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pledges exercise in resettlement

In October 2022, the European Commission published its report on migration and asylum with the breakdown of pledges for the period 2021-2022.1268 In total, 15 countries agreed to resettle almost 30,000 refugees, in addition to about 37,000 Afghans who were at risk during that period. In reality, however, the number of refugees who were successfully resettled into the EU during 2021-2022 was considerably lower.1269

At the end of November 2022, following the High-Level Forum on Legal Pathways to Protection and Resettlement Cooperation,1270 the European Commission published for the first time the breakdown of country pledges for the following year, 2023.1271 Although the number of participating countries remained similar (16), countries reflected challenges encountered in 2022 in their commitments. Thus, the overall number of refugees that countries committed to receive under these programmes decreased significantly to about 29,000 refugees.

Additional countries – such as Bulgaria, Ireland and Slovakia – made pledges for 2023, but the numbers did not balance the overall drop.

Some countries intended to continue increasing their annual quotas as planned in their national programmes. Belgium, for example, has been gradually increasing its quotas since 2013, with 1,250 refugees pledged in 2022 and a promise to reach 1,400 people in 2023 and 1,500 people in 2024. However, due to the asylum and reception crisis, the 2022 quota was not reached and the targets set for 2023 and 2024 were lowered. In October 2022, Belgium pledged to resettle 500 refugees and to admit 125 people under humanitarian admission programmes.

In Finland, selection missions were resumed in 2022, with an increased budget and quota (about 500 additional refugees), making a total of 1,500 refugees pledged for 2022.1272 However, commitments for 2023 dropped to 1,075, around 400 fewer people than in 2022, which meant returning to a pledge similar to 2021.

Following a decision of the new Swedish parliament, Sweden reduced its annual refugee quota from 5,000 to 900 refugees for 2023.1273 France also adjusted its resettlement quota from 5,000 to 3,000 for 2023, due to the arrival of more than 100,000 displaced persons from Ukraine in 2022 and its commitments under the new Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (3,000 relocations by mid-2023), in a context of substantial increases in asylum applications.

The unprecedented shortage in reception places in the Netherlands also resulted in the government's decision on 26 August 2022 to temporarily pause resettlement selections out of Turkey,1274 which will have an impact on the Dutch quota for 2023. Under AMIF, the country pledged 750 refugees under resettlement programmes, with no commitments to receive refugees under humanitarian admissions programmes. This represents a quota of about 4,000 less refugees pledged than in the previous period (2021-2022 pledges).1275

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