

# EMN INFORM

## Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe – what works?

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This EMN Inform summarises the findings from the EMN Study on 'Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe – what works?'.<sup>1</sup> The Study was based on contributions from EMN National Contact Points in 24 Member States<sup>2</sup>, collected via a common template to ensure comparability. The key findings are set out below.

### 2. KEY POINTS TO NOTE:

- ★ 17 Member States and Norway have in place **resettlement or humanitarian admission programmes or schemes**, or have had them in the past, while six countries **do not (yet) have experience with resettlement or humanitarian admission**. Increased migration flows in 2015 were followed by several legislative and policy changes in 2015 and 2016 at Member State and EU-level, including rules on resettled/admitted persons.
- ★ In the EU context, resettlement is the transfer of a third country national or stateless person, on request from UNHCR and based on the need for international protection, from a third country to a Member State where they are permitted to reside with refugee status or a similar status. Humanitarian admission is not defined.

However, in the context of this study it refers to schemes which are similar to resettlement, but for varying reasons do not fully adhere to the definition of resettlement

- ★ While the main objectives of such schemes are similar, their main characteristics vary substantially among (Member) States on the type of scheme/programme, the existence of predefined quota and selection priorities, and methods of approach to carrying out and implementing resettlement and humanitarian admission activities.
- ★ The **UNHCR has a clear role** in identifying and interviewing candidates for resettlement, while Member States' authorities take the final decision on resettlement after **selection missions**. Dossier selection is also widely used, especially for humanitarian admission. Identification and selection involves the use of criteria for eligibility and prioritisation and exclusion or deprioritisation of candidates.
- ★ The **pre-departure phase** and transfer often involve the IOM and includes preparation to travel, medical checks and sometimes cultural orientation training or workshops. In 12 Member States, there are some specific post-arrival and integration measures or practices for resettled/admitted persons compared to other refugees.

<sup>1</sup> Available from the [EMN website](#)

<sup>2</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary,

Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

- ★ The majority of Member States grant the **same or a similar status** to both resettled refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection. Some humanitarian admission programmes envisage return to the country of origin and initially grant stay of up to two years, though in certain circumstances such stays can be extended, and indefinite stay is ultimately possible.
- ★ Member States' **rules and approaches vary** regarding accommodation, geographical distribution and integration measures provided to the resettled/admitted individual.
- ★ Although only six Member States<sup>3</sup> have implemented formal **private sponsorship programmes or schemes**, several other Member States are interested in developing such programmes.
- ★ The players involved in implementing resettlement and humanitarian admission schemes faced several **challenges**, resulting in numerous **improvements**, and identification of **good practices**.

### 3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of the Study was to offer a comprehensive overview of policies and practices on the functioning of resettlement, humanitarian admission programmes and schemes, as well as private sponsorship programmes for refugees in the EU Member States and Norway.

The Study presents and discusses:

- ★ The national political contexts for contemporary policies on resettlement and humanitarian admission in EU Member States and Norway;
- ★ Methods and criteria used for selecting persons to be resettled, and activities undertaken prior to departure to the resettlement country of the person or family;
- ★ Post-arrival integration measures, including cultural orientation, for resettled persons especially when they differ from integration measures for other migrants or persons granted protection;
- ★ The main characteristics of private sponsorship programmes for refugees in the EU Member States and Norway;
- ★ Challenges and good practices in the implementation of resettlement and humanitarian schemes.

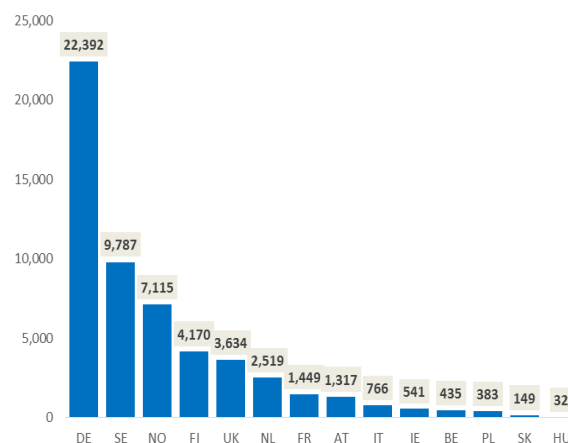
<sup>3</sup> Including the United Kingdom, which launched its private sponsorship scheme in mid-2016, and is therefore not further elaborated on.

