

## **RESETTLEMENT BY EUROPE**

### ***THE ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ROLE OF EUROPEAN NGOs***

#### ***Summary Results***

### **Background Information**

The expansion of resettlement activities by European countries in order to increase global responsibility sharing for the protection of refugees is one of ECRE's objectives as identified in its *Agenda for Change, Europe's role in the global refugee protection system – The Way Forward*.<sup>1</sup> Resettlement is therefore a priority area of work for ECRE and is being taken forward through a variety of advocacy and capacity-building activities. In order to identify appropriate strategies and help define future actions for cooperation between ECRE and relevant stakeholders, especially UNHCR, it was agreed that it would be extremely useful to have more systematic information on the role European NGOs currently play in existing European resettlement activities and how they could support the expansion of such activities both at the pre-departure and post-departure stages. ECRE has therefore undertaken a limited mapping exercise looking at existing frameworks for resettlement in European countries and the current role and interest of European NGOs in resettlement activities.

### **The Questionnaire**

The objective of the questionnaire was to establish who does what, where, in what context and/or what NGOs (within ECRE) would like to do in relation to resettlement. It was aimed not just at organisations already involved in resettlement, or operating in countries implementing resettlement programmes, but was also intended to explore the potential interest of NGOs, should resettlement programmes start in their own country.

The questionnaire was distributed to all of ECRE's member agencies between December 2006 and February 2007. Responses were received from 46% of them: 35 organisations, 12 of which are directly involved in resettlement activities.

Their geographical scope is quite representative, covering 68% of the countries represented in ECRE (21 countries out of 31). Most European resettlement countries (Ireland, UK, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland) are represented as well as all European countries (except Luxembourg and Liechtenstein) that accept refugees for resettlement on an exceptional or ad hoc basis but have no established programmes (Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic and Lithuania)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.ecre.org/topics/ecres\\_refugee\\_agenda\\_for\\_europe](http://www.ecre.org/topics/ecres_refugee_agenda_for_europe). See also *The Way Forward: Europe's role in the global refugee protection system – Towards a European resettlement programme*, April 2005.

