

UNHCR Recommendations

TO THE EUROPEAN UNION: RESETTLEMENT NEEDS AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2021

In the past ten years, the number of forcibly displaced people has nearly doubled. In 2019, the number of people forced to flee (inside and beyond the borders) grew to 79.5 million – the highest ever recorded. Refugee situations continue to increase in scope, scale and complexity, whereas durable solutions provided to refugees are at levels that fall well below needs.

The [Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#) translates the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#) into a global plan for action to build the structures to increase the number of resettlement and complementary pathways places. It also seeks to expand the number of engaged countries and improve the availability and predictability of third country solutions for refugees. The Strategy foresees resettlement of one million refugees and admission of two million through complementary pathways by 2028. More specifically, the Strategy calls for an incremental increase of 10,000 resettlement admissions per year. The global resettlement admissions target was set at 70,000 refugees for 2020 and at 80,000 for 2021. It will be reaching 150,000 refugees by 2028.

The COVID-19 pandemic **had a serious impact with border closure and travel restrictions** and placed a significant obstacle in securing third country solutions for refugees in 2020. The pandemic's toll on European countries has been significant. Despite the major challenges caused by COVID-19, EU Member States remained engaged with UNHCR to find ways to keep resettlement programmes running: scores of refugees with emergency protection needs have been able to depart for resettlement; and innovative modalities have been adopted to maintain resettlement processing. UNHCR welcomes the support and assistance provided by EU Member States and local communities to refugees.

With the resumption of travel and admissions since June 2020, UNHCR stands ready to support States in their efforts. UNHCR is very pleased to see several arrivals to EU countries, including from the Niger Emergency Transit Mechanisms and calls on countries to assist and expedite departures in order to continue evacuations from Libya.

UNHCR welcomes the Pact on Migration and Asylum and looks forward to working with Member States and the EU. The Pact is a foundation for growing resettlement and complementary pathways in 2021 and beyond in reflection of the goals of the *Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*.

I. SOLIDIFYING THE EU'S POSITION AS A LEADER IN RESETTLEMENT

- ▶ **Recommendation 1: Increase the number of resettlement places:** While the Strategy's goal for 70,000 refugees to be resettled globally in 2020 will not be met, UNHCR asks the EU countries to do everything possible to meet the targets, whether by the end of 2020 or into 2021. UNHCR asks for the 27 EU Member States to admit at least 35,000 refugees in 2021, in addition to the 30,000, due to arrive in 2020. This would secure the EU's contribution of 40 % of global resettlement.
- ▶ **Recommendation 2: Increase the number of resettlement countries:** The Strategy also aspires to increase the number of resettlement countries globally to 50 by 2028. In the last two years, only 29 countries received UNHCR resettlement submissions, which is significantly less than in 2016 with 35 countries. The European Commission's support will be critical to revive lapsed programmes and increase the number of EU resettlement states.

- ▶ **Recommendation 3: Strengthening partnerships and build the capabilities** of actors that can contribute to expanding resettlement; engaging actors not traditionally involved in resettlement; strengthening the efficiency of processes and improving data collection to inform evidence-based advocacy.

II. GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT NEEDS 2021 AND KEY PRIORITY SITUATIONS

- ▶ **Recommendation 4: Priority situations:** As per the 2021 Projected Global Resettlement Needs (PGRN) more than 1.445 million refugees are in need of resettlement. UNHCR urges EU Member States to focus efforts on refugees along the **Central Mediterranean Route**, as well as **in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) countries**, and **in the Middle East, with a focus on Syrian refugees**. Additionally, UNHCR calls for **unallocated quotas** that can be used in a flexible way for urgent and emergency cases across the globe.

III. KEY POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ **Recommendation 5: Towards a predictable and sustainable European program:** The EU has taken encouraging steps to solidify a predictable and sustainable European programme for providing refugees third country solutions – with the draft regulation proposing the **Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework**. UNHCR looks forward to the opportunity to consult with the EU and Member States and provide input as the Framework comes closer to becoming a reality. The Pact and discussions ahead are also an opportunity to recall the importance of resettlement, and its function as a tool to provide protection and a durable solution to refugees.
- ▶ **Recommendation 6: Enhance collaboration among actors and EASO engagement:** UNHCR welcomes ongoing close collaboration with EASO and the opportunity to participate in EASO's recent Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Network meetings to maximize information-sharing and coordination among all stakeholders involved.

IV. COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS

- ▶ **Recommendation 7: Expand and ensure access to Complementary Pathways:** The EU can support the Strategy to provide complementary pathways to two million refugees within the next ten years. Complementary pathways should be **in addition** to, not a substitute for resettlement. UNHCR welcomes EU Member States' initiatives to expand programmes and to ensure that these include necessary protection safeguards.
- ▶ **Recommendation 8: Work with a range of actors to ensure more educational pathways:** UNHCR stands ready to assist and work towards expanding partnerships with various stakeholders, including academia, foundations, private sector, international organizations, universities and civil society for more educational pathways.
- ▶ **Recommendation 9: Ensure refugees can access labour schemes:** UNHCR welcomes the EU's support for labour mobility as a pathway and calls upon States to exercise flexibility allowing refugees to access already existing labour schemes open to foreigners generally.
- ▶ **Recommendation 10: Engage with civil society on Humanitarian Admission Programmes:** UNHCR calls for States to remain engaged with civil society actors responsible for organizing Humanitarian Admission Programs (including Humanitarian corridors) so that these efforts align with global resettlement needs and complement the EU and Member States' larger strategy.
- ▶ **Recommendation 11: Ensure the right to family unity:** UNHCR calls on EU Member States to preserve the right to family unity and expand refugees' access to established procedures that allow refugees to reunite with immediate and dependent family members. While the right to family unity is enshrined in international and regional instruments, many legal and administrative obstacles to family reunification remain.
- ▶ **Recommendation 12: Play an active role in ensuring community sponsorship:** UNHCR encourages the EU's active participation in Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) activities. The EU can play a key role in supporting states draft policy frameworks that support community sponsorship and resolving challenges that inhibit nascent programmes from reaching maturity.