## 4. DATA AND FUNDING

The **total number of persons resettled or admitted** through (humanitarian) admission schemes for all Member States that provided statistics was over 5,400 for 2011 and 2012, over 16,100 for 2013, nearly 18,000 in 2014, 10,300 in 2015 and nearly 18,000 so far for 2016.

Figures on persons resettled or admitted through (humanitarian) admission programmes and schemes from National Reports for this Study are slightly different from Eurostat figures. Figure 5 provides an overview of the actual number of persons resettled based on the quotas for the years 2011-2015.

*Figure 1 Actual number of persons resettled or admitted under humanitarian admission for the period corresponding to the quotas for the years 2011-2015.*

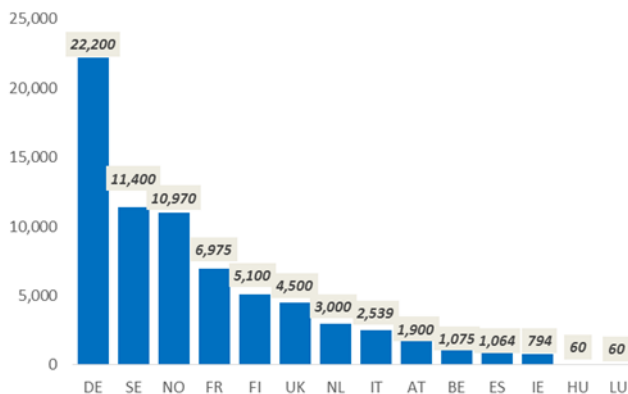


*Note: Statistics included all programmes and schemes, both resettlement, humanitarian admission and other. Decisions made in 2015 can lead to effective arrivals in 2016*

*No data for ES. UK figures only include Gateway Protection Programme. No quotas apply for Poland.*

**Annual national quota of resettled/admitted persons greatly varied among (Member) States** over the period 2011-2016, from less than hundred (BG, HU, LU) to 2,000 (AT, IT) and over 10,000 (DE, SE, NO). However, comparison across years is limited because some Member States rather use programme or scheme periods that span two calendar years.

Figure 2 Member State quotas for resettlement and/or humanitarian admission for the period 2011-2016.



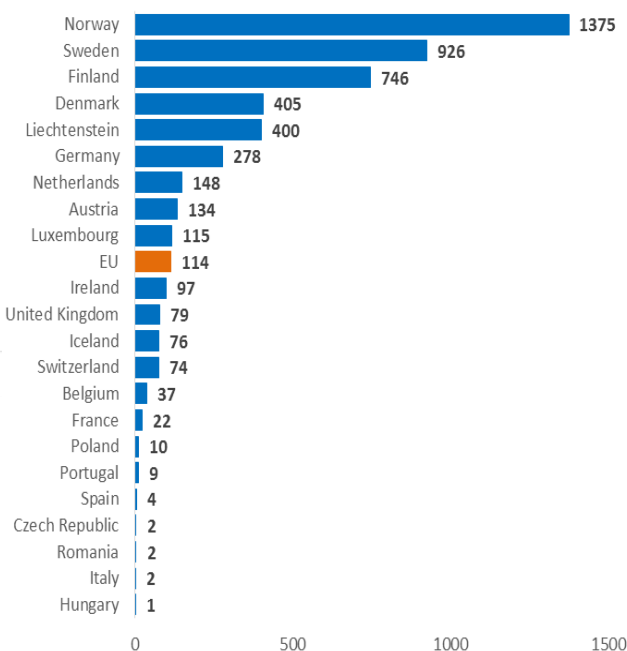
Source: Member States' National reports

Note: No 2016 data for ES, HU

Statistics for SE and FI includes emergency quota. The figure for LU is the upper estimate, with the lower estimate being 45. Figure for FR is an estimate. The pledge for its permanent programme refers to the number of applications to be processed. One application can concern several persons and/or can be rejected. On the contrary, the pledges for the two ad hoc programmes' indicate the number of persons to be resettled. Statistics for UK only includes Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) quota, not Syrian Resettlement Programme as there is not an annual quota for this scheme. For Poland no quotas apply.

