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icon for humanitarian admission programmes

Humanitarian Admission Programmes are complementary pathways to international protection through which a country can admit a group of refugees by providing temporary protection on humanitarian grounds.1321 Different practices prevail in the implementation of these programmes at the national level.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan resulted in the implementation of multiple national initiatives to provide protection quickly to Afghan nationals. These efforts were in line with key priorities set out by the EU and the High-Level Forum in August 2021, which called to cooperate on the evacuation of persons at risk and establish humanitarian corridors for Afghan refugees seeking protection in neighbouring countries *(see Section 2)*.1322, 1323 In October 2021, a high-level Resettlement Forum focused on helping Afghans most at risk through a global effort. National responses included resettlement from neighbouring countries, humanitarian admissions, family reunification and evacuations. However, the forum also discussed the need for flexibility through complementary pathways.1324

While some countries, such as Norway and Sweden, opted to receive Afghan nationals under their resettlement programmes, many EU+ countries used humanitarian admission schemes. Between 14 August and 31 December 2021, around 2,100 Afghans were evacuated and received international protection through a simplified asylum procedure to process their applications rapidly *(see Section 4.4)*.

The German federal government has admitted local staff and their families under the existing admission programme for former local staff. In addition, a decision was taken on the admission of individuals working in education and academia, policymaking, the judiciary, NGOs, culture and the media who are exposed and at risk due to their personal engagement in Afghanistan. This includes human rights activists and journalists. By the end of 2021, Germany had granted admission to more than 25,000 Afghans from these groups. Following the announcement by the European Commission of an Afghan support scheme for humanitarian admissions, Germany submitted a pledge for 25,000 places. From mid-August 2021 until the end of 2021, almost 7,000 Afghans with an admission to Germany arrived in the country. The arrivals of Afghans who have been granted admission in Germany are ongoing.1325

In line with its commitments, the Irish government launched the Afghan Admission Programme in December 2021, under which people either residing in Afghanistan or neighbouring countries who had fled from Afghanistan since 1 August 2021 and who have close family members in Ireland can apply for a temporary Irish residence. A total of 500 places were available under this programme. The closing date for submissions was extended to 11 March 2022.1326

In some countries no resettlement activities were carried out during 2021. Nonetheless, their governments pledged to receive Afghan nationals on humanitarian admission grounds. This was the case for Luxembourg that pledged to receive 90 Afghan nationals at risk, including girls, women, former judges and human rights activists during 2021 and 2022. Similarly, Portugal hosted 768 Afghan citizens who were evacuated through humanitarian admission in 2021. In Greece, 800 Afghan nationals (consisting of female dignitaries and their families) were admitted.

Countries that traditionally implement humanitarian admission programmes continued with them during 2021. In addition to the 2,500 Afghan nationals that France pledged to receive during 2021 and 2022, mostly through evacuations, an additional 1,094 asylum visas were issued in 2021, mainly to Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans in need of international protection. In 2021, France expanded its humanitarian corridors from Lebanon by signing two protocols to receive up to 600 Syrians or Iraqis in need of protection over the next 3 years (2021-2023).

A new protocol for the protection of 500 individuals from Libya was signed between the Department of the Civil Liberties and Immigration under the Italian Ministry of the Interior, the Sant' Egidio community and the Federazione Chiese Evangeliche Italiane (FCEI) in June 2021. 1327 Furthermore, arrivals were also processed under several Memoranda of Understanding for humanitarian corridors and evacuations. In 2021, 128 third-country nationals arrived from Lebanon, 279 from Ethiopia, Niger and Jordan, and 98 from Libya. No Afghan nationals arrived in Italy through humanitarian corridors or evacuations from Iran and Pakistan. In December 2021, the Court of Rome ordered the issuance of a humanitarian visa to two Afghan children whose lives were in danger under the Taliban regime. The measure would allow them to arrive safely in Italy and apply for international protection in the country.

Civil society organisations immediately shared their reactions to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, calling for increasing resettlement commitments at the European and national levels, the activation of humanitarian corridors from Afghanistan and the grating of humanitarian visas to allow people to safely arrive in Europe.1328, 1329 In this context, a joint statement was signed by more than 60 civil society organisations, highlighting the priorities for an EU response and the need for evacuations, resettlement and other safe routes.1330A lack of harmonisation in the response given by EU+ countries based on their asylum systems and their varied positions on returns of Afghan nationals were also observed. Civil society organisations called for a coordinated EU response to protect human rights and urged that humanitarian and development aid for the Afghan population do not replace the reception of Afghans at the EU's borders.1331

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