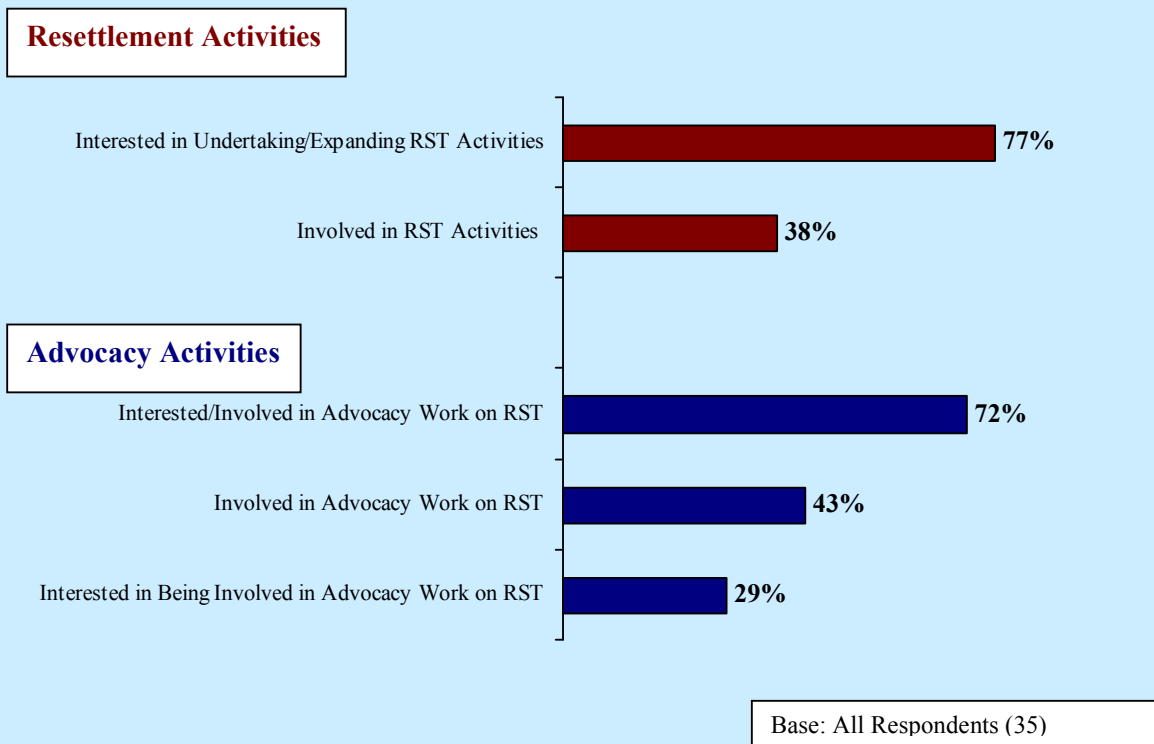
<sup>2</sup> Source UNHCR

The response rate and number of countries covered provide a representative and significant sample of the ECRE membership and will allow the drawing of general conclusions from the information collected. For a complete list of respondents and countries represented, please refer to Appendix 1.

## Overview

The results of the questionnaire indicate a great interest from NGOs in advocating and undertaking/expanding their involvement in resettlement activities. Table 1 shows that 38% of respondents are involved in resettlement activities and 77% are interested in undertaking or expanding these activities. Similarly, 43% of respondents are involved in advocacy to promote and improve resettlement activities and 29% would be interested in being involved in advocacy work. This means that over 70% of respondents are either already involved in or interested in advocacy work on resettlement.

**TABLE 1**



## European NGOs Involved in and Interested in Resettlement Advocacy Work

TABLE 2

Countries with NGOs <u>INVOLVED</u> in Resettlement Advocacy Work	Countries with NGOs <u>INTERESTED</u> in Resettlement Advocacy Work
Austria	Belgium
Denmark	Czech Republic
Finland	France
France	Germany
Germany	Greece
Ireland	Netherlands
Italy	Portugal
Lithuania	Romania
The Netherlands	Serbia
Romania	UK
Spain	
Switzerland	
UK	

Advocacy work conducted included campaigning for national governments to raise quotas for resettlement placements in some countries where resettlement programmes already exist (Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands). Groups in Spain, Austria, Switzerland and Italy are advocating for the establishment of resettlement programmes within their respective countries. In addition, some groups indicated that they are advocating on issues related to resettlement such as integration.

### NGO Involvement in Resettlement Activities

#### a) Assistance to resettled persons

The numbers of resettled persons assisted vary greatly among the organisations. The Finnish Red Cross is responsible for assisting 700-750 airport arrivals annually. The Dutch Council on Refugees (DCR) assisted 90% (approximately 1,500) of all persons resettled to the Netherlands between the years of 2002 and 2006. The Portuguese Refugee Council (PRC) reported having assisted 17 resettled persons and the British Refugee Council (BRC) has assisted 255 persons. Furthermore, the Asociación Comisión Católica Española de Migración (ACCEM) from Spain has acted as an intermediary for the resettlement of approximately 1,000 persons annually to the US.

#### b) Pre-departure activities

Only 3 of the 13 organisations undertaking resettlement activities are involved during the pre-departure phase. The three organisations are the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (ARCA), and International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC).

The activities in which these organisations are involved range from the identification of refugees in need of resettlement (DRC, ICMC), to deploying staff to UNHCR (ICMC), to being involved in refugee status determination (ICMC), to advising states at decision making stage

and cultural orientation (DRC, ICMC), to providing cultural orientation (DRC, ICMC), and providing counselling (ICMC).

### **c) Post-arrival activities**

The number of organisations involved in post-arrival activities is higher (10 respondents) than those involved in pre-departure activities. The 10 respondents are from Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. As noted above, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and the UK have established resettlement programmes while Lithuania, Portugal, and Spain undertake ad hoc resettlement activities.

Each organisation tends to be involved in several activities: 8 out of 10 respondents carry out 5 activities or more. Among these activities, the most common are family reunification and advice on accessing services (8 respondents each), followed by developing integration programmes, counselling, language and skills training, and employment advice (7 respondents each).

Other post arrival activities in which NGOs are engaged include providing information upon arrival (6 respondents), cultural orientation (6 respondents), preparing the local community (5 respondents), mentoring (5 respondents), and assisting with airport arrivals (2 respondents).

In most of the 12 organisations involved, these activities are carried out by paid staff, 5 also use volunteers, and only in one case is the work done exclusively by volunteers.