When compared to the Member State's population, very large differences arise. When considering all persons resettled or admitted under humanitarian admission as a share per 1 million inhabitants, the largest share of persons are resettled by Norway, followed by Sweden and Finland.

Figure 3 Persons resettled or admitted under humanitarian admission by per 1 million inhabitants, for the period 2011-2015.



Source: Eurostat and Member State reports, elaboration EMN Service Provider

Note: Statistics includes EU Member States, as well as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Funding for resettlement is provided under the **Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)** through lump sums of EUR 6,000 per person or EUR 10,000 per person for persons resettled meeting certain criteria. In addition, Member State funding (excluding EU-financing) per person resettled/admitted for the quota corresponding to those years ranged from EUR 448 (FR), to EUR 725 (IT), EUR 895 (ES), EUR 995 (SE), to EUR 1,145 (IE), EUR 1,018 (FI), EUR 1,210 (LU), EUR 4,885 (PL)<sup>4</sup>, though such figures should not be compared.

## 5. RESETTLEMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ADMISSION SCHEMES IN EU MEMBER STATES

Due to the unprecedented increase in refugees arriving in the EU in 2014-2015, and to fulfil the commitments taken at EU level, these (Member) States started to put in place relevant legislation and operational plans to set up such schemes. In addition, a first ever European resettlement scheme was set up in July 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the actual number of persons transferred, not on the quota.

A year later, based on the existing resettlement and humanitarian admission initiatives at EU level, the Commission proposed a regulation establishing a Union Resettlement Framework.

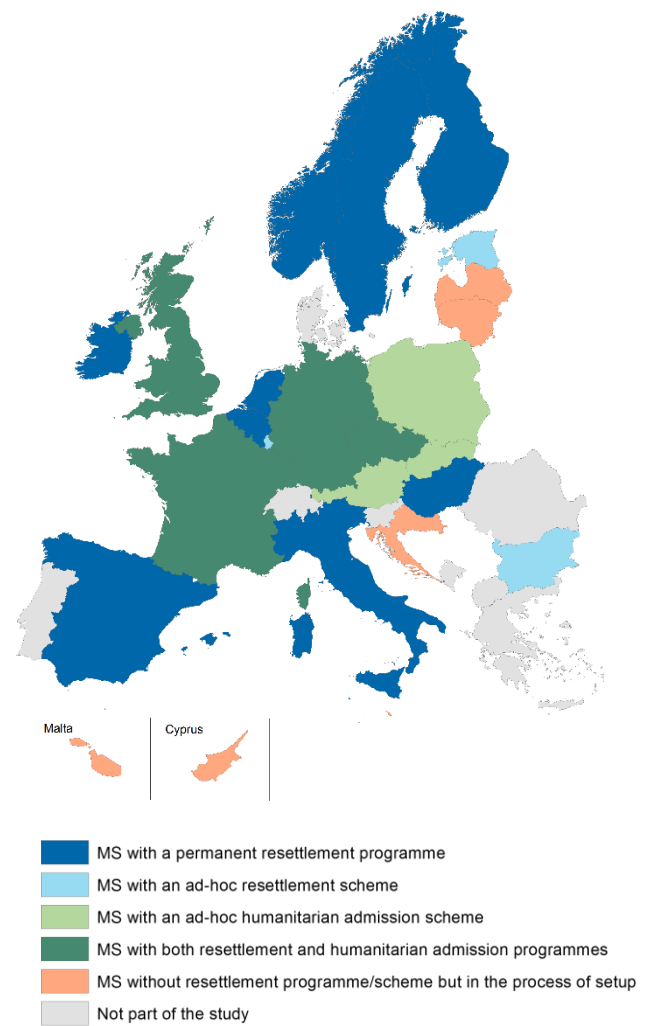
The **increased migration flows** were followed by several legislative and policy changes in 2015 and 2016 at national level, concerning: i. rules that apply to all beneficiaries of international protection including resettled persons (AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, FI, HU, LV, SE), ii. Rules that focus specifically on resettled refugees (BE, EE, NO, UK) or iii. Rules and procedures for implementing resettlement programmes or schemes (BE, DE, EE, FR, IE, NO, PL, SE).

