

Adoption of the Union Resettlement Framework: A chance for the EU to bring more people to safety and champion global responsibility sharing

10 April 2024 – While the adoption of the Pact on Migration and Asylum today is likely to lead to a detrimental degradation of people’s access to protection in Europe, the new Union Resettlement Framework (URF) adopted alongside the Pact offers a glimmer of hope. It has the potential to bring about a more coordinated, predictable and protection-centred approach to EU resettlement, especially for refugees in vulnerable situations. Safe routes for refugees to reach Europe are not an optional 'nice to have' - they must be an intrinsic part of a well-functioning asylum system, alongside and in addition to the right to claim territorial asylum. Refugee resettlement is one tried and tested safe route, which is ready to be significantly scaled up. The Union Resettlement Framework offers a golden opportunity to make this happen.

With refugee resettlement needs at an all-time high, the EU must leverage this moment to bring more people to safety, in line with [commitments](#) made under the Global Compact on Refugees. In 2024, [over 130 million](#) people are estimated to have been forcibly displaced globally, while UNHCR estimates that over [2.4 million](#) are in need of resettlement.

Yet, while EU leaders often speak of the importance of increasing safe routes to protection, many resettlement programmes have been scaled down, suspended, or indefinitely put on pause in recent years. Indeed, only 14 EU Member States have pledged to participate in resettlement programmes in 2024 and 2025 - which is a decrease compared to the 17 who had made such commitments for 2023. In December, EU states pledged to resettle 15,000 refugees in 2024, down from 30,000 pledges made for 2020 despite resettlement needs soaring by [40% in the last four years](#). The resettlement target is clearly far too low, accounting for less than 1% of the people identified as being in need of resettlement by the UN refugee agency UNHCR. In addition, Member States have pledged to welcome 15,000 people via humanitarian admission programmes, which allow for the urgent evacuation of vulnerable people following a humanitarian emergency.

While resettlement pledges are not meeting needs and are decreasing, too many states increasingly fail to even implement their pledges. Each of these unfulfilled pledges leaves a vulnerable refugee trapped in limbo in their country of first arrival – often in dire conditions, unable to begin rebuilding their lives. Europe can, and must, do better. The URF signals the EU’s political support for global resettlement efforts and has the potential to be a step towards advancing solidarity, capacity-building and responsibility sharing. It must now be operationalised effectively to ensure that more people reach safety and find long-term solutions.

We encourage the EU and Member States to seize the following three priority actions in order to make URF an effective tool for scaling up resettlement:

- 1. Increase the capacity of national resettlement programmes and ensure the participation of more EU states in resettlement efforts through the full operationalisation of the URF - leading to increased pledges, more robust programmes, and better implementation**

- The European Commission should propose, and the Council should support and establish, an ambitious Union Plan that coordinates and ultimately scales up state resettlement commitments. Specifically:
 - Leverage the multi-year planning process, which aspires to offer greater predictability and forward-planning, to sustainably grow national programmes and future-proof resettlement schemes.
 - Resettlement must remain the preferred admission programme to the EU and other pathways, such as humanitarian admission programmes, must remain complementary and additional to resettlement. The plan must safeguard at least 60% of admissions for resettlement, with targets and geographical priorities defined according to the needs and in consultation with humanitarian and civil society actors.
 - The plan should establish timelines and processes for Member States to report on their progress, and set out clear requirements for Member States to provide transparent breakdowns of the total number of people to be admitted, as required by the URF.

- Member States should step up their efforts to implement the Union Plan, pledge in line with projected global resettlement needs, and invest in national resettlement programmes to increase their quality and efficiency. Member States should use resettlement submission categories in line with UNHCR guidance and refrain from using integration criteria or criteria not driven by protection considerations.
- Member States must take advantage of additional EU support offered by the URF - namely increased funding per person resettled and common EU rules on admission, resettlement procedures, and technical support - to scale up programmes.
- The European Commission should provide technical assistance and financial support to Member States to help them increase and implement their pledges, including but not limited to facilitating technical cooperation and exchange of good practices between Member States such as the training of personnel, and providing necessary tools and guidance.

2. Ensure fit-for-purpose monitoring and regular reporting on resettlement commitments

- The European Commission and Council should develop a mechanism to regularly monitor and report on the progress towards the implementation of the Union Plan and efforts of all Member States to scale up resettlement and humanitarian admission. This will enable greater transparency, sharing of best practices, and can be used to identify any technical challenges Member States may face so that they can be addressed in a timely and constructive manner. The process should include regularly published reports on the implementation of resettlement and humanitarian admission pledges and breakdown per Member State, and those arrived on different schemes.
- The European Commission should ensure timely reporting to the European Parliament on the progress of the framework. The report should also include actionable proposals for scaling up the EU and Member States' resettlement and humanitarian admission efforts in

the next pledging cycles.

3. Strengthen resettlement programmes by involving displaced people, civil society, and humanitarian actors at every step of the process

- The European Commission and Member States should ensure a **meaningful and systemic consultation process** with refugees and displaced people, humanitarian actors, International Organisations, NGO and civil society actors throughout the URF's implementation.
 - The expertise that these groups possess should inform the process of planning resettlement schemes and monitoring progress. Meaningful consultations can be achieved/ensured through involving actors in the development of the Union Plan, through ensuring a seat at the table of the High-Level Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Committee, and/or through the creation of a dedicated advisory body/expert group(s) within the Committee.

Signed:

Afghanistan LGBTIQ+ Organization (ALO)

Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland

Asociación Rumiñahui

Caritas Europa

Caritas International Belgium

Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe CCME

COFACE Families Europe

Danish Refugee Council

Dutch Council for Refugees

European Network on Statelessness

FARR, SFARR, Swedish Network of Refugee Support Groups

Forum réfugiés

Fundación Social Ignacio Ellacuría

HIAS Europe

ICMC Europe/Share Network

International Rescue Committee

Mosaico azioni per i rifugiati

Newcomers with Disabilities in Sweden

Ocalenie Foundation

Oxfam

Portuguese Refugee Council - Conselho Português para os Refugiados

Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen