idea that citizens work on behalf of refugees on a voluntary basis. Volunteers are organised in over 400 local municipal branches all of which are members of the national association. The work of the VWN is directed towards protection of legal rights of asylum seekers and refugees, provision of information, advocacy and advice work. A national Helpdesk is operated daily to answer questions related to admission and reception. VWN is the lead agency in the Task Force on housing for refugees. The Good Practice Guide on Housing focuses on the following issues : access to housing, affordability and housing quality.

Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR) is an NGO which gives legal advice to asylum seekers and refugees on issues such as the asylum procedure, family reunification and voluntary return ; provides information and advice about social assistance and integration programmes, and organises awareness raising events, including refugee related cultural activities, educational programmes in schools, and publishes information about refugee related issues.

CIR is the lead agency in the Task Force on refugee health. The Good Practice Guide on Health, addresses three main issues: entitlement and the right to health, access to health care services and dealing with traumatic experiences.

The **Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS)** is a branch of the **World University Service**, (UK) RETAS has three teams (Advice, Employment and Education) running several training programmes: it has a respected advice service and offers grants for refugee education and training. It provides direct help to over 2000 refugees and asylum seekers each year and also supports colleges and refugee community groups in the UK.

RETAS is the lead agency in the Task Force on refugee education. The Good Practice Guide on Education focuses on three main issues: educational provision for refugee children and young people in the EU; language courses for adult refugees; and the recognition of foreign qualifications.

France Terre D'Asile (FTDA) advocates with public authorities and public opinion to preserve respect for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees seeking international protection in France. Solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees is demonstrated through the provision of legal advice for the completion of the asylum procedure, the provision of housing, training and employment advice, language courses and introduction to the country and its culture.

FTDA is the lead agency in the Task Force on vocational training for refugees. The Good Practice Guide on Vocational Training focuses on the following issue: improving access to vocational training, the organisation of vocational training programmes, and improving the link between vocational training and employment.

The **British Refugee Council (BRC)** is a membership organisation whose usual activities include: giving direct help and advice to newly arrived asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups of refugees, working with refugee community organisations, supporting people working with refugees through specialist advice and information, advocating for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK, in Europe and internationally.

BRC is the lead agency in the Task Force on refugee employment. The Good Practice Guide on Employment focuses on the following issues : removing barriers to eligibility to work, helping individual refugees to get jobs, the role of the social partners (trade unions and employers), self employment, equal opportunities policies, training and employment programmes.

Presentation and Aims of the Good Practice Guides

This publication consists of six Good Practice Guides each on a different integration theme: community and cultural integration, housing, health, education, vocational training, employment. These

are the six themes which have been researched over a period of two years by the partners in the ECRE Task Force: each partner has been responsible for and is thereby the author of a Guide on one theme. However, as all these themes are inter-linked and many projects and practices described in the Guides are multi-dimensional the partners have collaborated on many overlapping sections and cross referencing where appropriate has been made between projects which are featured in more than one Guide. Attached as Appendix 1 is an index of all the projects and organisations mentioned in the Guides ; they are listed alphabetically by project name and next to each is a code indicating in which of the Guides they are to be found. References are also made in all the Guides to Appendix 2 : the ECRE Position on the Integration of Refugees in Europe.

The purpose of the Good Practice Guides is to identify and promote methods, practices, projects and policies which are helping refugees to integrate into the host society. These could be projects run by refugee assisting NGOs, actions by refugee community organisations, by local authorities, or initiatives by Trade Unions etc. In brief, integration is a subject which involves several key players involved in combatting the social exclusion of marginalised groups in society. Some of the projects mentioned are “pilot projects” which have been funded by the European Commission under the budget line B3-4113. Also included are some projects funded by the Community Initiatives (Integra, Horizon etc.) of the European Social Fund (ESF) which is the EU’s main financial instrument for combatting long term unemployment and exclusion and promoting equal opportunities in the labour market. However, not all projects included in the Guides are beneficiaries of European funding ; many initiatives are ongoing activities of organisations which receive funding from a variety of sources : central and local government, churches, charitable foundations and private donations. Nor do all of the projects and initiatives included specifically target refugees, some are more mainstream activities whose client group includes asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and/or other socially excluded groups.

What is Good Practice ?

The projects described have been chosen because they are considered to be examples of innovative, interesting and inspiring practice; and because they have the potential to be transferred in whole or in part to other national contexts. They are projects which have become known to the partners in the Task Force through the networking activities and various meetings organised throughout the two years, (see below: Methodology). The Good Practice Guides are not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive survey of the *best* initiatives on refugee integration in the 15 EU Member States, and there are undoubtedly many good projects and practices which may not have been included – any omission should not be interpreted as a negative judgement or criticism of the projects which do not feature.

The Guides include projects from all of the 15 Member States, but some countries are more strongly represented than others. This in part reflects the variation in the numbers of refugees residing and the number of projects/initiatives on refugee integration existing in the different countries ; and in part reflects the varying degrees of experience and know-how among societies with very different histories of receiving and integrating refugees. Nevertheless we have endeavoured to provide a balanced picture of the good practices that do exist across the EU and any perceived country bias is unintentional.

Who are the Good Practice Guides for ?

The Guide is aimed primarily at practitioners as it describes practices which we hope will be replicated in different national or local contexts to help refugees learn the language, find work, become active participants in the host society etc. The Guides also inevitably include some policy recommendations which are aimed at policy makers at the local, national and European level. Some projects and initiatives are only possible because a certain policy or administrative regime exists in a given country, and where this is the case the Guides recommend that these policies should be adopted in every EU Member State. For more detailed and comprehensive policy recommendations on refugee integration, the reader should refer to Appendix 2 : ECRE Policy Position on Integration of Refugees in Europe.

Methodology

The methodology used by the partners in gathering information and identifying projects has followed broadly similar lines but the detail varies and is elaborated upon by each partner in the introduction to their respective Guides. Common to all have been initial stocktaking activities which involved sending out questionnaires and making first contacts with organisations working in the field; follow up and more in-depth research through visits to projects and the organisation of expert meetings; broader consultation and debate in a European Conference on the Integration of Refugees which took place in Antwerp, (Belgium) in November 1998¹. A key element of the research has involved finding out refugee perceptions of integration: what it means to refugees to be integrated into a host society, what are the main obstacles and which solutions actually work from the refugee perspective. Refugees from all 15 Member States were invited to take part in six refugee panels, in Dalfsen (the Netherlands) 1st-2nd July 1999, in which many of the recommendations contained in the Good Practice Guides were discussed. Qualitative research was also conducted in all Member States through a series of interviews with refugees about their ex-

1 Report of the Conference on Integration of Refugees in Europe, Antwerp – ECRE Task Force (1999) can be downloaded from the website: www.refugeenet.org, or obtained from the ECRE Task Force Secretariat in English, French and Italian.

perience of integration in the host society. This research was not intended to be representative of the views and experience of all refugees throughout Europe, but enabled us to get some perspectives from refugees to complement, confirm and on some issues contradict the many ideas, experiences and recommendations emerging from the NGO community. Quotations from the refugee panels and the refugee interviews have been incorporated where appropriate in the Guides.

Content and structure

Each of the six Guides begins with an introduction describing the background to the integration theme, the methodology and content and structure of the Guide. Different issues connected to the integration theme are addressed in the sections that follow. In each section there is an analysis of the problem, identification of good practice and recommendations [“ Signposts to Good Practice ”] showing the way to the achievement of good practice in all EU Member States. Projects which illustrate “ Good Practice ” are describes in detail, headed by the project name, organisation and country, while some projects or organisations are referred to in less detail in the text. Full contact details can be found for all projects and organisations mentioned in the Guides in Appendix 1 : Index of Projects and Organisations, (see above). After each project description comments have been added to highlight elements which the reader should take note of when considering the replication of the project in whole or in part:

a 😊 indicates the key positive element(s) which have recommended the practice to us;

a 😐 indicates an element of ambiguity – a project may not have been running long enough to be able to fully evaluate its benefit;

a 😞 does not indicate a negative criticism of a project’s intrinsic value, but highlights the limitations of a project in terms of its potential for transferability.

A note about terminology

The reader should be aware of the complex issues surrounding the use of certain terminology in the Good Practice Guides. The nature of the subject of integration and the varied target groups of many of the projects described means that the authors are discussing practices and policies which concern on one level “ refugees ” and “ non- refugees ”, but which in some instances distinguish between groups of people with different legal statuses according to the varying legislation and policy which applies to non EU nationals in different Member States. Below is an attempt to clarify the usage of the most common terminology:

Refugee

The Good Practice Guides are concerned specifically with ‘refugees who have settled or who intend to

settle in the European Union'. This includes all persons who have been granted some form of recognised status including refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention, as well as all persons receiving some form of complementary protection. Several different forms of complementary protection exist in the different Member States of the EU (e.g Humanitarian status, Exceptional Leave to Remain, Indefinite Leave to Remain, Temporary Protection etc) and the social and economic rights granted to the beneficiaries vary accordingly². These Guides begin from the premise that all refugees who have received permission to stay and who have settled or intend to settle in a country whether this is with the full rights as guaranteed by the Convention or with lesser rights, for a definite or an indefinite period, need to integrate. Only when it is relevant to the practices described and has a bearing on the possibilities for integration is a distinction made between the holders of different forms of refugee status and the accompanying rights.

Asylum seeker

The term means all those who are seeking asylum and are still in the asylum procedure. The use of the term in connection with integration reflects the belief of the ECRE Task Force that given the duration of asylum procedures in many EU countries, asylum seekers need to begin the process of integration before they are recognised. This is considered to be essential to the well being of the individual and to their achievement of integration in the longer term; this will therefore be of benefit to the host society.

Migrant, immigrant, newcomer and ethnic minority

Depending on the context in which these terms are used they should be read as either a general term including all non-indigenous members of the population regardless of legal status ; or as groups who are legally distinct from refugees, but may be beneficiaries of the same integration programme/activity. *Immigrants* and *newcomers* are generally understood to be relatively recent arrivals and the term *newcomer* in the context of the Netherlands relates specifically to the legal reality of the “ Newcomers Integration Act ” which targets all new arrivals to the Netherlands. The term *ethnic minority* is an accepted term of reference in English to describe communities and groups of people with ethnic minority backgrounds that differ in a systematic way from the majority community. Differences may be due to colour, nationality, geographical origin of individual or family, culture or religion. They are not necessarily newcomers, though they may be.

Discrimination, Positive Action

Discrimination is used in a general sense to describe disadvantage that refugees suffer as a result either of their identity as ‘foreigners’ in a country or specifically as ‘refugees’. Depending on the legislation in

² For a detailed analysis of the socio-economic rights of refugees and non-nationals in Europe, see the *Research Paper on the Social and Economic Rights of Non- Nationals in Europe* commissioned by ECRE, November 1998.

place in different EU countries discrimination may be direct or indirect. In the context of integration, refugees experience discrimination in a variety of situations, e.g in accessing services, in the housing or labour market. *Positive Action* is used particularly in the context of training and employment to describe attempts to remedy discrimination and to effect changes in practice to allow all members of the community to have similar opportunity to achieve their potential.

The meaning of terminology specific to each integration theme is explained where necessary in footnotes to the text. Clarification and more detailed definitions can be found in other documents produced by the ECRE Task Force on Integration which are also referenced in footnotes throughout the Guides and are all available on the ECRE Task Force website : www.refugeenet.org

Index of projects and organisation (appendix 1)

The index is ordered alphabetically by **project name**, or if there is no project name, by **organisation**. Full contact details are listed. The code(s) next to the name indicates which of the six Guides the projects/organisations appear in.

Key

CC = Community & cultural integration; **HO** = Housing; **HE** = Health; **ED** = Education; **VT** = Vocational Training; **EM** = Employment

Abri - HE

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Amsterdam, The Netherlands
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Fax: +31 206205743

Koningswinterer Str. 29,
83227 Bonn, GERMANY
Tel: +49 2285411495
Fax: 49 2285411500

(ANM?)

Access Ireland Project - CC

Irish Refugee Council
Dublin 7, Richmond Business Campus,
North Brunswick Street, IRELAND
Tel: +35 318724677
Fax: +35 318724411

Alakko Naa Mna ? (Will You Play With Me ?) - CC
Peltolantie 8 A 1, 2nd Floor,
90230 Oulou, FINLAND
Tel: +358 85301767
Fax: +358 83112471

Agora

Meeting Place for Women Refugees - CC

Foreningen Goteborgs Flyktingshjalp
Kungsgatan 18, SV-41119,
Goteborg, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 317012080
Fax: +46 317012099

ANPE réfugiés - EM

France Terre d'Asile
25 rue Ganneron,
75018 Paris, FRANCE
Tel: +33 153043965
Fax: +33 153040240

Ahoi

Action & Advice for Labour Market Information - EM

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz

Arkki - CC

Kerava Town Council-Social Affairs and Health Office
Aleksis Kiventie 4,
SF 04200 Kerava, FINLAND

Tel: +358 929492243
Fax: +358 929492498

Asylum Rights Alliance - EM

C/O Irish Refugee Council
Lower Dominic Street,
Dublin, IRELAND
Tel: +353 18730042
Fax: +353 18730088

Asylum Seekers right to work - EM

VluchtelingenWerk Nederland
Postbus 2894, 1000 CW
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 203467200
Fax: +31 206178155

BAOBAB

African Corporation - CC/ VT

Koningin Elisabethlaan 56,
B-8000 Brugge, BELGIUM
Tel: +32 56237024
Fax: +32 56237021

Business Advisers / Mentoring project - EM

EMlooi
Prins Hendrikkade 48,
1012 AC Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 20 6277501
Fax: +31 20 6262205

Business Enterprise Adviser - EM

British Refugee Council
Training and Employment Section
240 Fernadale Road, London SW9 8BB, UK

Tel: +44 171 3466749
Fax: +44 171 7373306

CC.OO

Confederacion Sindical de Comisiones Obreras - VT
Fernandez de la Hoz 12,
28010 Madrid, SPAIN
Tel: +34 913191750
Fax: +34 913195454

CEDEFOP

European Centre for the development of
vocational training - VT
Marinou Antipa 12,
GR-57001 Thessaloniki, Themi, GREECE
Tel: +30 31490190

***Cellule d'accueil des primo-arrivants du Val de
Marne - ED***

Mission d'Insertion des Jeunes de l'Education
Nationale - Inspection Académique du Val de Marne
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Tel & Fax: +33 145176268

***Centro Regionale d'Intervento per la
Cooperazione - VT***

Via Mansolini 12,
I-89100 Reggio Calabria, ITALY
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Fax: +39 965812560

CIES - VT/CC

Centro Informazione e
Educatione allo Sviluppo

Via Paletmo 36,
00184 Roma, ITALY
Tel: +39 677264611

CIRE

Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et
Etrangers - **HO**
80 rue du Vivier,
1050 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel: +32 26441717
Fax: +32 26468591

Communal Adult Education Centre - VT

Solartech
Järfälla Komvux
Järfällavägen 102
175 41 Järfälla, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 858028463
Fax: +46 858028194

Community Health Project - HE

Refugee Advice Center
702 High Road Leyton,
London E10 6JP, UK
Tel & Fax: +44 1815586928

Community Outreach Team - CC

British Refugee Council
3-9 Bondway,
London SW8 1SJ, UK
Tel: +44 1718203106/5
Fax: +44 1715829929

***CSP-Refugee Service of the Protestant Social
Centre - VT/ED***

Rue Cans 12,
1050 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel: +32 25135182
Fax: +32 25127030

Da assistiti a risorse - VT

CIR- Consiglio Italiano per i Refugiati
Via del Velabro 5/A,
00186 Rome, ITALY
Tel: +39 0669200114
Fax: +39 0669200116

Danish Red Cross Culture House - CC

Danish Red Cross
Strandgate 100
E 1401 Copenhagen, DENMARK
Tel: +45 32960088
Fax: +45 32960058

Dobro Dosli - HO

Volkshilfe Österreich
Diefenbachgasse 45-46/4/1,
A-1150 Vienna, AUSTRIA
Tel: +43 18936117
Fax: +43 18936120-4

Dobro Dosli et après - ED

Caritas Foundation
Rue Michel Welter 29, B.P. 1721,
1017 Luxembourg, LUXEMBOURG
Tel: +352 402131532
Fax: +352 402131409

Doctors Journal Club - EM

Refugees into Jobs

3-7 Carlton Avenue East,
Off Preston Road,
Wembley HA9 8UA, UK
Tel: +44 1819084433
Fax: +44 1819083917

***Eastern Health Board Medical Unit - HE
Refugee Application Centre***

79-83 Lower Mount Street,
Dublin 2, IRELAND
Tel: +353 16028000 /6028177
Fax: +353 16028138

Economic Integration of Refugee Women - VT

France Terre D'Asile
25 rue Ganneron
75018 Paris, FRANCE
Tel: + 33 153043999
Fax: +33 153040240

***Education and Integration for Adolescent Un-
accompanied Refugees - ED***

Oase Pankow e.V
Schonensche Str. 9,
10437 Berlin, GERMANY
Tel: +49 304714071
Fax: +49 3047002550

ENAIIP

Centro di Servizi Formativi - VT
Via Sebastiano Serlio 22,
40128 Bologna,
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Fax: +39 051 257001

ENFAP-ABRUZZO - VT

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65100 Pescara, ITALY
Tel: +39 085 4714095
Fax: +39 085 72741

Employability - EM

City Parochial Foundation
6 Middle Street,
London EC1A 7PH, UK
Tel: +44 171 6066145
Fax: +44 171 6001866

Employment Charters - EM

France Terre d'Asile
25 rue Ganneron, 75018 Paris, FRANCE
Tel: +33 153043965
Fax: +33 153040240

Etnisch Ondernemen - EM/VT

LIA -Antwerpen
Sint Elisabethstraat 38A
2060 Antwerpen, BELGIUM
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FÁS

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National Training and Employment Authority
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Dublin 13, IRELAND
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Lausitzer Str. 10/ Aufgang C,

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Fax: +49 306188428

Foundation Wereldwijd - VT

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6251 ne Eckelrade, The Netherlands

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Global Village - CC/EM

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Haags Centrum Onderwijsbegeleiding - ED

Postbus 53509,

2505 AM Den Haag, The Netherlands

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Fax: +31 704482829

Haringey Refugee Consortium - EM

Selby Centre,

Selby Road,

London N17 8JN, UK

Tel: +44 1818855511

Fax: +44 1818803988

IFK

Deutschkurse Salzburg und Collegium Austriacum - ED

Postfach 120,

5010 Salzburg, AUSTRIA

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IFSA

language courses in Kiel - ED

Lange Reihe 10-12,

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IGLOO Programme - HO

Comité Européen de Coordination de l'Habitat Social (CECODHAS),

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FEANTSA - HO

Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales

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ETUC - HO

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IMSERSO - EM

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INKA

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1000 BV Amsterdam, The Netherlands
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Inspiration & Results - EM

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Integration Facilitation Centre PYXIS - CC

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Fax: +30 13803774

Integration-Participation in Society - EM

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ISOP-Interkulturelles Forum EM/ VT

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Fax: +43 316 91 6678

Intercultural mediators as technical assistants - ED

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29 rue Aldringen,
L-2926 Luxembourg, LUXEMBOURG
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Fax: +352 4785140

Introduction Programme for Refugees

Trauma and Recovery - HE

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Brygggarvägen 9-11,
14785 Tumba, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 853062716
Fax: +46 853062740

Invandrerprojekter - VT

Norregade, 36, 3. Sal,
1165 København K, DENMARK
Tel: +45 33931236
Fax: +45 33931276

Job Search Training Handbook for Refugee Professionals - EM

RETAS- World University Service
14 Dufferin Street,
London EC14 8PD, UK
Tel: +44 1714265804
Fax: +44 1712511314

Libre

Interactive Laboratory of Well Being and Restoration - **HE**
CIR - Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati
Via del Velabro 5/A,
00186 Rome, ITALY
Tel: +39 0669200114
Fax: +39 0669200116

MEET project - ED

COSPE - Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi
Emergenti
Via Slataper 10,
50134 Florence, ITALY
Tel: +39 055473556
Fax: +39 055472806

Mental Health Centre & Canvas

Employment Rehabilitation of Refugees - **HE**
GGZ's Hertogenbosch
Postbox 10150, 5260 GB Vught, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 736585846
Fax: +31 736585845

Mentors: Recruiting Advisers - EM

EMlooi - See above

Migranet Information Technology Project - EM

Day-mer Turkish and Kurdish
Former Library premises,
Howard Road,
London N16 8PR, UK
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Fax: +44 171 2757245

Multi- Agency Refugee Alliance (MARA) - ED

London Borough of Merton, Housing and Social
Service Department, Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX, UK
Tel: +44 1815453405

National training scheme for teaching French to refugees - ED

Cimade
176 rue de Grenelle,
75007 Paris, FRANCE
Tel: 33 1 44186050
Fax: +33 1 45560859

North Westminster Community School - ED
Penfold Street,
London NW1 6RX, UK
Tel: +44 1716417752
Fax: +44 1716417788

Oldenzaal municipality- Arbeidsbureau - VT
P.O.Box 350,
7570 AJ Oldenzaal, The Netherlands
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Fax: +31 742557370

Pan London Refugee Training and Employment Network - EM
The British Refugee Council
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London SW8 1SJ, UK
Tel: +44 1718203090
Fax: +44 1715829929

People to People Project - CC
Swedish Red Cross
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102 54 Stockholm, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 8 6655600/59061000
Fax: +46 8 6673642/59062740

Pharos - HE
P.O.Box 13318,

3507 LH Utrecht, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 302349800
Fax: +31 302364560

Portobella Project - HE
Omega
Granatengasse 2,
8020 Graz, AUSTRIA
Tel & Fax: +43 316773554

Pre-school bilingual teaching in Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg - ED
Verein Projekt Integrationshaus
Engerthstrasse 161-163,
1020 Wien, AUSTRIA
Tel: +43 1 2123520/42
Fax: +43 1 212352019

Pro-Badolato Project - CC/VT
CRIC-Centro Regionale d'Intervento per la
Cooperazione
Via Mansolini 12,
I-89100 Reggio Calabria, ITALY
Tel: +39 965812345
Fax: +39 965812560

Profession-Job-Future - EM
Arbeiterwohlfahrt
Nernstweg 32,
22765 Hamburg, GERMANY
Tel: +49 40 3984800
Fax: +49 40 39848016

Project Fenix - ED
Säbygatan 16,

261 33 Landskrona, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 418 473704
Fax: +46 418 449669

Psychosocial Centre for Refugees - HE

Diakonisches Werk der Evangelisch-Lutherischen
Kirche in Bayern e.V
Pirckheimerstrasse 6,
90408 Nuremberg, GERMANY
Tel: +49 911 9354404
Fax: +49 911 9354469

Psychosocial Rehabilitation - HE

CEPAR
Nørrebrogade 9F,
2200 Copenhagen N, DENMARK
Tel: +45 35377885
Fax: 45 35377863

Raising awareness on EXILE in schools - ED

CIR -Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati
Via del Velabro 5/A,
00186 Rome, ITALY
Tel: +39 06 69200114
Fax: +39 06 69200116

Refugee Advice Centre - HO

702 High Road Leyton
London E10 6JP
UK

Refugee Children's Art - CC

ISS-International Social Service, Greek branch
6, Manzarou Str.,
106-72 Athens, GREECE

Tel: +30 1 3636191
Fax: +30 1 3612433

Refugee Education Project, Camden - CC

Camden Language and Support Service- Refugee
Team
Medburn Centre
136 Chalston Street
London NW 1 1RX, UK
Tel: +44 1713884346
Fax: +44 1713887458

***Refugee Internships in Government Depart-
ments -EM***

Emplooi
See above

Refugee Language Support Unit - ED

Richmond Business Campus,
North Brunswick Street,
Dublin 7, IRELAND
Tel: +353 18072400
Fax: +353 18076252

Refugee Outreach Advice Project (ROAP) - ED/VT

World University Service
14 Dufferin Street,
London EC1Y 8PD, UK
Tel: +44 171 4265815/5808
Fax: +44 171 2511314

Refugee Outreach Team - HE

Lambeth, Southwark & Lewisham Health Authority
Unit 788, Eurolink Business Centre,
49 Effra Road,

London SW2 1BZ, UK
Tel: 44 1717339211
Fax: 44 171733935

Refugee Support Service - HE

Forest Healthcare Trust Larkwood Centre
Thorpe Coombe Hospital,
714 Forest Road,
Walthamstow, London E17 3HP, UK
Tel: +44 1815356850
Fax: +44 1815356910

Refugee Women's Association - VT

Print House,
18 Ashwin Street,
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Refugees and the right to work - EM

Switch
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Tel: +32 2 2740033
Fax: +32 2 2010376

Refugees into Business - EM

Stichting SEON, Postbus 16283,
2500 BG Den Haag, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 70 3051826
Fax: +31 70 3051829

Refugees into Work - EM

The British Refugee Council

Training and Employment Section
240 Ferndale Road,
London SW9 8BB,
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Tel: +44 1713466749
Fax: +44 1717373306

See Difference as an Advantage - EM

Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke
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1300 Copenhagen, DENMARK
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Servizio Medicina Internazionale

Asl Rome E - **HE**
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00192 Rome, ITALY
Tel: +39 06 68352429
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Servizio Rifugiati e Migranti (SRM) - HO

Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia
Via Firenze 38,
I-00184 Rome, ITALY
Tel & Fax: +39 06489 5101

SIBCO - VT

Smedjevagen 5
352 46 VAXJO, Sweden
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Fax: +46 470 749 360

Skills match - EM

Midlands Refugee Council

5th floor, Smithfield House,
Digbeth,
Birmingham B5 6BS, UK
Tel: +44 121 2422200
Fax: +44 121 2422201

***Social and Economic Integration of Refugees -
CC/EM/ED***

Portuguese Refugee Council
Av. Duque Avila 9, 1st floor,
1000-138 Lisbon, PORTUGAL
Tel: +351 13159847
Fax: +351 13537692

Social Service for Foreigners - VT

L.Spilliaertstraat 10,
8400 Oostend, BELGIUM
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***Socio-Economic Integration,
UNHCR Greece - EM***

Social Work Foundation
11 Victorias Street,
Athens 10434, GREECE
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Fax: +30 1 8226945

Socio-Economic Integration

UNHCR Italy - EM
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Via del Velabro 5A,
00186 Roma, ITALY
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Fax: +39 0669200116

Socio-economic integration of refugees - VT
receiving protection, on humanitarian grounds in
Greece by promoting their self-reliance

The Greek Council for Refugees
25, Solomou Str.,
106-82 Athens, GREECE
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Fax: +30 1 3803774

Solartech - EM

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Järfällavägen 102,
175 41 Järfälla, SWEDEN
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St Mark's Junior School - ED

Springfield,
Dublin 24, IRELAND
Tel: +353 14512076
Fax: +353 14625275

Stimulans - EM

Emplooi
See above

Supporting Integration of Disabled Refugees - HE
AVRE

125 rue d'Avron,
75020 Paris, FRANCE
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Susret- Encounter - CC/VT/HE

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SVU-Stichting Vluchtelingenwerk Utrecht - VT
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Taking Positive Action for Equal Opportunities - EM
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Fax: +44 1715829929

The Bosnian Project - HE
Welcare Community Projects
145 High Road,
Willesden, London NW10 2QS, UK
Tel: +44 1814592278
Fax: +44 1814598892

The Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS) - ED
Trinity College,
Dublin 1, IRELAND
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Rigensgade 13,
1316 Copenhagen, DENMARK
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Fax: +45 33144214

The Danish Refugee Council - ED
10 Borgergade,
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Fax: +45 33328448

The Evelyn Oldfield Unit - CC
356 Holloway Road,
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Fax: +44 1717008136

The German Red Cross - VT
Köningswinterer Str.29,
83227 Bonn, GERMANY
Tel: +49 2285411491
Fax: +49 2285411500

The employmente International Organisation for Migrants - ED
6 Dodekanissou,
17454 Athens, GREECE
Tel: +30 19919040
Fax: +30 19910914

The mitten project - "Swedish for Immigrants" in Botkyrka - ED
Komvux/ Komväv in Botkyrka
Lilla Sällskapetets väg 113,
12 761 Skärholmen, SWEDEN
Tel: +46 418 473704
Fax: +46 418 449669

The Refugee Policy - EM
The Prince's Trust

18 Park Square East,
London NW1 4LH, UK
Tel: +44 1715431234
Fax: +44 1715431200

The Social Welfare Office of the city of Neuss - VT

IFF Projekt-Büro
Promenadenstrasse 43-45,
41460 Neuss, GERMANY
Tel: +49 2131905059
Fax: +49 211255652

The University of Glasgow - VT

Department of Adult and Continuing Education
59 Oakfield Avenue,
Glasgow G12 8LW, UK
Tel: +44 1413305640
Fax: +44 1413303525

The Village Grocer - EM

Indvandrerprojekter
Norregade 36,
1165 Copenhagen, DENMARK
Tel: +45 33931236
Fax: +45 33931276

Training and Employment Section (TES) - VT

The British Refugee Council
3-9 Bondway,
London SW8 1SJ, UK
Tel: +44 171820316/5
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***Tuberculosis Screening and Health Information
Project - HE***

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Fax: +44 1715829929

***Tür an Tür-Miteinander Wohnen und Leben
e.v - CC/HO***

Oberer Graben 39,
86152 Augsburg, GERMANY
Tel: +49 82137261
Fax: +49 821156740

Turun Ammatillinen Aikuiskoulutuskeskus - ED

TURKU Vocational education centre for adults
Kärsämäentie 11,
20360 Turku,
FINLAND
Tel: +358 24119495
Fax: +358 24119401

Tvaerkulturel Psykologisk Rådgivning - HE

Tingvej 26,1
2300 Copenhagen S, DENMARK
Tel & Fax: +45 32979800

UGT Aragon - EM/VT

C/ Don Pedro de Luna 22,
50010 Zaragoza, SPAIN
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Fax: +34 976315211

“Un voyage pas comme les autres” - ED/CC

Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et
Etrangers
See above

Una cultura per il lavoro - EM

CGIL Piemonte
Via Pedrotti 5,
10152 Torino, ITALY
Tel: +39 0112442229
Fax: +39 0112442210

University of North London - ED

Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit
The Learning Centre
236-250 Holloway Road,
London N7 6PP, UK
Tel: +44 1717535044
Fax: +44 1717535012

Verein Projekt Integrationshaus - EM/VT/HO

Engerstrasse 161-163,
1020 Wien, AUSTRIA
Tel: +43 12123520/36
Fax: +43 1212352019

Vivir Aquí - EM/HO

Unió Pobles Solidaris
C/ Palleter 57,
Entlo.2,
46008 Valencia, SPAIN
Tel: +34 963857073
Fax: +34 963920996

Vluchtelingendag 1999-Refugee Day - CC

Vluchtelingen Werk Nederland
Jacques Veltmansstraat 29, PO Box 2894
NL-1065 EG Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS
Tel: +31 20 3467200
Fax: +31 20 6178155

Voices Without Frontiers - CC

AMARC-Europe-World Association of Community
Radio Broadcasters
Paternoster Row 15,
S1 2BX Sheffield,
South Yorkshire, UK
Tel: +44 1142210592
Fax: +44 1142798976

Wie Angst Unser Verhalten Beeinflusst - HE

OMEGA-Gesundheitsstelle-Verein für Opfer von
Gewalt und Menschenrechtsverletzungen
Granatengasse 2,
A-8020 Graz, AUSTRIA
Tel & Fax: + 43 316773554

Work & Language Experience Project - EM

Stichting Vluchtelingen Werk Utrecht
Telingstraat 2,
Postbox 1057,
3500 66 Utrecht, THE NETHERLANDS
Tel: +31 302340676
Fax: +31 302304350

***Working Towards Being an Equal Opportuni-
ties Employer - EM***

RETAS- World University Service
14 Dufferin Street,
London EC1Y 8PD, UK
Tel: +44 1714265805
Fax: +44 1712511314

World Job - EM

Ufficio Stranieri del Comune di Milano
Via Tadino 12,

Milano, ITALY
Tel: +39 0229403274
Fax: +39 0229517840

Woonbegeleiding (Housing Guidance) - HO
VluchtelingenWerk Nederland
See above

Youth school of Hilleroed - ED
Nordre Jernbanevej 5,
3400 Hilleroed, DENMARK
Tel: +45 48 250645
Fax: +45 48 241611

ZORA project - ED
Brøndby Language Centre
Brøndby Kommune, Brøndby Sprogcentre
Park Alle 292, 2605 Brøndby, DENMARK
Tel: +45 43282965

ECRE Position on the Integration of Refugees in Europe (appendix 2) September 1999

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ECRE key conclusions on the Integration of Refugees in Europe

A Definition of Integration

1. ECRE considers integration to be a process of change that is:
 - a) *dynamic and two-way*: it places demands on both receiving societies and the individuals and/or the communities concerned. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness to adapt public institutions to changes in the population profile, accept refugees as part of the national community, and take action to facilitate access to resources and decision-making processes.
 - b) *long term*: from a psychological perspective, it often starts at the time of arrival in the country of final destination and is concluded when a refugee becomes an *active* member of that society from a legal, social, economic, educational and cultural perspective.
 - c) *multi-dimensional*: it relates both to the conditions for and actual participation in all aspects of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country of durable asylum as well as to refugees' own perception of acceptance by and membership in the host society.
2. ECRE recommends that the objective of integration programmes and policies is the establishment of a mutual and responsible relationship between refugees and their communities, civil society and host states. This should encourage self-determination and sustainable self-sufficiency for refugees while at the same time promoting positive action in the public and government domain.
3. ECRE acknowledges that refugee integration is closely related to the phase of reception and the quality and length of the asylum determination procedure. It recommends that the phase of reception be recognised as an integral part of the integration process of refugees, given the potential impact of the reception phase on the process of integration of those eventually granted leave to settle in a European country.

The Legal Context

4. ECRE proposes that European states should adopt a *correct* interpretation of the refugee definition in

the 1951 Convention and its Protocol, and refrain from granting a lesser status to persons fulfilling the criteria of the Convention.

5. It recommends that any socio-economic rights accruing to people with full refugee status should be granted to all persons afforded complementary protection. Within the context of the Amsterdam Treaty, it proposes that the European Union agrees upon measures setting out the rights of persons with complementary forms of protection on the basis of international and Council of Europe legal instruments, human rights law standards and best practice. Citizenship and Freedom of Movement
6. ECRE considers citizenship to be a key policy instrument for facilitating integration and acknowledging full refugee membership in the society of durable asylum. It proposes that European governments give consideration to Article 34 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Council of Europe's Recommendation 564 (1969) on the Acquisition by Refugees of the Nationality of Their Country of Residence and facilitate refugee naturalisation.
7. ECRE recommends that the European Union undertakes to guarantee freedom of movement and equality of treatment in parity with nationals of EU countries to persons whose Convention or complementary protection status has been recognised by an EU Member State. Throughout Europe, individual states should ensure that they adopt measures to facilitate travel for refugees residing in their territory.