#### Type of schemes

A total of 14 schemes in place are **national permanent programme-based schemes** in BE, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, NL, SE, UK (2), NO. Another 14 are **non-programme based temporary** (or **ad-hoc**) arrangements for resettlement or humanitarian admission, in AT, BG, CZ, DE (2), EE, FR (2), LU (2), PL (2<sup>5</sup>), SK, UK. In (Member) States with permanent resettlement programmes in place, resettlement has been an **established component** of the national migration and asylum policy.

By contrast, ad-hoc temporary schemes constitute an engagement of Member States in **response to specific humanitarian crises**. The first resettlement programmes were established during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The **number of schemes has increased** since 2010, especially since 2013 due to the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighbouring countries.

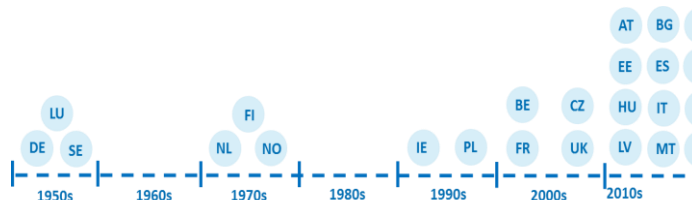
Figure 4 Overview of permanent and ad-hoc resettlement and (humanitarian) admission programmes and schemes



<sup>5</sup> This refers to 2 transfers that PL carried out in 2014 and 2015 from Ukraine.

Several Member States (**DE, FI, LU, NL, SE, NO**) have a long tradition of resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes, some of which were created soon after WWII. Figure 5 below shows when Member States and Norway established their first resettlement and/or humanitarian admission programmes and schemes.

*Figure 5 Time periods in which the first resettlement and/or humanitarian admission schemes were created or carried out<sup>6</sup>*



The **main objectives** of (Member) States' resettlement/humanitarian admission schemes include: providing protection as a durable solution; implementing international solidarity; providing safe legal migration avenues; implementing international commitments; and participating in the efforts to manage humanitarian crises.

The majority of (Member) States (BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, SE, UK, NO) define **annual or multi-annual quota** according to resettlement needs, reception capacity and political priorities. Total (Member) States quota for resettlement/humanitarian admissions has increased between 2011 and 2016.<sup>7</sup>

At least 16 (Member) States (AT, BE, BG, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR<sup>8</sup>, HU, IE, IT, NL, PL, SE, UK and NO) have set **geographical priorities** in resettlement or humanitarian admission for the 2011-2016 period, while three Member States (CZ, LU, SK) have no such priorities in place and decide the geographical selection of persons for resettlement on a **case-by-case basis**.

*Pre-departure and departure phases of Resettlement and humanitarian admission*

Member) States use a variety of approaches for the identification of persons for resettlement. Nonetheless, the **UNHCR has a clear role** in identifying (and interviewing) persons eligible for resettlement, and also for some humanitarian admission programmes and schemes.

In 16 (Member) States, the person needs to have been first **recognised as refugee by UNHCR** (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, SE, UK, NO). By contrast, this is not required under the humanitarian admission programmes and schemes of five Member States (CZ, DE, FR, PL, SK). Following this selection, some (Member) States (AT, BE, CZ, EE, ES, FI, HU, LU, NL, SE, NO) reassess the candidates identified by the UNHCR, while some others in principle do not (DE, FR, IT, UK). **Final decision-making** on resettlement and humanitarian admission always **lies with relevant Member State authorities**.

In order to select candidates several (Member) States (AT, DE, EE, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, LU, NL, PL, SK, NO) use additional **criteria for prioritising**. Such additional criteria or priority criteria are typically established by the responsible national authority. These criteria often relate to the vulnerability of persons, such as: survivors of violence and/or torture, persons at risk of violence and/or torture and persons in need of medical assistance. Other priority criteria include, among others, age (elderly persons/children), single mothers, family unity and links to the Member State, and integration potential. At the same time, **national exclusion criteria or deprioritisation approaches** are also in place (AT, BE, BG, DE, FI, FR, HU, IE, LU, NL, SE, UK, NO) which, on top of those under Article 1F of the Geneva Convention, could be having a criminal record, family composition issues, and being involved in military activities.

