







Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2009/2240(INI)	Procedure completed
Establishment of a joint EU resettlement programme		
Subject 7.10.06 Asylum, refugees, displaced persons; Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	 Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	 Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Commission DG Justice and Consumers	Commissioner MALMSTRÖM Cecilia	

Key events			
02/09/2009	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2009)0447	Summary
17/12/2009	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/04/2010	Vote in committee		Summary
03/05/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0131/2010	
18/05/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/05/2010	Debate in Parliament		
18/05/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0163/2010	Summary
18/05/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
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Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2009)0447	02/09/2009	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE431.182	08/02/2010	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE439.335	05/03/2010	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0131/2010	03/05/2010	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0163/2010	18/05/2010	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2010)4416	16/09/2010	EC	

Establishment of a joint EU resettlement programme

PURPOSE: to propose the creation of a "Joint EU Resettlement Programme" in order to develop resettlement within the EU into a more effective instrument to give protection to refugees, providing for closer political and practical cooperation among EU Member States.

BACKGROUND: the great majority of refugees worldwide find themselves outside the EU, in developing countries in Asia and Africa. Global resettlement needs are much greater than the resettlement places which are available worldwide. The UNHCR estimates the global resettlement needs at about 747 000 persons, including populations where resettlement is envisaged over a period of several years. On the basis of prioritisation, UNHCR estimates that out of this number, for 2010 alone, 203 000 persons will be in need of resettlement. According to the UNHCR, in 2008, 65 596 refugees were resettled worldwide. Of these, 378 refugees, or 6.7%, went to one of the EU countries. The numbers of refugees resettled in the EU contrasts sharply with the numbers taken in by many other countries in the industrialised world. At the same time, the EU receives a proportionately greater number of 'spontaneous' asylum seekers than other parts of the developed world. Furthermore, a majority of EU countries has no resettlement programme at all and would need to engage in capacity-building activities in order to be in a position to regularly engage in resettlement. There are at present ten EU Member States which participate annually in resettlement (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal, France, Romania and the Czech Republic). Some other Member States have provided resettlement on an ad-hoc basis. Member States set resettlement priorities nationally without prior consultation and coordination at the EU level. Resettlement has been receiving significant financial support under the [European Refugee Fund \(ERF III\)](#) since 2008. The principal objective of joint EU action on resettlement should therefore be to involve more Member States in resettlement activities and to provide for an orderly and secure access to protection for those resettled. At the same time, it should serve to demonstrate greater solidarity to third countries in receiving refugees. The programme should, in particular:

- strengthen the EU's involvement in resettlement activities with a view to raising the Union's effectiveness and credibility in international affairs generally;
- adapt the structures and procedures for coordinating resettlement policy in the EU to enable closer cooperation among Member States and more effective coordination of resettlement activities at the EU level;
- lower the economic costs associated with resettlement in the EU through closer cooperation among Member States.

A clear distinction should be made between resettlement of refugees from outside EU territory to a Member State, which is a humanitarian measure and an expression of solidarity by the EU vis-à-vis third countries, and intra-EU resettlement of refugees, which is carried out primarily for the purpose of burden sharing among Member States. The latter issue is not addressed in the Communication. This Communication and the accompanying proposal to amend the ERF Decision for the period 2008-2013 address the issue of solidarity with third countries in dealing with refugees.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes to create a joint EU resettlement programme with the following objectives: (1) to increase the humanitarian impact of the EU by ensuring that it gives greater and better targeted support to the international protection of refugees through resettlement; (2) to enhance the strategic use of resettlement by ensuring that it is properly integrated into the Union's external and humanitarian policies generally, and (3) to streamline the EU's resettlement efforts so as to ensure that the benefits are delivered in the most cost-effective manner.

The programme is based on the following guiding principles:

- participation by Member States in resettlement should remain voluntary. Member States will remain free to decide whether they want to resettle at all, and if so, how many refugees they wish to resettle;
- the scope of resettlement activity in the EU should be widened by familiarising as many Member States as possible with resettlement, and enhancing their required experience and capacity to carry out resettlement;
- the mechanism which is established should allow for adaptability to changing circumstances. In order to use resettlement strategically it should be possible to review and revise resettlement priorities annually. Adaptability is required also in order to respond to evolving needs with respect to practical cooperation on resettlement between Member States;
- actors other than Member States governments, who play a key role in resettlement, should also participate. The most important actor in this respect is the UNHCR, because of its international mandate and the pivotal role it plays in resettlement worldwide. The involvement of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is also important;
- the development of a common EU approach to the resettlement of refugees from third countries should be incremental and, with experience, the scope of the programme could be further developed.