Key Principles of Refugee Integration

8. The development of a tolerant inclusive society is a key prerequisite to the successful integration of refugees. Governments and decision-makers should provide political leadership and set the tone in public debate on tolerance and non-discrimination.
9. ECRE emphasises the importance of close links and multi-sector alliances of social actors involved in refugee issues. Such alliances should seek the involvement of representatives of the media, political parties, local municipalities and businesses, the police, local/national non-governmental organisations and other associations.
10. A key priority for the non-governmental sector across Europe should be the participation of refugees as service users and providers in the conception, development, organisation and evaluation of integra-

tion services and policies. ECRE proposes that providers of integration services, in close consultation with refugees and/or their community representatives, undertake to develop commonly agreed criteria for assessing the quality and effectiveness of integration interventions at national and European level.

11. In order to promote the active participation of refugees in European host societies, ECRE emphasises the importance of enabling refugees to use their own resources and skills to help each other, in particular newcomers, and represent their interests and those of their family and community to service providers and decision makers. National funding should be made available to facilitate the development of refugee organisations and self-help groups as well as the co-ordination of refugee organisations' activities at regional and national level.
12. ECRE proposes that within the spirit of the 1951 Convention, European governments recognise refugees as “individuals with special needs” and therefore distinct service requirements during the initial phase of their integration in a host society. Interventions should be needs-led and based upon a recognition of the diversity of refugee populations. In some cases, it should be acknowledged that interventions might be necessary at a later stage of the integration process.
13. Policy makers and service providers, particularly in the areas of health, education and employment advice, should be trained in the consequences of language difficulties, physical and psychological trauma and cultural/religious differences on the integration process of refugees.
14. Government policies and resource allocations for refugee integration need to be compatible with social protection arrangements specific to individual European countries. Countries with extensive systems of social protection for a range of vulnerable groups should develop time-limited refugee-specific policies/ programmes. Such initiatives could either address refugee-specific needs or act as “bridges” to mainstream provision.
15. In countries with less regulated/non group-specific social policy traditions, mainstream social policy should make provisions for special interventions - rather than separate treatment - to address the potential disadvantages faced by refugees and cater for specific needs in the areas of mental health or legal aid.
16. Interventions need to incorporate a gender perspective and involve refugee women in the design, implementation and evaluation of integration programmes.

Employment, Education and Vocational Training

17. Employment is a key factor to the integration process. ECRE affirms that lack of access to the labour market during the reception phase seriously hinders integration in the long-term. It recommends that any restrictions on employment be lifted at the earliest possible stage and not later than six months from the time of the asylum application.
18. ECRE urges national governments to grant refugees and people with a complementary protection status unconditional rights to employment and automatic access to work permits. It recommends that vocational training and other programmes promoting refugee labour participation should be individually tailored with interventions being built upon a thorough understanding of the state of the labour market and linked to general economic regeneration/development strategies.
19. ECRE recommends that a system of recognition of previous experience and qualifications should be set up at EU level. This should establish EU-wide verification and assessment criteria and a set of recommended practice for bridging gaps between refugee qualifications' levels and industry or education standards in countries of durable asylum.
20. It recommends that provision should be made for special education or language programmes for refugees during the initial phase of integration. Financial support on a parity with nationals of the host country should also be available for general educational purposes and for bridging the gap between refugees' original qualifications and entry requirements for further mainstream education in the host country.
21. All refugees granted leave to stay in a European country should be entitled to a minimum number of hours of free language tuition. Special arrangements should be made for carers in terms of assistance with child care. Arrangements should also be in place for asylum seekers to acquire basic skills in the language of the host country.

Housing

22. ECRE recommends that European states guarantee the basic human right of “shelter” to all persons in need of international protection independently of their status.
23. It recommends that Convention refugees and people with a complementary protection status are given choice as to where to settle and enjoy full access to housing rights. Upon receiving a permission to stay,

people accommodated in reception centres should be given all necessary information to make an “informed decision” following full consideration of the type and location of housing which might be available to them.

Health

24. ECRE considers that limited or no access to health provision together with lack of adequate and healthy reception conditions during the initial phase of arrival can seriously undermine refugee long-term health and integration prospects. It proposes that physical and mental health services should be made available to asylum seekers upon arrival in European countries of asylum.
25. ECRE suggests that specialised refugee services should form a permanent part of mainstream health provision and benefit from long-term public support. They should act as “bridges” to mainstream provision and focus on specific care and treatment needs resulting from experiences in the country of origin and during a refugee’s flight to safety and reception in host country.
26. In order to overcome barriers to health access, key priority should also be given to the establishment of interpreting and mediation services as well as the promotion of health education and prevention programmes.

Family Reunion

27. ECRE recommends that family reunion should not be limited to people meeting the criteria of the 1951 Convention but also be extended to people granted a complementary protection status.
28. European governments should not impose restrictions on the right to family reunification of refugees and people with complementary protection status relating to length of residence, employment status, access to housing and earning capacity, or availability of documentation proving family links. Attempts should be made to ensure that refugee families reunite with the least possible delay and at a minimum within the first six months from status determination.

Investment in Integration

29. ECRE considers refugee integration to be the primary responsibility of national governments. When calculating the cost of refugee integration programmes, European governments should take into con-

sideration the long-term economic and social costs associated with risks of refugee marginalisation in the case of public non-intervention at an early stage. Given the European dimension of refugee integration and on the basis of solidarity across Europe, structural and special funding need to continue being available to realise EU-wide targets of refugee integration.

30. Considerable investment needs to be made in services during the reception phase in order to enable people to develop the necessary skills and knowledge which facilitate integration in the host country in the case of a positive asylum decision.

31. Investment should also be made in educational measures to enable people to gain qualifications useful for rebuilding their home country in case of return.

September 1999

Executive Summary

In this position paper, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) has compiled the views of its member agencies, consisting of over sixty-five refugee-assisting non-governmental agencies throughout Europe, with regard to how the integration of refugees in European societies should be organised. It draws upon discussions which took place at experts' meetings and a conference on refugee integration in Europe hosted by the ECRE Task Force on Integration in 1998. It also incorporates proposals made by refugee panels organised in Dalfsen, the Netherlands in July 1999.

ECRE starts by noting that the integration of refugees in European societies is subject to considerable variations in national practice reflecting differences in approaches to social welfare and protection as well as differences in national perceptions of what is, or should be, a desirable social order.

It acknowledges that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and other international and national legal instruments provide an adequate international legal framework for the integration of Convention refugees in Europe. However, it raises questions as to the efficacy of both international and national legal frameworks on refugee integration given the low proportion of asylum seekers whose refugee status is recognised under the 1951 Convention and to whom asylum is currently granted.

ECRE notes the considerable differences in European states' citizenship and naturalisation criteria. It reaffirms the role of citizenship acquisition as a potent measure of refugee integration in a host society. It also stresses the importance of refugees' freedom of movement and equality of treatment in parity with EU nationals in the European Union.

Within the context of an emergence of a climate of intolerance, xenophobia and racism in some European countries, ECRE specifically highlights the need to change public perceptions of refugees and promote positive messages based upon well-documented and comprehensive information.

Throughout the position paper, the critical role of refugee empowerment in the process of integration is emphasised. References are also made to strategies used by European countries to facilitate the development of refugee community organisations and refugee participation in public life.

ECRE puts forward a range of specific policy recommendations in relation to the legal, socio-cultural and structural framework of integration and specific issues such as: refugee access to the labour market; discrimination in the workplace; recognition of overseas qualifications; vocational training; education; children's education; housing; health; family reunion; data on refugees; and the cost of refugee integration. It hopes that this Position will assist the ongoing process of searching for guiding principles and standards among European states and raise public awareness of the complex needs and enormous potential of refugees living in the midst of Europe's societies.

Introduction

1. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) is a pan-European organisation concerned with the protection of and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. Within this overall concern, ECRE promotes the integration of refugees and people granted complementary protection in European societies.
2. In 1997, upon the request of non-governmental organisations such as ECRE, the European Parliament created a special budget-line with the purpose of addressing the socio-economic integration of refugees. During the same year, ECRE set up a Task Force on Integration, a consortium of six lead agencies and a secretariat to be responsible for addressing specific integration areas and facilitating network-

102 The Task Force on Integration consists of the following ECRE member agencies: British Refugee Council: *Employment*; World University Service: *Education*; Dutch Refugee Council: *Housing*; Greek Refugee Council: *Community & Culture*; Italian Refugee Council: *Health*; and France Terre d' Asile: *Vocational Training*. The secretariat of the Task Force is based at the Overlegcentrum voor Integratie van Vluchtelingen (OCIV) in Belgium.

ing among providers.¹⁰² The findings of the Task Force's work in 1998 and 1999 have informed ECRE's Position on the Integration of Refugees in Europe.

3. This paper should be read in conjunction with the ECRE Positions on the Reception of Asylum Seekers (June 1997) and Asylum Seeking and Refugee Women (1997) and in the light of other ECRE policy statements.¹⁰³

General Remarks

Definition and scope

4. The integration of refugees in European countries is subject to considerable variations in national practice reflecting differences in approaches to social welfare and protection as well as differences in national perceptions of what is, or should be, a desirable social order. While the issue of integration has gained increasing prominence in refugee debate in national and international fora, there are as yet few established international principles governing this area.
5. Integration is here defined as a process of change that is:
 - a) *dynamic and two-way*: it places demands on both receiving societies and the individuals and/or the communities concerned. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one's own cultural identity.¹⁰⁴ From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness to adapt public institutions to changes in the population profile, accept refugees as part of the national community, and take action to facilitate access to resources and decision-making processes.
 - b) *long term*: from a psychological perspective, it often starts at the time of arrival in the country of final destination and is concluded when a refugee becomes an *active* member of that society from a legal, social, economic, educational and cultural perspective. It is often the case that the integration process extends beyond the first generation of refugees.
 - c) *multi-dimensional*: it relates both to the conditions for and actual participation in all aspects of the

103 In particular, *Position on Refugee Children* (1996) and *Working Paper on the Need for a Supplementary Refugee Definition* (1993).

104 The concept of cultural identity of refugees and host societies is often seen as static and unidirectional. The reality is often more complex. In many cases, refugees have an impact on the social cultures and structures of countries of durable asylum while at the same time, as individuals, they engage in a process of redefinition of their values as a result of changes stemming from their experiences of exile.

economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country of durable asylum as well as to refugees' own perception of acceptance by and membership in the host society.

6. ECRE recommends that the objective of integration programmes and policies is the establishment of a mutual and responsible relationship between refugees and their communities, civil society and host states. This should encourage self-determination and sustainable self-sufficiency for refugees while at the same time promoting positive action in the public and government domain.
7. ECRE proposes that integration interventions should be based upon a set of substantive rights and responsibilities conferred to refugees on the basis of equality with nationals of European societies rather than fulfilment of citizenship or national/ethnic membership criteria.¹⁰⁵ Public discourse on refugee integration should acknowledge the permanent presence of refugees and the positive contributions they can make in the economic, social and cultural life of the countries they live in.
8. It further recommends that European and national actions/programmes on refugee integration build upon the skills and potential of refugees themselves and seek to promote:
 - a) *the active participation of refugees* in a common sphere of public social life which is not segregated from the wider society and within a context of provision of social welfare in parity with nationals (in terms of income, education, accommodation and health services);
 - b) *respect for differences and diversity* in relation to religious beliefs, political opinions, cultural affiliations, personal and cultural identities as manifested both in the private and public spheres of life;
 - c) *self-development* by enabling refugees to use their skills and knowledge, engage in meaningful employment and achieve self-sufficiency either personally or as a member of their family or ethnic group.
9. This policy position is concerned specifically with the integration of “refugees *who have settled or who intend to settle in European states*”.¹⁰⁶ It however acknowledges that refugee integration is closely related to the phase of reception and the quality and length of the asylum determination procedure. Within this context, ECRE recommends that the phase of reception be recognised as an integral part of

105 The UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees prescribes a number of socio-economic rights to people recognised as refugees. Some of these are limited to ensuring equality of treatment with other non-nationals (i.e. Articles 17, 18, 19 on the right to work; Article 22, 2 on the right to higher education; Article 21 on the right to housing etc) while others provide for the same treatment with nationals (i.e. Article 23 on the right to public relief). For a detailed analysis of the socio-economic rights of refugees and non-nationals in Europe, see the *Research Paper on the Social and Economic Rights of Non-Nationals in Europe* commissioned by ECRE, November 1998.

106 This is the definition used by the European Commission in *Budget Line B3-4113- Integration of Refugees, Report on the Implementation and Selection of Projects in 1997*.

the integration process of refugees, given the potential impact of the reception phase on the process of integration of those eventually granted leave to settle in a European country.¹⁰⁷

The Legal Framework of Integration

International & National Instruments

10. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights together with the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and other international legal instruments¹⁰⁸ provide an adequate international legal framework for the integration of recognised refugees in Europe. At national level, a number of European states have sought to interpret their obligations under the 1951 Convention¹⁰⁹ liberally and have at times introduced generous national legal frameworks to promote the integration of recognised refugees in their society.
11. The efficacy of both international and national legal frameworks of integration however, depends on the proportion of asylum seekers whose refugee status is recognised under the 1951 Convention and to whom asylum is granted. Most European countries have low recognition rates and grant inferior legal statuses to persons not falling within an often limited or even restrictive interpretation of the 1951 Convention definition. The socio-economic rights of people afforded complementary protection are often limited.¹¹⁰ The European Union¹¹¹ and UNHCR¹¹² do not have a formal position on either the integration rights of Convention refugees or the socio-economic entitlements of persons with a complementary protection status.

107 For a detailed list of recommendations, see ECRE' s *Position on the Reception of Asylum Seekers*, (June 1997).

108 International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950).

109 Entitlements to Convention rights are granted on an incremental basis, relating to the refugee' s degree of attachment to the state. Some rights accrue to refugees who are simply *present* in the territory under a state' s jurisdiction [A.3 (non-discrimination), A.4 (religion), A.16 (access to the courts), A.22 (public education), A.27 (identity papers), A.33 (prohibition of expulsion)]; other rights are reserved for refugees who are *lawfully present* [A.18 (self-employment), A.26 (freedom of movement) and A.32 (expulsion)]; or who are *lawfully staying* [A.15 (right of association), A.16(2) (access to courts), A.17(1) (wage-earning employment), A.19 (liberal professions), A.21 (housing), A.23 (public relief), A.24 (labour legislation and social security), A.25 (administrative assistance) and A.28 (travel documents)]; or are *residing for an extended period* in the territory of the host state [A.17(2) (wage-earning employment), and A.7(2-5) (exemption from legislative reciprocity)].

110 A notable exception is the situation in some Nordic countries where people with complementary protection are granted the same socio-economic rights as Convention refugees.

111 In 1995, the European Union Council considered a Draft Council Act adopting a common action on certain aspects of the status of refugees recognised by the Member States of the European Union. Among other issues, the Draft Council

Recommendations

12. ECRE proposes that European states should adopt a *correct* interpretation of the refugee definition in the 1951 Convention and its Protocol, and refrain from granting a lesser status to persons fulfilling the criteria of the Convention.
13. It recommends that any socio-economic rights accruing to people with full refugee status should be granted to all persons afforded complementary protection.¹¹³ It further proposes that within the context of the Amsterdam Treaty, the European Union¹¹⁴ agrees upon measures setting out the rights of persons with complementary forms of protection on the basis of international and Council of Europe legal instruments, human rights law standards and best practice.¹¹⁵
14. There is a need to make the range of international legal instruments relating to refugee integration fully effective. ECRE recommends that the following measures should be considered wherever necessary by states:
 - a) ratification of, or accession to, relevant European agreements and conventions relating to refugees;¹¹⁶
 - b) ratification of conventions and acceptance of recommendations of the International Labour Organisation as they relate to refugees;¹¹⁷

Act proposed that recognised refugees a) be granted a residence permit valid for 10 years; b) be granted family reunification rights which are not subject to the conditions normally required of other aliens; c) be assisted in settling in another Member State on humanitarian, cultural and family grounds; and d) be granted access to employment, welfare and social security rights on the basis of equality with nationals of the state they reside. It also recommended that Member States undertook to harmonise their efforts relating to other aspects dealt by the Geneva Convention. The Draft Council Act was never adopted.

- 112 UNHCR considers local integration to be one of the traditional durable solutions for refugees together with voluntary repatriation and resettlement (UNHCR Conclusion No. 62 (XLI). In its annual Conclusions on International Protection, it has refrained however from commenting upon the principles/minimum standards necessary for refugee local integration.
- 113 In its February 1999 Resolution on the harmonisation of forms of protection complementing refugee status in the European Union, the European Parliament has recommended that complementary protection should be granted to the following categories: “persons who have fled their country or are unable or unwilling to return because their lives, safety or freedom are threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights and other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order; and persons who have fled their country, and/or are unwilling to return there, owing to a well-founded fear of being tortured or of being subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or violations of other fundamental human rights.”
- 114 The Treaty of Amsterdam prescribes that within five years after the entry into force of the Treaty, measures will be adopted to define the minimum standards for persons who otherwise need international protection (Article 63 (2) (a).
- 115 The Council of Europe’s Recommendation 773 (1976) on De Facto Refugees recommends that states make applicable to de facto refugees (people unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin for political, religious or other valid reasons) as many articles as possible of the 1951 Convention.

- c) ratification of the November 1995 Additional Protocol Amending the European Social Charter establishing a collective complaints procedure;¹¹⁸
- d) ratification of the December 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

Nationality & Citizenship

- 15. The acquisition of citizenship has been identified as the “most potent measure of integration into a host society by foreign nationals”.¹¹⁹ Not only, does it represent a means to integration but for some people it might signify the end of the integration process per se.
- 16. There are considerable differences in European states’ citizenship and naturalisation criteria and procedures reflecting distinct historical experiences as countries of emigration or immigration, different concepts of nationhood and inclusionary or exclusionary policies towards long-term residents. Some countries tend to prioritise the principle of blood relation with a citizen of the state (principle of *ius sanguinis*), whereas others stress the importance of territory or religious affiliation (the principle of *ius soli*).

Recommendations

- 17. ECRE considers citizenship to be a key policy instrument for facilitating integration and acknowledging full refugee membership in the society of durable asylum. It proposes that European governments give consideration to Article 34 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees¹²⁰ and the Council of Europe’s Recommendation 564 (1969) on the Acquisition by Refugees of the Nationality of Their

116 The European Convention on Social Security (14 December 1972) and the European Social Charter (1961).

117 For example, Convention 97 concerning Migration for Employment; Convention 143 concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers, Convention 118 concerning equality of treatment of nationals and non-nationals in social security; Convention 157 concerning the establishment of an international system for the maintenance of rights in social security etc. Further information can be found in a *Research Paper on the Social and Economic Rights of Non Nationals in Europe* commissioned by ECRE in 1998.

118 The 1995 Additional Protocol Amending the European Social Charter provides for a System of Collective Complaints and encourages the Council of Europe’s social partners including NGOs with consultative status to report Charter violations to the Committee of Independent Experts in the form of a complaint.

119 Council of Europe, CDMG(93), 28 September 1993.

120 Article 34 recommends that states facilitate as far as possible the “assimilation and naturalisation of refugees” and “make every effort to expedite naturalisation proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings”.

Country of Residence and in particular facilitate the naturalisation of refugees by:

- a) taking into account the total period of residence of a person in a country of durable asylum including periods under Temporary Protection or as a registered asylum seeker;
- b) removing or at least reducing legal obstacles to naturalisation, such as the minimum period of residence when it exceeds five years, or requirements that applicants should prove loss of former nationality;
- c) allowing people to continue holding their original nationality when possible;
- d) enabling refugee children to obtain at birth the nationality of the country in which they were born, and where their parents have been granted protection;
- e) removing administrative obstacles by introducing accessible procedures, transparent criteria for acceptance and low procedural fees when they exceed the financial possibilities of refugees.

18. It further recommends that European states accede to the United Nations Convention of 1961 on the Reduction of Statelessness and treat *de facto* stateless refugees as though they were stateless *de jure*.¹²¹

19. There is an emerging trend in some countries to link permanent residence and naturalisation to the successful completion of integration programmes. ECRE regrets this trend and recommends that access to citizenship or permanent residence for refugees should not be conditioned upon fulfilling any legally binding requirements in respect of integration in the host society. Any future EU measures, under Article 63 of the Treaty of Amsterdam¹²² on conditions for granting long term visas and residence permits, should seek to facilitate access for refugees to a secure and permanent status.

Freedom of Movement and Travel Documents

20. Under the Treaty on European Union, a range of supranational citizenship rights have been conferred to nationals of EU Member States.¹²³ Article 63(4) of the Treaty of Amsterdam includes in the framework agenda for the transitional period of five years, the adoption of measures on the rights and conditions by which third country nationals legally resident in one Member State may reside in another.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Council of Europe Recommendation 564 (1969), point ii).

¹²² Article 63 (3) (a) prescribes the adoption of measures within five years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam including “preparation of rules on the conditions of entry and residence and standards on procedures for the issue by Member States of long-term visas and residence permits including those for the purposes of family reunion”.

¹²³ The Treaty on European Union (1992) establishes Union citizenship rights for all persons holding the nationality of EU Member States including the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.

Recommendations

21. ECRE recommends that the European Union undertakes to guarantee freedom of movement and equality of treatment in parity with nationals of EU countries to persons whose Convention or complementary protection status has been recognised by an EU Member State. Throughout Europe, individual states should ensure that they adopt measures to facilitate travel for refugees residing in their territory.
22. As an interim measure, refugees and people with complementary protection should be given access to simplified procedures for obtaining travel documents¹²⁵ and transferring rights of residence to other European countries on proof of family and cultural ties or an employment offer.¹²⁶

Voting Rights

Recommendations

23. In some European countries, there exist arrangements which enable refugees and other permanent residents to stand for or vote in local elections. ECRE considers that refugee access to local decision-making processes and the political life of the country of durable asylum is key to ensuring a two-way process of integration involving refugees and host societies on a equitable basis.
24. In accordance with Article 6 of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (1992), it recommends that European states grant refugees and people with complementary protection status¹²⁷ the right to vote and stand for election in local authority elections

124 *The Action Plan of the Council and the Commission on how best to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam establishing an area of freedom, security and justice*, (December 1998) refers to imminent discussions by the relevant working party on the question of giving third-country nationals holding residence permits the freedom to settle in any Member State of the Union. It proposes that in determining the rights and conditions under which third country nationals may reside in another country, account should be taken of the "consequences for social equilibrium and the labour market" resulting from third country nationals being allowed to settle and work in any Member State of the Union.

125 Article 28 of the 1951 Convention recommends that Contracting States issue travel documents to refugees "lawfully staying in their territory". It further affirms that states "may issue such a travel document to any other refugee in their territory ...in particular shall give sympathetic consideration to the issue of such a travel document to refugees...who are unable to obtain a travel document from the country of their lawful residence".

126 See also the Council of Europe's European Agreement on Transfer of Responsibility for Refugees, (1980). Also, Regulation (EEC no 1408/71) on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, self-employed persons and members of their family moving within the Community refers specifically to refugees' right to transfer social security entitlements including health care acquired through residence in a EU member state.

once they fulfil the legal requirements applying to nationals and have been resident in the state concerned for a minimum period of two years preceding the elections.

25. In order to familiarise refugees with political processes in the country of durable asylum and facilitate refugee representation and participation in local public affairs, ECRE also recommends that institutional arrangements should be made for refugee involvement and participation in local consultative fora/councils¹²⁸ and/or the activities of local non-governmental organisations. In all cases, information should be available to refugees as to their rights and obligations in relation to public life in the country of asylum.
26. Article 8b (2) of the Treaty on European Union establishes the right of every citizen of the European Union to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which s/he resides under the same conditions as nationals of that State. Within the context of initiatives such as the Starting Line Group's *Proposals for Voting Rights for Third Country Nationals*, ECRE recommends that all third country nationals, including refugees and people with complementary protection, are granted the right to vote and stand as a candidate at European elections after five years of residing in an EU Member State.¹²⁹

Anti-discrimination & Equality

27. Over the last few years, there has been an emergence of a climate of intolerance and xenophobia in some European countries. This has been particularly prominent in countries in Central and Eastern Europe where migration movements represent a recent phenomenon.¹³⁰ In 1997, the European Commission introduced the European Year against Racism aimed at raising awareness and promoting cooperation in fighting racism and discrimination.¹³¹ During the same year, Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam established the power of the European Union to act against discrimination based on, *inter*

127 See also Recommendation 773 (1976) on De Facto Refugees, II (iii) which invites governments not to subject de facto refugees to restrictions regarding their political activities - with the exception of political rights in the strict sense which depend upon possessing the nationality of the country of residence.

128 See also, Article 5, Chapter B - Consultative bodies to represent foreign residents at local level of the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.

129 As per the Starting Line Group's "Proposals for Legislative Measures to Combat Racism and to Promote Equal Rights in the European Union", 1998.

130 See also UNHCR Materials of the Experts Group Meeting on Freedom of Movement and Choice of Place of Residence in the CIS, 8-10 December 1997.

131 Prior to that, in 1993, the Council of Europe adopted the Vienna Declaration and a Plan of Action on combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

alia, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief. The European Commission plans to make proposals for anti-discrimination legislation before the end of 1999.

28. At a national level, since the introduction of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965,¹³² many European states have adopted a wide range of approaches to promote equality and fight discrimination. Some countries have introduced measures which promote multiculturalism and acknowledge the presence of minorities and/or provide support for cultural growth and expression by refugee/migrant groups. Other countries have implemented programmes aimed at raising public awareness to combat racism and xenophobia, and allowing for preferential action for second generation refugees/immigrants.¹³³

Recommendations

29. The development of a tolerant inclusive society is a key prerequisite to the successful integration of refugees. Governments and decision-makers should provide political leadership and set the tone in public debate on tolerance and non-discrimination.

30. Given the role of education in shaping public perceptions, training on human rights and refugee issues should be incorporated in relevant educational curricula. Intercultural education at schools and colleges and in the workplace should aim at promoting respect for differences, highlighting the benefits of cultural diversity and preparing people to live in an increasingly diverse society and economy.

31. Refugees and local communities should be supported in adapting to changes in their environment and engaging in constructive dialogue and co-operation at local and national level.

32. The Council of Europe should consider the development of a programme of activities educating the European public on cultural diversity issues. This could form part of the European Conference on Racism planned under the auspices of UN World Conference on Racism and scheduled to take place in January 2001. At the same time, UNHCR should continue playing a role in Europe-wide public awareness campaigns and the development of information/education materials on refugee issues.¹³⁴

132 The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination commits all signatory states to “adopt all necessary measures for speedily eliminating racial discrimination...”. A.1,2 however states that the Convention “shall not apply to distinctions, exclusions, restrictions or preferences made by a State Party to this Convention between citizens and non-citizens”.

133 Such action has mostly focused on targeted educational/training provision for young adults and migrant women.

134 During 1998/99, UNHCR has been responsible for a public awareness campaign on refugee integration issues in the Member States of the European Union.

33. European governments should seek to introduce national anti-discrimination legislation and systems to monitor refugee access to the labour and housing markets as well as to health, social and other community services. Provisions should also be made for the introduction of easily accessible complaints systems and legal enforcement mechanisms. Emphasis should be given to providing intercultural training to members of law enforcement professions. All such measures should parallel those in place for ethnic minorities or migrant groups in individual countries.
34. In the case of identification of distinct refugee disadvantage in a particular service sector, consideration should be given to the development of positive action initiatives to ensure the equal enjoyment of rights of refugees and members of the host society.¹³⁵
35. Any measures under the proposed European Union legislation on anti-discrimination should apply to both EU and third-country nationals permanently residing in EU member states without any distinctions or exclusions between citizens and non-citizens.¹³⁶

The Socio-Cultural Framework of Integration¹³⁷

*The Role of Civil Society*¹³⁸

36. European societies differ considerably in the degree to which they embrace cultural diversity and the ways they deal with refugees and foreigners in general. Some societies endorse acceptance and promote tolerance of difference, while in others, there is an expectation of assimilation into the dominant culture. In some countries, a pluralistic approach and commitment to multiculturalism underpins all refugee integration activities and programmes. The role of public sphere institutions¹³⁹ also differs considerably depending on the historical, cultural and political traditions of individual European countries.

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- 135 The principle of positive action is established in A.1, 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination where it is stated that “special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination provided...they do not lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups...”.
- 136 Detailed proposals for legislative measures to combat racism and to promote equal rights in the European Union have been made by the Starting Line Group in the form of a Draft Directive on Third Country Nationals and a Draft Council Directive Concerning the Elimination of Racial and Religious Discrimination.
- 137 The Greek Refugee Council has compiled detailed documents on issues relating to community integration and cultural adaptation. These can be found in the Task Force on Integration web-site <http://www.refugeenet.org>
- 138 Here, civil society is defined as “a sphere of dynamic and responsive public discourse between the state, the public

37. Across Europe, non-governmental and religious organisations often play a central role in advocating on behalf of refugees and providing specific information and integration services. At times, they also contribute to the development of opportunities for different groups in local communities to learn about others and to interact with them. In countries with a strong tradition of volunteerism, NGOs and religious organisations are involved in recruitment, training and management of volunteers.
38. A major role in the socio-cultural integration of refugees is also played by the media. This role ranges from positive to negative. In some cases, media may perpetuate negative stereotypes of refugees or “foreigners” in general. Occasionally, they play a key role in the fight for equal rights by exposing racism and discrimination and “mirroring” inequalities. In their role as purveyors of art -television, radio, music recordings - the media can also contribute to the way refugees may or may not participate in the cultural evolution of the society they live in.

Recommendations

39. ECRE emphasises the importance of close links and multi-sector alliances of social actors involved in refugee issues. Such alliances should seek the involvement of representatives of the media, political parties, local municipalities and businesses, the police, local/national non-governmental organisations and other associations. They should be developed in partnership with refugee community representatives.
40. In close consultation with refugees, non-governmental and church organisations need to play a central role in refugee integration debates by appraising public policy responses, mediating between host and refugee communities and seeking to influence public opinion. Their work should seek to mobilise resources from all sectors of the society and the wider public.
41. A key priority for the non-governmental sector across Europe should be the participation of refugees as service users and providers in the conception, development, organisation and evaluation of integration services and policies. With regard to policy and service evaluation, ECRE proposes that providers of integration services, in close consultation with refugees and/or their community representatives, undertake to develop commonly agreed criteria for assessing the quality and effectiveness of integration interventions at national and European level.

139 sphere consisting of voluntary organisations and the market sphere concerning private firms and unions”. Here, the term is used to describe a wide range of organisations operating in the public sphere including political parties, interest groups, welfare associations, social movements, religious bodies and the media.

42. Such criteria could be based upon objective and/or subjective considerations and include: labour market position and earnings capacity; legal status/residence rights; political rights; knowledge of the language of the host country; levels of participation in social and cultural activities; degree of refugee satisfaction with life in host country; levels of refugee recognition and appreciation of values, norms and attitudes of host society; public attitudes towards refugees; and host society recognition of and respect for the values and beliefs of refugee populations.
43. There is the need to change public perceptions of refugees and promote alternative media messages based upon well-documented and comprehensive information. ECRE considers that an important challenge for the European non-governmental sector is the development of information/media strategies which build upon quality material and thorough research while being presented in a user-friendly format. The potential of cultural events and other communication means (drama, literature, film, sports) should be explored further.
44. Some trade unions have played an important role in promoting positive attitudes and dispelling prejudice in the workplace. ECRE recommends that trade unions undertake to educate their members on “diversity management”¹⁴⁰ in the work place and involve employees with a refugee background in their activities as members and/or elected representatives. They should also engage in lobbying major employers and/or employers’ associations and highlighting the potential contributions refugees can make in the workplace.
45. At a European level, ECRE emphasises the importance of action against discrimination as outlined in the 1995 Joint Declaration of Social Partners.¹⁴¹

Refugees as Social Actors in the Country of Asylum

46. Refugee empowerment is critical in refugee integration. Some countries focus on the development of refugee community organisations. These provide a focal point for community activities, facilitate the development of political self-confidence, and act as intermediaries between individual refugee members and the host community. Another type of public intervention emphasises refugee self-development and expression through cultural or recreational activities.

140 The term is used to refer to training directed to managers and aiming to emphasise the importance of valuing difference in the workplace. It argues that ethnic, racial and sexual groups have different cultural styles of working which should not be negatively labelled.

141 The social partners are represented at European level through the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE) and the European Centre for Public Enterprise (CEEP).

Recommendations

47. In order to promote the active participation of refugees in European host societies, ECRE stresses the importance of enabling refugees to use their own resources and skills to help each other, particularly newcomers, and represent their interests and those of their family and community to service providers and decision makers.
48. National funding should be made available to facilitate the development of refugee organisations and self-help groups as well as the co-ordination of refugee organisations' activities at regional and national level.
49. Special consideration should be given to supporting initiatives which promote refugee women and young people's participation in decisions affecting their lives and provide them with facilities to meet and participate in the public sphere in their own right.
50. European Union financial support should be provided for activities which enable refugees to network with each other and with host society institutions at local, regional, national and European level.

The Structural Framework of Integration

Institutional Arrangements

51. Refugees face a number of barriers to integration resulting from their experiences of flight and involuntary exile; lack of knowledge of the language of the host country; isolation; problems of adaptation during the first years; and physical and mental health problems relating to past trauma and possibly torture. They also encounter a range of disadvantages relating both to social and economic factors, reception phase conditions and the shortcomings in some policies and practices of service providers in European states.

Recommendations

52. ECRE proposes that within the spirit of the 1951 Convention, European governments recognise refugees as "individuals with special needs" and therefore distinct service requirements during the initial phase of their integration in a host society. Interventions should be needs-led and based upon a recog-

inition of the diversity of refugee populations. In some cases, it should be acknowledged that interventions might be necessary at a later stage of the integration process.

53. Government action should consist of two inter-linked strategies: a) preparing individual refugees to function in society, fulfil their legal obligations and actively participate in the socio-economic development of the community they live in;¹⁴² but also b) making the economic, social, cultural and physical environment more accessible and welcoming to refugees.
54. Policy makers and service providers, particularly in the areas of health, education and employment advice, should be trained in the consequences of language difficulties, physical and psychological trauma and cultural/religious differences on the integration process of refugees.
55. There are considerable differences in programmes and practices addressing the needs of refugees throughout Europe. Government policies and resource allocations for refugee integration need to be compatible with social protection arrangements specific to individual European countries. It is advisable that countries with extensive systems of social protection for a range of vulnerable groups develop time-limited refugee-specific policies/programmes. Such initiatives could either address refugee-specific needs or act as “bridges” to mainstream provision. They could be combined with services provided to migrant or minority groups. The overall objective should be the eventual incorporation of refugee perspective(s) in minority/equality and general policies.
56. In countries with less regulated/non group-specific social policy traditions, it might be inappropriate to establish distinct arrangements for refugees. In this case, mainstream social policy should make provisions for special interventions - rather than separate treatment - to address the potential disadvantages faced by refugees and cater for specific needs such as in the areas of mental health or legal aid.
57. In all cases, interventions need to incorporate a gender perspective and involve refugee women in the design, implementation and evaluation of integration programmes.¹⁴³
58. Given the European dimension of refugee integration, ECRE proposes that structural funds should be available to support the realisation of EU-devised targets for refugee integration.¹⁴⁴ Specific funding should be set

142 Refugee skills and personal development could also facilitate the eventual return of refugees to their home country if the circumstances enable them to return in safety and dignity.