Member States and Norway use two main methods for the selection process: **selection missions** (BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, LU, NL, SE, SK, NO), and **dossier selections** (documentation only) (BE, CZ, DE, FI, FR, IE, LU, NL, PL, NO). Selection missions consist of interviews on site, and depend on the security situation in the countries concerned. In circumstances where missions cannot take place, Dossier selections are also used for some humanitarian admission programmes (in AT, DE, FR, PL, UK).

Once Member States accept persons for resettlement, UNHCR is informed. UNHCR will in turn inform selected candidates for resettlement. IOM is often also involved in preparations for departure, health checks and/or fit-to-travel checks prior to departure and, sometimes, cultural orientation.

<sup>6</sup> Finland began receiving refugees ad hoc already in 1970s, while it started an annual programme in 1985. In 2009 and 2011 Belgium contributed to resettlement projects on an ad-hoc basis and since 2013 the Belgian resettlement programme is permanent.

<sup>7</sup> Such national quotas are not binding, they only indicate the target number of persons to be resettled or admitted in the Member States.

<sup>8</sup> Only for the two ad-hoc programmes. For the permanent resettlement programme decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

A leaflet or guide about the persons' rights and obligations and the resettlement process or humanitarian admission is provided in most (Member) States (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IT, PL, SE, SK, UK, NO). Also, **cultural orientation training** or **workshops** with variable length are provided prior to departure for persons being resettled to Member States.

#### *Departure and transfer to the Member State*

The final stages of the pre-departure and departure phase involve more practical steps involved in the actual transfer of the person to the (Member) State. For several Member States actual transfer and pre-departure assistance on-site is arranged by **IOM** (AT, BE, DE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, SE, UK, NO), on the basis of a bilateral agreement or contract between the Member State and the IOM. Other Member States (BG, CZ) organise departure and travel themselves but call on IOM in case of need.

#### *Post-arrival & integration*

In most Member States, post-arrival and integration measures are the same for resettled persons as for other refugees; only a few Member States have developed **specific measures** which target resettled persons or persons admitted through humanitarian admission.

In three Member States (AT, BE, FI) measures are by law the same for all refugees. However, they differ in practice. For example, in Austria resettled refugees admitted as "UNHCR cases" received specific housing and integration support. In Belgium, the National Resettlement Programme provides specific measures for tailor-made assistance to resettled refugees. France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom specifically target integration of resettled or admitted persons.

Immediate support to resettled/admitted persons upon arrival is available in many different forms, including airport pickup, provision of temporary documentation, food, lodging, clothing, medical examination and other forms of health care, and interpretation upon arrival.

#### *Status and rights granted to resettled refugees*

The majority of Member States (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, SK, NO) grant the **same or a similar status** to both resettled refugees and other refugees. In the United Kingdom, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) humanitarian protection permit lasts five years, while the Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) permit is indefinite.

Sweden issues permanent residence permits to resettled refugees while those beneficiaries of international protection who have come to Sweden as asylum seekers only receive temporary permits. Some humanitarian admission programmes envisage return to the country of origin and initially grant stay of up to two years, though in certain circumstances and under conditions indefinite stay is possible.

At least 18 (Member) States (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LU, NL, PL, SE, SK, UK, NO) grant the **right to family reunification** to resettled refugees by law. Ireland does not provide an automatic right to family reunification, though in practice applications from resettlement programme refugees are dealt with on the same basis as other refugees. In most cases, the right is provided on the same basis as it is for other refugees.

In Germany the right to family reunification refugees for persons admitted under the humanitarian admission programme for refugees from Syria is narrower in scope as compared to the right for other refugees, while in Norway it is wider.

**Geographical distribution** in accommodating resettled refugees around the country exists in at least twelve (Member) States (CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, IE, NL, PL, SE, SK, UK, NO). On the contrary, seven Member States (AT, BE, BG, FR, HU, IT, LU) do not have any form of geographical distribution.

Types of **accommodation** available to resettled refugees and refugees admitted under humanitarian programmes and schemes vary: reception centres, social/council housing, hotels and private housing are the most used arrangements. Reception centres are mostly used as temporary, initial solutions and not used as long-term accommodation. Long-term housing is usually social, council or private housing.