In practical terms, the Programme will primarily consist of a mechanism which allows for the setting of common annual priorities on resettlement and more effective use of the financial assistance available through the ERF "pledging" exercise. This will be complemented by

strengthened practical cooperation, enhanced effectiveness of external asylum policies and a regular evaluation of the Joint Resettlement Programme. Priorities could apply both to geographic regions and nationalities as well as to specific categories of refugees to be resettled, including emergency cases. In order to identify these priorities, the current ad hoc Resettlement Expert Group will be developed into a body which meets on a regular basis. The Group will also exchange information between Member States on quantitative targets set by Member States and discuss specific needs with respect to resettlement, such as activities aimed at encouraging Member States which are not yet engaged in resettlement. Together with the European Asylum Support Office which should be operational in 2010, the Group will also be in a position to identify current needs for practical cooperation in the field of resettlement.

The Commission will continue to support practical cooperation projects. In order for the EU programme to be successful - both with respect to the identification of common priorities as well as practical cooperation activities - it will be important to cooperate closely with the UNHCR. The consultations between Member States, the

Commission and UNHCR concerning resettlement will therefore need to be intensified. There is also a need to provide structurally for an integrated approach between resettlement, other components of EU external asylum policies and EU external policies as a whole. In particular, coherence with the EU Global Approach to Migration should be ensured.

The Commission is accordingly proposing that an amendment be made to the ERF III Decision, as set out in the legislative proposal accompanying this Communication.

Establishment of a joint EU resettlement programme

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Rui TAVARES (GUE/NGL, PT) on the establishment of a joint EU resettlement programme welcoming the Commission's initiative proposing a change to the European Refugee Fund (ERF) in order to incorporate the impact of the EU Resettlement Programme. Members call for a more ambitious programme with the following characteristics:

A real and effective EU Resettlement Programme: overall, Members agree with the the general objectives set out in the Communication on the EU Resettlement Programme as mentioned above and the growing attention devoted to resettlement in the overall EU asylum policy. They call for a more ambitious programme which ensures the quality and effectiveness of the resettlement, containing specific guidelines on a new model of priority-setting, incentives to attract more Member States to resettle refugees, consistency of resettlement with other EU asylum policies and standards of reception conditions and follow-up measures to be taken in each resettlement initiative.

Members recall, however, that a budget line and financial support are not sufficient to establish a real EU-wide resettlement programme. This is why they urge the Member States to promote the creation of private funding mechanisms and more widespread public-private initiatives so as to underpin the European Resettlement Programme.

They consider that under the new financial perspectives (2013-2017) a specific envelope for resettlement should be established. Such an envelope could take the form of a dedicated resettlement fund.

Members welcome the opening of the new Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) in Romania offering temporary accommodation for refugees in urgent need of resettlement and call on the Commission to make use of this structure. They also welcome the ad hoc initiatives taken by a number of Member States in accommodating refugees in urgent need of resettlement while recognising the need for such initiatives to take a more structured form.

Requirements for efficiency and responsiveness of resettlement measures: Members underline that an effective EU Resettlement Programme should provide protection and durable solutions both for long-term, protracted refugee situations and for rapid and adequate responses in case of emergency or unforeseen urgency. In their view, the setting of annual priorities should be such as to enable a prompt reaction to sudden humanitarian crises which might occur throughout the year. Members favour a private-public partnership with NGOs and further social partners such as religious and ethnical organisations. They believe that municipalities already involved, or becoming involved, in resettlement should create partnerships and twinnings with other municipalities in their home country and in the EU Member States in order to exchange their experiences. Members stress the need to:

- establish a structured cooperation framework through measures to gather expertise and enable information collecting and sharing;
- access to human resources, expert advice and shared information that may be useful in any phase of the resettlement initiative for the Member States involved;
- exchange of best practices which foster efficiency between Member States (e.g. the promotion of joint programmes, peer evaluation, the setting-up of joint missions, the use of common infrastructures);
- set in place follow-up measures on the quality of reception and integration.