## **European NGOs' Interest in Resettlement Activities**

The majority of respondents (74%) have expressed interest in undertaking or expanding their pre-departure and/or post-arrival activities. Even though the number of organisations interested is the same for pre-departure and post-arrival activities (22 respondents each), there is interest in a wider range of post-departure activities, possibly due to European NGOs' great familiarity with such work.

For pre-departure activities, most respondents indicated interest in participating in the deployment of staff to UNHCR, assisting in the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, providing cultural orientation, preparing refugees for interviews, and preparing dossiers.

For post-arrival activities, most respondents indicated interest in developing integration programmes, assisting with family reunification, the preparation of the local community, providing information upon arrival, providing cultural orientation, providing counselling, helping arrange medical checks, and giving advice on accessing services.

Of the 27 organisations interested in undertaking or expanding resettlement activities, 20 would do so by using existing staff as well as employing new staff; while 5 would rely entirely on new staff.

Finally, 8 respondents indicated that they would not be interested in undertaking or expanding their resettlement activities for reasons such as lack of capacity or resources and the issue of resettlement not being a primary focus of the organisation's mission.

**TABLE 3<sup>3</sup>**

COUNTRIES WITH NGOS INVOLVED IN RESETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES <sup>4</sup>	COUNTRIES WITH NGOS INTERESTED IN ENGAGING IN OR EXPANDING THEIR RESETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES	
Denmark	Austria	Hungary
Finland	Belgium	Italy
Lithuania	Bulgaria	Netherlands
Netherlands	Czech Republic	Portugal
Portugal	Denmark	Romania
Romania	Finland	Serbia
Spain	France	Spain
UK	Germany	Switzerland
	Greece	UK

## Conclusion

Overall this limited mapping exercise indicates that NGOs based in Europe have a high level of interest in being involved in a wide-range of resettlement work. While it might have been expected that a majority of the NGOs are engaged or are interested in undertaking advocacy to promote resettlement to Europe it is perhaps less well-known that an even higher number of organisations are or would like to be operationally involved in their governments' resettlement activities.

ECRE therefore encourages all relevant stakeholders, particularly European governments and UNHCR, to explore how to further cooperate with European NGOs in improving and expanding, or establishing resettlement programmes. Many European NGOs already have considerable expertise that can be used to support resettlement activities and many others are currently actively engaged in building up their capacity and expertise in order to actively contribute to the expansion of European resettlement activities.

June 2007

<sup>3</sup> The information contained in this table is based only on the NGOs polled by the survey. This list is, therefore, not an exhaustive account of all European countries with established resettlement programs or those European countries engaged in ad hoc resettlement activities. Similarly, this list is not an exhaustive account of all European countries with NGOs interested in engaging in resettlement activities.

<sup>4</sup> Countries included in Table 3 under the heading "Countries with NGOs involved in resettlement activities" either have established resettlement programs run by their National Governments or engage in resettlement activities on an ad hoc basis.

## **Appendix 1 - Countries, Organisations & Networks Represented**

<u>Austria:</u>	Diakonie
<u>Belgium:</u>	Comité Belge d'Aide aux Réfugiés (CBAR) International Rescue Committee (IRC) Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen
<u>Bulgaria:</u>	Red Cross
<u>Czech Republic:</u>	Sdruzeni Obcanu Zabyvajicich se Emigranty (SOZE)
<u>Denmark:</u>	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
<u>Finland:</u>	Red Cross
<u>France:</u>	CIMADE Forum Réfugiés France Terre d'Asile
<u>Germany:</u>	Arbeiterwohlfahrt Diakonisches Werk der EKD
<u>Greece:</u>	Greek Council for Refugees
<u>Hungary:</u>	Hungarian Helsinki Committee Menedek, Hungarian Association for Migrants
<u>Ireland:</u>	Irish Refugee Council
<u>Italy:</u>	Italian Council for Refugees
<u>Lithuania:</u>	Red Cross
<u>Netherlands:</u>	Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR) Pharos
<u>Portugal:</u>	Portuguese Refugee Council (PRC)
<u>Romania:</u>	Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (ARCA) Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)
<u>Serbia:</u>	Group 484 Red Cross
<u>Spain:</u>	Asociación Comisión Católica Española de Migración (ACCEM) Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)
<u>Sweden:</u>	Save the Children
<u>Switzerland:</u>	Swiss Refugee Council (OSAR)
<u>UK:</u>	Ethiopian Community Centre International Rescue Committee (IRC) British Refugee Council Scottish Refugee Council
<u>International NGO:</u>	International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)