In some Member States (AT, BE, DE, ES, FI, IT, SE, SK, UK) resettled refugees are discouraged from **moving elsewhere** (within or outside the country), as this could under some circumstances lead to losing certain rights, services and/or benefits under the admission schemes. In all Member States intra-EU movement with the purpose of travelling was subject to a number of conditions, such as: having received a **status of international protection**, having a **residence document** and **travel documents**. Travelling is generally permitted for up to 90 days.

Integration measures (long-term support) are available to persons admitted under resettlement and/or humanitarian admission in all Member States and Norway.

The types of measures vary across Member States, but can be summarised as follows:

- ★ **Weekly/monthly allowance**, whose duration and characteristics varies across Member States, from six-eight months (PL), to two to four years (HU, SK, NO) to indefinite duration as long as eligible (AT, BE, DE, EE, FI, IE, NL, SE);
- ★ **In-kind support** (food, clothing, furniture and household appliances, transportation, medical care, school supplies).
- ★ **Educational support**, including: language courses, counselling, education, vocational orientation.
- ★ **Social support** from IOM and/or NGOs (e.g., assistance in entering labour market, housing advice, legal support).
- ★ Access to **healthcare and specialised services**, such as services for survivors of violence and victims of torture, women or girls at risk, children at risk, refugees with disabilities, elderly.
- ★ **Interpreters** for reception and orientation sessions, although for a limited period.

In 17 (Member) States (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, NL, PL, SE, SK, UK, NO) resettled refugees, as well as persons admitted through humanitarian admission, receive **information and/or cultural orientation sessions**. In six Member States (AT, BE, FR, LU, NL, PL) sessions are provided with a focus on the provision of useful information and integration measures, taking the form of courses, workshops and sessions, accompanied by brochures and leaflets. In ten (Member) States (AT, CZ, DE, EE, FR, LU, PL, SK, UK, NO) geography, history, culture and introduction to political system are subjects included in the cultural orientation sessions. The provision of such courses are usually the responsibility of reception centres, social workers, IOM, employment offices, NGOs and civil society organisations, church organisations, municipalities and/or intercultural mediators. Finally, the receiving community is also prepared in all Member States except Austria, and Italy. The preparation of the receiving community takes place at different levels: citizens, NGO's and local authorities.

## 6. PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMMES

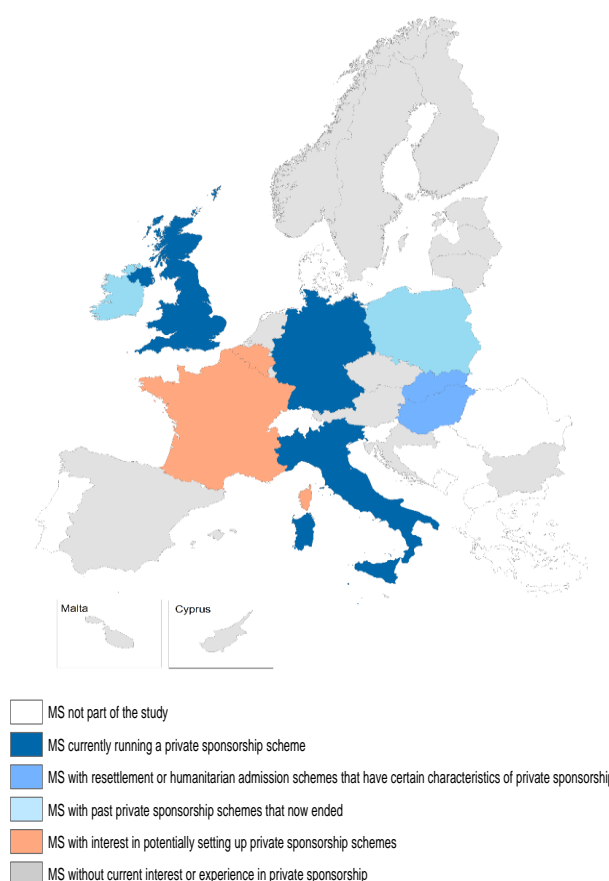
Private sponsorship foresees the **active participation** of private citizens, groups, organisations or other entities who introduce and support the application of the potential beneficiary.