A permanent Resettlement Unit: Members believe that the absence of mechanisms of cooperation and coordination between Member States raises the costs of the operations related to resettlement, makes them less attractive and reduces their strategic impact. They therefore recommend the creation of a specific unit with proper staff allocated to carry out the necessary coordination between all the ongoing resettlement activities in the Member States and believe that the most appropriate institutional framework for this Resettlement Unit would be within the (European Asylum Support Office). This unit could establish close contact with the UNHCR and local NGOs, in order to obtain important information to forward to the Member States and EU institutions regarding, for instance, urgent priorities, integration techniques, etc. It could play an important role in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and quality of the Resettlement Programme at EU level.

Flexible priority-setting: as suggested in the [Tavares report](#) on the proposal for a decision amending Decision 573/2007/EC establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008 to 2013, adopted in parallel, Members consider that there should be a certain number of categories which remain stable every year, so that Member States can resettle particularly vulnerable persons at any time of the year. They recognise that an adequate resettlement programme requires a regular update of the nationalities and categories of refugees that should be prioritised in the resettlement process, with special regard to geographical emergencies and particularly vulnerable persons who are most in need of protection.

They believe that the Union's annual priorities should be defined with the involvement and support of the European Parliament at all stages of the identification and assessment of candidates for resettlement. A procedure associating the European Parliament is thus proposed. Members also suggest that individual Member States should be enabled to prepare for emergency procedures in cases of unforeseen

humanitarian circumstances ? for instance, when refugees are under armed attack or when natural accidents or catastrophes seriously affect refugee camps.

Ensuring that more Member States participate in resettlement: to date, only 10 Member States currently have resettlement programmes, established without coordination among themselves. Recognising that certain Member States, particularly in southern Europe, face special challenges because of their location at the external border of the Union, Members call for greater incentives to encourage more Member States to participate in the EU Resettlement Programme. They suggest that more substantial financial assistance is given to Member States wishing to start participating in the EU Resettlement Programme, in order to help them create a sustainable resettlement programme and to alleviate the initial burden of setting up such an initiative. In order to avoid an excessive impact on the European Refugee Fund, the value of the financial assistance should be equalised to the other Member States after the first years of participation to the programme.

Members stress that it will not be possible to increase the number of refugees resettled in the EU without an administrative and expert framework to underpin the programme and the creation of permanent structures to prepare for resettlement and follow-up on the integration process.

Follow-up measures: Members consider that an effective EU Resettlement Programme must include provisions on follow-up measures. They call on the EASO to establish clear criteria for quality resettlement in close cooperation with the UNHCR, NGOs and local authorities and follow the resettlement of the refugees, in order to contribute to the evaluation and further improvement of the resettlement activities in the Member States.

Establishment of a joint EU resettlement programme

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the establishment of a joint EU resettlement programme.

A real and effective EU Resettlement Programme: Parliament welcomes the initiative of the Commission to propose a change to the European Refugee Fund in order to incorporate the impact of the EU Resettlement Programme. Appreciating the general objectives set out in the Communication on the EU Resettlement Programme, as well as the growing attention devoted to resettlement in the overall EU asylum policy, Parliament, nevertheless, calls for a more ambitious programme which ensures the quality and effectiveness of the resettlement. Parliament cites, in particular, incentives to attract more Member States to resettle refugees, consistency of resettlement with other EU asylum policies and standards of reception conditions and follow-up measures.

Parliament recalls, however, that a budget line and financial support are not sufficient to establish a real EU-wide resettlement programme. This is why it urges the Member States to promote the creation of private funding mechanisms and more widespread public-private initiatives so as to underpin the European Resettlement Programme. It considers that, under the new financial perspectives (2013-2017), a specific envelope for resettlement should be established. Such an envelope could take the form of a dedicated resettlement fund.

Parliament welcomes the opening of the new Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) in Romania offering temporary accommodation for refugees in urgent need of resettlement and call on the Commission to make use of this structure. They also welcome the ad hoc initiatives taken by a number of Member States in accommodating refugees in urgent need of resettlement while recognising the need for such initiatives to take a more structured form.