143 See also paragraph 47 of ECRE's *Position on Asylum Seeking and Refugee Women*, December 1997.

144 The European Social Fund and the Community Initiative EQUAL now contain specific references to refugees and asylum seekers.

aside to continue supporting innovation in approaches to refugee socio-economic integration and information sharing and promote the development of comparative and longitudinal research on refugee integration in Europe.¹⁴⁵

59. With regard to Central and Eastern European states, ECRE recommends that a funding programme to support developments relating to the integration of refugees in those countries should be established. Provisions should also be made to ensure that the proposed Pre-Accession Structural Instruments, set up through the EU enlargement process, be used to finance projects on refugee integration and facilitate co-operation between projects based in the EU and Central/Eastern Europe.

Access to the Labour Market¹⁴⁶

60. Very few European countries allow asylum seekers to work during the period they await a decision on their application for asylum. Some countries grant people the right to work after six months from applying for asylum. In others, differentiated rights are granted to asylum seekers in terms of the type of work they are entitled to and the length of time they can engage in employment.

61. Upon status recognition, most Convention refugees are automatically granted a permission to work.¹⁴⁷ In some countries however, the granting of complementary forms of protection to individuals not recognised at risk of persecution under the 1951 Convention only entails a restricted right to employment.

Recommendations

62. ECRE affirms that lack of access to the labour market during the initial period of arrival in a country of asylum seriously hinders refugee integration in the long term. It recommends that any restrictions on employment be lifted at the earliest possible stage and not later than six months from the time of the initial application for asylum.¹⁴⁸ In addition to receiving permission to work, asylum seekers should also be supported in accessing the labour market and participating in basic vocational train-

145 In 1997, the European Commission launched the implementation of budget line B3-4113 - Measures to Assist Refugees. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), limited financial assistance can sometimes be provided through the PHARE-LIEN Programme.

146 The British Refugee Council has compiled detailed documents on issues relating to refugee employment which can be found in the Task Force on Integration web-site <http://www.refugeenet.org>

147 The only notable exception being Luxembourg where the residence permit does not entail an automatic permission to work.

148 See also paragraph 37 of ECRE's *Position on the Reception of Asylum Seekers* (June 1997).

ing. Family members should equally benefit from arrangements applying to principal asylum applicants.

63. ECRE argues that employment restrictions risk pushing people into illegal work or encouraging dependency on public assistance. In particular, it views limitations on the employment rights of Convention refugees to be in violation to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.¹⁴⁹ It urges national governments to grant refugees and persons with complementary protection status unconditional rights to employment and automatic access to work permits.¹⁵⁰ Any employment restrictions justified by national security and citizenship considerations should be minimal and based upon reasonable grounds.
64. A great number of refugees across Europe face problems of unemployment, underemployment, downward mobility and employment insecurity despite high-level qualifications and/or requalification in the host country. ECRE recommends that programmes promoting refugee labour participation should be individually tailored with interventions being built upon a thorough understanding of the state of the labour market and linked to general economic regeneration/development strategies.
65. Priority should firstly be given to addressing language, communication and labour market orientation needs. A second phase could involve the development of employment access programmes which take into account refugee skills and knowledge, past experience, professional interests and future aspirations. Attempts should be made to facilitate “on the job” learning through a mixture of work or voluntary placements and further training.
66. Special emphasis should be given to increasing refugee women’s participation in employment programmes through provision of information on employment and social assistance rights and assistance with childcare or transport/mobility difficulties.
67. A key component of employment interventions is the establishment of partnerships between institutions such as Chambers of Commerce, public and private sector employers, local/regional development agencies, trade unions and employment advice providers. Consideration should be given to the development of

149 Article 17 of the 1951 Convention prescribes that refugees are to be accorded the best treatment given to nationals of any other country by treaty or by practice. Upon signing however, the Benelux and Scandinavian countries submitted reservations to A. 17(1) to the effect that the clause would not apply to their regional economic and customs agreements.

150 See also Articles 18 (self-employment), 19 (liberal professions) and 24 (1) (a) (labour legislation) UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 23, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 6, 7 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 5, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Part 1,1, European Social Charter.

mentoring schemes involving retired/active business people; workplace awareness-raising based upon “refugee success stories”; and the setting up of employment networking opportunities. At all times, refugees should be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies addressing their needs. They should also be engaged as “role models” mentoring people to jobs and self employment on the basis of their past experiences.

68. The Treaty of Amsterdam states that employment will be treated as a “common concern” by EU member states which commit themselves to co-ordinate their actions. At the EU Summit on Employment in November 1997, an agreement was reached on EU-wide Employment Guidelines which are to underpin National Action Plans on Employment. The 1999 Employment Guidelines include among their recommendations to Member States the promotion of “social inclusion and equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups”.¹⁵¹ Within this context, ECRE recommends that government measures to reduce unemployment in the European Union should pay particular attention to the employment situation of recognised refugees and people with complementary protection.

Discrimination in the labour market

69. Refugees often face problems of direct or indirect discrimination in the labour market which are difficult to prevent in practice even in countries with strong anti-discrimination legislation. European governments should seek to introduce legislation and racial harassment monitoring systems to fight discrimination in the labour market and promote equality of opportunity. Easily accessible complaints systems and legal enforcement mechanisms should be made available.

70. Similarly, national governments, non-governmental and church organisations have a key role to play in sensitising employers and trade unions to the existence of valuable skills and knowledge among refugees and their potential contribution in the workplace. The dissemination of positive images of refugees and best practice in employment should be promoted through intercultural training and public awareness campaigns.

71. The European Commission should play an important role in sensitising the European Social Partners through information provision. The forthcoming anti-discrimination measures under Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam¹⁵² should be equally applicable to refugees without making a distinction between EU citizens and non-citizens.

¹⁵¹ Vienna European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 11-12 December 1998.

¹⁵² Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam provides for “appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Recognition of Overseas Qualifications

72. Difficulties in accessing the labour market and downward mobility represent key problems facing refugees. An additional barrier relates to the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and past work experience. In some countries, there exist systems of “certification of competencies” which aim to facilitate recognition of foreign qualifications and work experience on an individual basis. In other cases, methods, such as AP(E)L [Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning], have been developed to help refugees evaluate past experiences.

Recommendations

73. ECRE recommends that a system of recognition of previous experience and qualifications should be set up at EU level. This should establish EU-wide verification and assessment criteria and a set of recommended practice for bridging gaps between refugee qualifications’ levels and industry or education standards in countries of durable asylum. In the case of certain professions, attempts should be made for the creation of recognised “top up” courses.¹⁵³ All such measures should parallel those in place for third country nationals.

74. Refugee assisting NGOs and other advice providers should seek to develop a thorough understanding of mechanisms of recognition of overseas qualifications. Emphasis should also be placed on establishing the rights, if any, of some refugees with regard to the recognition of their qualifications under relevant bilateral agreements which some European governments have signed.

Vocational Training¹⁵⁴

Recommendations

75. Vocational training should be seen as a tool leading to the employment of refugees rather than an end

153 See also Council of Europe European conventions in the field of recognition of academic qualifications including: No 15, European Convention on the equivalence of diplomas leading to admission to universities and its Protocol (No 49); No 21, European Convention on the equivalence of periods of university study; No 32, European Convention on the academic recognition of university qualifications; and No 138 European Convention on the general equivalence of periods of university study. The 1997 Joint Convention of the Council of Europe and UNESCO attempts to address issues relating to the recognition of previous qualifications for the purpose of education only.

154 France Terre d’ Asile has compiled detailed documents on issues relating to refugee vocational training which can be found in the Task Force on Integration web-site <http://www.refugeenet.org>

in itself. Vocational training programmes should be in tune with the current and future needs of the labour market and be time-specific leading to either work experience placements or employment.

76. In order to facilitate refugee access to vocational training, information services should be set up in individual countries. These should aim to provide easily accessible information on mainstream and refugee-specific vocational training programmes.
77. “Bridging” programmes should be established to support refugees in developing flexible training and labour market participation targets. These should consist of pre-vocational training courses, job-specific language training, labour market orientation, career advice and job search skills’ development. They should be linked to employment access courses and seek to involve public and private sector employers in “on the job” training.
78. Tailored programmes should also be developed to address problems of access in skills training faced by refugee women. They should be flexible and aim to help women to overcome cultural constraints or barriers, such as the need for child care, that impede their utilisation of training and educational opportunities. They should aim to empower women to undertake new roles in support of themselves and their families.
79. Refugee involvement in vocational training and integration-related programmes should be based on trust and goodwill rather than coercion. Imposition of sanctions for non-attendance should be in parity with compliance requirements applying to nationals and should follow a careful evaluation of the format and content of training programmes.
80. Given the effect of the reception phase on long-term refugee integration or return prospects, basic training provision should be made available to asylum seekers as soon as they submit an application. Such training should focus on the development of skills or knowledge which could be equally useful in the case of settlement in the host country, preparation for return and reintegration in the country of origin or resettlement in a third country.
81. Through the European Social Fund, the European Commission has funded a number of vocational training programmes targeting refugees living in EU countries. National governments should be encouraged to use their discretion under the new structural funds to support the continuing development of vocational training resources for refugees. Similar arrangements should be made for accession countries within the context of EU enlargement.

Education¹⁵⁵

82. Education is a powerful tool in the process of adaptation and social integration.¹⁵⁶ It promotes the personal development of refugees while at the same time improving their chances to contribute to the host society through participation in the labour market.
83. Some countries organise language tuition for refugees as part of comprehensive integration programmes for newcomers. Their duration can range from three months to three years. In some cases, attendance is compulsory for those receiving social assistance. In other countries, there are no arrangements for free language classes.

Recommendations

84. ECRE recommends that provision should be made for special education or language programmes for refugees during the initial phase of integration. Financial support on a parity with nationals of the host country should also be available for general educational purposes and for bridging the gap between refugees' original qualifications and entry requirements for further mainstream education in the host country.
85. All refugees granted leave to stay in a European country should be entitled to a minimum number of hours of free language tuition. Special arrangements should be made for carers in terms of assistance with child-care.
86. Tuition arrangements need to be accessible and tailored to the needs and educational requirements of refugees. A range of courses should be made available including intensive/accredited courses, courses dealing with problems of literacy and/or geared towards vocational training/career development or socio-cultural orientation in the country of durable asylum.
87. Arrangements should also be in place for asylum seekers to acquire basic language skills during the initial period of arrival in the country of asylum.

155 The World University Service (UK) has compiled detailed documents on issues relating to refugee education which can be found in the Task Force on Integration web-site <http://www.refugeenet.org>

156 See also Article 22, UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 13, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Article 4, UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education; Article 28, Convention on the Rights of the Child; Protocol No 1, Article 2, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The Education of Refugee Children

88. Schooling is an essential part of the integration process of refugee children. By teaching a common language, providing opportunities to achieve a better socio-economic position in life and preparing pupils to live harmoniously in pluralist societies, schools play a key role not only as centres of knowledge acquisition but also as places of formal and informal preparation of refugee children to live in a new society.

Recommendations

89. Intercultural training should be widely available in order to sensitise teachers and other school staff of the effect of refugee experiences on children's learning processes. Awareness raising might also be necessary with curriculum development bodies.

90. Education departments should seek to support the development of appropriate methodologies to assess prior education gaps in refugee children's progress, recognise competency in mother tongue languages and develop benchmarks to assess the acquisition of national language skills.

91. Refugee parents/carers should be empowered to participate in the education of their children and in managing school affairs. When possible, schools should seek to employ intercultural mediators to facilitate the introduction of newly arrived refugee children to the educational curriculum and school environment of the country of asylum.

92. There are a number of difficulties encountered by refugee young people who might be deemed too old to join children's reception classes and too young to attend adult language courses or career counselling. ECRE recommends that educational providers develop special language and educational/career guidance programmes for 14-19 year old refugees. These should act as "bridges" to mainstream education or training provision.