Private sponsors may assume responsibility for providing financial, social and emotional support to a resettled person or family, for a predetermined period of time (usually one year or even longer) or until the person or family becomes self-sufficient.

The reasons provided as to why Member States set up private sponsorship programmes or schemes show wide variation, but have often followed from the humanitarian crisis in Syria and/or other conflict situations in the Middle East.

**Private sponsorship** programmes are or were in place in six Member States (DE, IE, IT, PL, SK, UK<sup>9</sup>), while France reported to be interested in developing private sponsorship programmes.

*Figure 6 Overview of private sponsorship programmes*



<sup>9</sup> Including the United Kingdom, which launched its private sponsorship scheme in mid-2016, and is therefore not further elaborated on.

**Eligibility criteria** for the selection of beneficiaries of private sponsorship differ in all Member States. Three Member States (DE, IE, IT) had vulnerability as a key criterion, whereas for Poland and Slovakia, persons to be resettled through private sponsorship were selected by the sponsors on the basis of persecution for religious reasons.

**Different statuses** are granted to the sponsored resettled person or family. In Germany, the refugee receives a residence permit for up to two years, with the possibility of extension. The admitted person is allowed to work immediately. In Ireland, beneficiaries received a stamp specific to the humanitarian admission programme, allowing them to work, establish a business or invest in the State. Italy provides resettled persons with a visa on humanitarian grounds, while in Poland they receive refugee status, and in Slovakia asylum on humanitarian grounds after an initial national visa.

In these five Member States the **majority of costs** related to the resettlement of a migrant through private sponsorship **is covered by the sponsor** individual or organisation and include: visa fees, travel costs, medical costs, housing and household. In Germany, medical costs were, at a later stage in the programme, excluded from the obligations by the sponsors in most participating federal Länder because of the high costs involved.

## 7. EVALUATIONS AND IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES, GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

The main reported sources of information on challenges and good practices were **reports on programme implementation** within the framework of evaluations of EU funds. In some cases evaluations took place through **surveys distributed to the beneficiaries** of resettlement/humanitarian admission schemes, or **reports** prepared by the organisations involved.

**Challenges** faced by actors of resettlement/humanitarian admission schemes in the **pre-departure and departure phases** included:

- ★ Complexity and length of the selection procedure;
- ★ Logistical challenges in third countries;
- ★ Meeting specific needs of target group;
- ★ Lack of or limited pre-departure information and orientation;
- ★ Unrealistic expectations of beneficiaries compared to the conditions after arrival;
- ★ Challenge of coordinating numerous stakeholders in pre-departure and post-arrival phases;
- ★ Difficulty receiving information on potential beneficiaries;
- ★ Lack of travel documents and problems obtaining these;
- ★ Security in the country of residence;

- ★ Limited possibility for obtaining biometric data (fingerprints, photo etc.) of resettled refugees.

Member States and Norway also reported a number of challenges in the **post-arrival and integration phase**:

- ★ Securing housing for resettled individuals;
- ★ Language learning;
- ★ Time constraints and contingencies of resettlement operations, especially for short-term arrivals;
- ★ Difficulties in ensuring the availability of support services and appropriate staff for vulnerable groups;
- ★ Finding employment and receiving appropriate remuneration;
- ★ Administrative delays in issuing a residence permit.

The following **lessons learnt** were highlighted, as positive/effective in implementing resettlement or humanitarian admission programmes or schemes:

- ★ Smooth pre-departure and post-arrival collaboration and communication among the different stakeholders, was widely reported as a decisive factor for successful integration, while also saving resources;
- ★ Adequate information and cultural orientation at pre-departure stage to prepare candidates for transfer and manage expectations;
- ★ Selection missions conducted in countries of first asylum help to anticipate arrivals and to quickly grant persons international protection upon arrival;
- ★ Early medical assessment to better prepare for the departure and communicate the relevant information and needs to the actors providing integration services after arrival;
- ★ Direct access to housing may promote independence and the rapid integration of resettled persons;
- ★ Peer support from other refugees in the same ethnic or national group;
- ★ Social involvement of volunteers;
- ★ Engaging local communities/churches in the integration process.

## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

You may obtain further details on this EMN Inform and/or on any other aspect of the EMN, from [HOME-EMN@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-EMN@ec.europa.eu).

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