Requirements for efficiency and responsiveness of resettlement measures: Parliament underlines that an effective EU Resettlement Programme should provide protection and durable solutions both for long-term, protracted refugee situations and for rapid and adequate responses in case of emergency or unforeseen urgency. In its view, the setting of annual priorities should be such as to enable a prompt reaction to sudden humanitarian crises which might occur throughout the year. Parliament favours a private-public partnership with NGOs and further social partners, such as religious and ethnic organisations. It believes that municipalities already involved, or becoming involved, in resettlement should create partnerships and twinnings with other municipalities in their home country and in the EU Member States in order to exchange their experiences.

Parliament stresses the need to:

- establish a structured cooperation framework through measures to gather expertise and enable information collecting and sharing;
- access to human resources, expert advice and shared information that may be useful in any phase of the resettlement initiative for the Member States involved;
- exchange of best practices which foster efficiency between Member States (e.g. the promotion of joint programmes, peer evaluation, the setting-up of joint missions, the use of common infrastructures);
- set in place follow-up measures on the quality of reception and integration.

A permanent Resettlement Unit: Parliament believes that the absence of mechanisms of cooperation and coordination between Member States raises the costs of the operations related to resettlement, makes them less attractive and reduces their strategic impact. It therefore recommends the creation of a specific unit with proper staff allocated to carry out the necessary coordination between all the ongoing resettlement activities in the Member States and believes that the most appropriate institutional framework for this Resettlement Unit would be within the (European Asylum Support Office - EASO). Parliament believes that the most appropriate institutional framework for this Resettlement Unit would be within the EASO, where it could cooperate in the ambit of EU policies in the area of asylum and migration. The unit could establish close contact with the UNHCR and local NGOs, in order to obtain important information to forward to the Member States and EU institutions regarding, for instance, urgent priorities, integration techniques, etc. It could play an important role in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and quality of the Resettlement Programme at EU level and contribute very usefully to the consistency and complementarity between the Resettlement Programme and the Union's other asylum policies.

Flexible priority-setting: Parliament recognises that an adequate resettlement programme requires a regular update of the nationalities and categories of refugees that should be prioritised in the resettlement process, with special regard to geographical emergencies and particularly vulnerable persons who are most in need of protection. It considers, however, that there should be categories which remain stable every year, so that Member States can resettle particularly vulnerable persons at any time of the year. It considers that the EU annual priorities should be established with strong and effective involvement of the European Parliament at all stages of the identification and assessment of candidates for resettlement. A procedure associating the European Parliament is thus proposed;

Parliament suggests that individual Member States may be enabled to prepare for emergency procedures in cases of unforeseen humanitarian

circumstances ? for instance, when refugees are under armed attack or when natural accidents or catastrophes seriously affect refugee camps. These procedures would allow resettlement to take place in a short period of time, with the administrative steps being accelerated.

Ensuring that more Member States participate in resettlement: to date, only 10 Member States currently have resettlement programmes, established without coordination among themselves. Recognising that certain Member States, particularly in southern Europe, face special challenges because of their location at the external border of the Union, Parliament calls for greater incentives to encourage more Member States to participate in the EU Resettlement Programme. It suggests that more substantial financial assistance is given to Member States wishing to start participating in the EU Resettlement Programme, in order to help them create a sustainable resettlement programme and to alleviate the initial burden of setting up such an initiative. In order to avoid an excessive impact on the European Refugee Fund, the value of the financial assistance should be equalised to the other Member States after the first years of participation to the programme. Parliament recognises that the participation of Member States remains voluntary.

Parliament stresses that it will not be possible to increase the number of refugees resettled in the EU without an administrative and expert framework to underpin the programme and the creation of permanent structures to prepare for resettlement and follow-up on the integration process.

Follow-up measures: Parliament considers that an effective EU Resettlement Programme must include provisions on follow-up measures. It calls on the EASO to establish clear criteria for quality resettlement in close cooperation with the UNHCR, NGOs and local authorities and follow the resettlement of the refugees, in order to contribute to the evaluation and further improvement of the resettlement activities in the Member States. Lastly, it calls for the organisation of a joint annual debate of its Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and on Foreign Affairs in order to contribute to the development of the programme.