

**IRELAND**

**2002 COUNTRY**

**OPERATIONS PLAN**

## Part I: Executive Committee Summary

### (a) Context

Ireland has undergone a very rapid transition from being an emigrant producing country to an immigrant country developing institutions, legislation and procedures for asylum within a very short time. In 2000 Ireland was third (10,938 applications) in Europe with regard to asylum-seekers per capita. The Refugee Act of 1996 (as amended) entered into force in late November 2000. The Refugee Applications Commissioners Office (first instance) and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal were established on a statutory footing in November 2000. The asylum sector employs the highest number of civil servants of any Government Department. Despite the above progress the asylum procedure remains slow and has a considerable backlog. Ireland has introduced legislation in the area of trafficking, is drafting a bill on carrier sanctions and has entered into readmission agreements with Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Nigeria, to effectively combat illegal immigration. While recognised refugees in Ireland are afforded the same rights as Irish citizens, implementation of Ireland's integration strategy remains outstanding. UNHCR is perceived by the Irish Government as a credible and expert partner in helping Ireland to build its capacity to deal with asylum-seekers and refugees. Government/NGO relations remain fragile, but both agree that UNHCR can play a facilitating role in building partnership and dialogue. Ireland's economy remains strong and Ireland increased its overall contribution to UNHCR in 2001 by 87%.

The rationale of, and overall objective for, the operation in Ireland is to ensure the establishment and maintenance of quality asylum in a uniting Europe and to solicit Ireland's support to UNHCR and refugees world-wide. In this scenario, UNHCR's involvement in Ireland is essential in order to carry out a range of activities from:

- Developing a best practice based asylum system, to
- Promoting durable solutions for refugees and to
- Improving public awareness of refugee issues.

**All UNHCR activities in Ireland are, without exception, protection-related and constitute core UNHCR activities. All activities are directly implemented by the office. All activities in pursuit of the key objectives are closely inter-linked in terms of management, sharing of resources and operational co-operation. There is one directly implemented country project, which enables the office to carry out its planned activities. UNHCR is the only UN agency present in Ireland.**

### (b) Selected programme goals and objectives

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| <b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme:</b>  |
| <b>Quality Asylum in a uniting Europe</b>   |
| <b>Main Goal(s):</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persons in need of international protection will have access to Ireland;</li><li>• Ireland will develop, and gradually harmonise its asylum system in conformity with international standards;</li><li>• <b>Public opinion will be receptive to the protection needs of refugees and supportive of their integration efforts.</b></li></ul> |

| Principal Objectives   | Related Outputs   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Asylum seekers and recognised refugees benefit from national legislation and procedures conforming to international standards.</b></li> <li>• <b>Informed public supportive of protection and solutions goals</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government officials (eligibility/immigration/police) trained.</b></li> <li>• <b>Government/MPs including MEPs lobbied on EU harmonisation.</b></li> <li>• <b>Technical assistance in drafting or revision of national legislation provided</b></li> <li>• <b>UNHCR positions widely disseminated to all stakeholders including the media</b></li> <li>• <b>Brochures, posters and other P.I material targeting general public are produced and distributed.</b></li> <li>• <b>Press releases and opinion editorials issued.</b></li> <li>• <b>Speeches delivered.</b></li> </ul> |

| <b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme:</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Europe's support to UNHCR and Refugees world-wide</b>  |  |
| Main Goal(s):   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Governments, regional organisations and private individuals/ corporations will increase their financial support to UNHCR operations.</li> <li>• The European people will give more and better informed support to UNHCR and to the refugee problem.</li> <li>• States will actively uphold UNHCR's protection concerns and actively seek solutions to refugee problems internationally</li> </ul> |  |
| <u>Principal Objectives</u>   | Related Outputs  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR, as the agency responsible for refugee protection, gets a higher profile</li> <li>• The public at large understands the difference between economic migrants and refugees</li> <li>• Xenophobic trends diminish in favour of increased tolerance</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pool of informed and reliable journalists expanded</b></li> <li>• <b>Participation in local and national awareness raising campaigns</b></li> <li>• <b>Educational P.I. packs targeting educational institutions produced and distributed</b></li> </ul> |

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