Housing¹⁵⁷

93. Shelter is a basic human right and necessity. The conditions in which people live determine to a great extent their health, well-being and ability to engage in gainful occupation, pursue self-improvement

¹⁵⁷ The Dutch Refugee Council has compiled detailed documents on issues relating to refugee housing which can be found in the Task Force on Integration web-site <http://www.refugeenet.org>

through education and recreation and in consequence attain a decent standard of living.¹⁵⁸

94. There are considerable differences in housing provision for refugees in European states. In some countries, local municipalities allocate housing to refugees on the basis of a quota system or availability of accommodation. In other countries, refugees have to find their own housing in the private or public housing sectors. In some cases, short-term accommodation for refugees is available through reception centres which also provide social assistance to refugees.

Recommendations

95. ECRE recommends that European states guarantee the basic human right of “shelter” to all persons in need of international protection independently of their status.

96. It recommends that Convention refugees and people with a complementary protection status are given choice as to where to settle and enjoy full access to housing rights.¹⁵⁹ Upon receiving a permission to stay, people accommodated in reception centres should be given all necessary information to make an “informed decision” following full consideration of the type and location of housing which might be available to them.

97. In the case of countries with centralised systems of refugee allocation in public housing, consideration should be given to the presence of family ties or community links in the area where refugees are to be settled, as well as to employment and educational opportunities and the availability of integration facilities. In all cases, refugees should be involved in decisions affecting their livelihoods. Past experiences of successes or failures in refugee settlement need to also be taken into account.

98. Among the key prerequisites to enabling refugees to exercise choice are: access to information about housing options and the profile of individual regions; financial resources in the form of income support and housing assistance; and an unrestricted right to employment.

99. Entitlements to housing allowances and other social benefits should not be tied to residence in a specific geographical area. No differential treatment should be applied to Convention refugees, persons

158 Article 21 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees imposes a positive obligation on states to accord refugees with “treatment as favourable as possible” with regard to housing.

159 Article 26, UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; Article 12(1) & (3), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Protocol No 4, Article 2, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

granted complementary protection and nationals of the country of durable asylum.

100. Direct and indirect discrimination in the housing sector needs to be tackled. European governments should introduce anti-discrimination legislation to be supported in its implementation by funding provision for developing mediation services, establishing systems of monitoring racial harassment incidents and dealing with problems of spatial segregation.
101. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of programmes to sensitise refugees as to their rights and obligations under housing legislation. In order to facilitate access to the private rental market, funds should be made available to non-governmental organisations to enable them to develop refugee rent-guarantee schemes.
102. Local government, service providers and the wider public should be informed of the presence and needs of refugee populations moving into their area. Public awareness activities should focus on increasing understanding among the general public, building links between refugees and local inhabitants and highlighting the positive contributions refugees can make if made to feel welcome and included.
103. Politicians and public opinion leaders should provide leadership to the debate with non-governmental organisations and local authorities playing a key mediation role. Priority should be given to programmes orienting refugees to the customs and way of living of the host populations.
104. European governments/regional bodies should introduce regulations linked to funding criteria for urban renewal programmes in order to encourage local authorities and other providers to consult with local communities (including refugee residents) on the implementation of urban policies.

Health¹⁶⁰

105. According to the definition of the World Health Organisation (WHO), health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”¹⁶¹

160 The Italian Refugee Council has compiled detailed documents on issues relating to refugee health which can be found in the Task Force on Integration web-site <http://www.refugeenet.org>

161 In 1977, the World Health Assembly decided that the major social goal of governments and WHO should be the attainment for all people of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that would permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life. In 1981, the Assembly unanimously adopted a Global Strategy for Health for All to be implemented by the year 2000.

People's quality of life and capacity for personal development depend on their physical and mental well-being.

106. Refugees can suffer from a range of health problems relating to their experiences of political persecution, torture and imprisonment and the conditions of flight from their country of origin. Their state of health can also be affected by multiple deprivation experiences,¹⁶² prolonged separation from family members, difficulties with cultural adaptation and lack of perspective of one's future during lengthy asylum determination procedures and once they have been granted leave to remain in a European country.
107. There are differences in health provision for refugees in European countries. In some countries, people have restricted access to the national health systems during the asylum phase or when granted complementary protection. In other countries, they are entitled to services on the same grounds as nationals.
108. In the case of recognised refugees, the granting of health rights does not always imply the full enjoyment of such rights. Access to services is often hindered by inflexible administrative procedures, financial requirements (like co-payments), limited or no refugee understanding of national health systems and lack of awareness of refugee needs and care expectations by doctors and other medical professionals.
109. Language difficulties can also constitute an important barrier to refugee health access. In some countries, interpreting services are available as part of the national health system. These are not always easily accessible or appropriate to refugee needs. In other countries, there is no interpreting assistance.
110. Among some refugee communities in Europe, female genital mutilation (FGM) represents a major health concern. It is a controversial issue generating strong reactions from both refugee communities and health professionals. It involves immediate health risks for those subjected to it and has long term physical and psychological implications.
111. In most European countries, NGOs as well as church organisations play a significant role in providing counselling, psychological and social support and medical treatment to refugees in need. In

162 Substandard housing, low income, social isolation, unemployment or underemployment.

some countries,¹⁶³ they are fully or partly funded by the state; in other countries,¹⁶⁴ they rely on private donations and voluntary work.

Recommendations

112. ECRE considers that limited or no access to health provision together with lack of adequate and healthy reception conditions during the initial phase of arrival can seriously undermine refugee long-term health and integration prospects. It proposes that physical and mental health services should be made available to asylum seekers upon arrival in European countries of asylum.
113. When developing strategies to facilitate refugee access and use of health services, primary consideration should be given to adopting working methods which create trust between health providers and refugees. In order to overcome barriers to health access, key priority should also be given to the establishment of interpreting and mediation services as well as the promotion of health education and prevention programmes (including oral and written information material).
114. ECRE suggests that specialised refugee services should form a permanent part of mainstream health provision and benefit from long-term public support. They should act as “bridges” to mainstream provision and focus on specific care and treatment needs resulting from experiences in the country of origin and during a refugee’s flight to safety and reception in host country.
115. Physical and mental health interventions need to take into account the range of circumstances of a refugee’s life. Health providers should seek as far as it is possible to develop culturally sensitive services which reconcile European norms of health with non-Western health orientations. Training for professionals, including doctors, nurses, interpreters and others, on refugee and cross-cultural issues should be made available at educational establishments and in the workplace. The involvement of refugees and/or their community representatives as trainers should be considered as appropriate.
116. Refugee women should be fully informed of the range of health services in the country of asylum and be given the option of being attended by female medical professionals. Care should be taken to explain to women their choices concerning reproductive health and family planning, including information on the services available and the laws relating to abortion.

163 Mostly in Northern Europe.

164 In Southern Europe.

117. In the case of refugee communities where female genital mutilation might be common, health authorities should seek to develop health awareness programmes targeting groups traditionally practising FGM.
118. Health providers should adopt a common agreement on the care standards applying to refugees with mental health problems. Provisions should be made to avoid the stigmatisation of refugees who have experienced torture or other traumas. Special assistance, treatment and rehabilitation programmes should be made freely available and should cater for families as a whole where this is requested. Any arrangements should be gender-sensitive and take into account the effect of experiences of flight and exile on refugee short and long term well-being.

Family Reunion

Recommendations

119. The principle of family unity and respect for family life is firmly established in international practice.¹⁶⁵ ECRE recommends that family reunion should not be limited to people meeting the criteria of the 1951 Convention but also be extended to people granted a complementary protection status.¹⁶⁶
120. European governments should not impose restrictions on the right to family reunification of refugees and people with complementary protection status relating to length of residence, employment status, access to housing and earning capacity, or availability of documentation proving family links.¹⁶⁷
121. Attempts should be made to ensure that refugee families reunite with the least possible delay and at a minimum within the first six months from status determination.
122. The right to family reunion should not be limited to immediate members of family.¹⁶⁸ Procedures should be in place to facilitate access to family reunification for common law or same sex partners as well as dependent extended-family members.

165 The 1951 Convention does not incorporate the principle of family unity in the definition of refugee. The majority of states however observe a recommendation on the protection of a refugee's family included in the Final Act of the 1951 UN Conference on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons. Also see Convention on the Rights of the Child, A. 10 & 20, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, A. 10(1), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights A. 17 & 23(1), Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, A.8, EXCOM Conclusions No 9 (1977) and No 24 (1981). See also ECRE position on *Temporary Protection in the context of the Need for a Supplementary Refugee Definition*, March 1997, par. 24.

123. Family members should be granted the same legal status and entitlements as the individual refugee(s) they are joining. They should have equal access to the labour market, educational and health facilities and other benefits available to people with a similar status. Access to specific integration programmes should also be guaranteed.
124. Special consideration should be given to the family reunion requirements of unaccompanied refugee children¹⁶⁹ and elderly refugees.

Data on Refugees

Recommendations

125. In most European countries, there is little information on the socio-economic situation of Convention refugees and persons afforded complementary protection. ECRE proposes that European governments should give consideration to the development of centralised information resources on refugees. Such resources would facilitate the collating of relevant statistical data and enable European governments and non-governmental organisations to critically assess the quality and effectiveness of refugee integration programmes.
126. Data collection should be on a longitudinal basis and allow for analysis of the situation of second generation refugees.
127. Any introduction of systems to monitor refugee integration in Europe should be preceded, when relevant, by consultations with refugees and/or their representatives at national level. These should

166 Also see Conclusion No 15, EXCOM, 1979, General Principles e) about the right to family reunification not being limited to situations of permanent asylum.

167 EXCOM Conclusion No 24 on Family Reunification states that “when deciding on family reunification, the absence of documentary proof of the formal validity of a marriage or of the filiation of children should not per se be considered as an impediment”.

168 UNHCR’s Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status considers as a minimum requirement the inclusion of the spouse and minor children. It however acknowledges that in practice, other dependants, such as aged parents of refugees, are normally considered for family reunion if living in the same household. EXCOM Conclusion No 24 states “it is hoped that countries of asylum will apply liberal criteria in identifying those family members who can be admitted with a view to promoting a comprehensive reunification of the family”.

169 Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child prescribes that States Parties shall provide co-operation to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. See ECRE’s *Position on Refugee Children* (November 1996).

aim to establish *acceptable* methods of statistical information collation in order to justify and implement special measures in favour of refugees.

128. In order to improve the accessibility of research, ECRE recommends that provisions should be made for the compilation of short summary descriptions of research findings in English, French and Russian.

Financing Integration

129. There are considerable variations in the level of resources used by European governments to promote refugee integration. These often reflect differences in social protection systems across Europe. Some countries spend a high proportion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on social welfare and have well-developed refugee integration and general welfare programmes. Other countries have less developed social protection and integration systems reflecting welfare expenditure levels below 22% of their GDP. With growing problems of social exclusion and marginalization of indigenous as well as immigrant populations in Europe, there is increasing government and public concern as to the level of resources used to facilitate refugee integration.

Recommendations

130. ECRE considers the financing of refugee integration to be a key government responsibility. When calculating the cost of refugee integration programmes, European governments should take into consideration the long-term economic and social costs associated with risks of refugee marginalization in the case of public non-intervention at an early stage. Given the European dimension of refugee integration and on the basis of solidarity across Europe, structural and targeted EU funding needs to continue being available to realise EU-wide targets of refugee integration.
131. Considerable investment needs to be made in services during the reception phase in order to enable people to develop the necessary skills and knowledge which facilitate integration in the host country in the case of a positive asylum decision.
132. Investment should also be made in educational measures to enable people to gain qualifications useful for rebuilding their home country in case of return.

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Annex

Relevant International Instruments

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- European Social Charter (1961)
- Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter (1995)
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)
- European Convention on Social Security (1972)
- European Agreement on Transfer of Responsibility for Refugees (1980)

ECRE Task Force on Integration

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