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As a safe and legal pathway to protection, community-based sponsorship programmes are gaining ground as an alternative to support refugees arriving to EU+ countries. This type of programme allows individuals, private companies and organisations to directly engage in financial, emotional and practical support to refugees who are resettled in their communities.[1292]

Although some countries continued to rely on these initiatives as complementary to their resettlement programmes, not many developments were identified during 2022 in terms of community sponsorship programmes.

The EMN found that the main challenges encountered during the year were difficulties to find new sponsor groups, insufficient involvement of municipalities, delays in transfers due to medical reasons and administrative procedures, and questions on how to continue and scale initiatives to more participants.[1293]

In 2022, in the framework of a pilot project called "Univ'R", implemented with UNHCR and the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, France opened university corridors for 20 refugee students. In addition, in 2022, France carried out the transfers of Syrians and Iraqis in need of protection in Lebanon who were hosted by faith-based organisations under the humanitarian corridors scheme, in line with protocols renewed in 2021.

In Germany, the federal government announced in July 2022 the consolidation of the Neustart im Team (NesT) programme as of January 2023, after the 3-year pilot phase.[1294] The programme is in addition to governmental humanitarian admission programmes, offering up to 200 places in 2023, with an increase planned in subsequent years. NesT is based on support provided by mentoring groups (consisting of legal or natural people) who jointly finance and provide accommodation and non-material support to participants.[1295] As the programme became permanent, adjustments were made based on the experience of the pilot phase, such as shortening the funding for suitable housing from 2 years to 1 year. After the pandemic-related delays in taking in refugees and the concentration of volunteer involvement in Germany on the refugees from Ukraine in 2021, current efforts focus on the recruitment of new mentoring

groups. Further findings can be found in the formative evaluation of the programme by the BAMF Research Centre.1296

Several initiatives were developed by civil society organisations to overcome some of the challenges and further develop different programmes. The 3-year programme, EU-Passworld, emerged in 2022, linking community sponsorship to labour and education pathways. The AMIF-funded project will be implemented by a multi-stakeholder consortium in Belgium, Ireland and Italy, where new complementary programmes will be designed and piloted to create a minimum of 200 new places for refugees.1297

Some evaluation reports were published during the year to assess challenges, in combination with an analysis of good practices and lessons learned. For instance, in its report on monitoring and the evaluation of community sponsorship programmes in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, the organisation Share Network issued a series of recommendations to support the development of new programmes and enhance the quality and sustainability of current ones.1298 Furthermore, to support countries with the planning and implementation of their community sponsorship programmes, the Global Refugee for Sponsorship Initiatives (GRSI) developed a monitoring and evaluation toolkit which is available for national administrations and stakeholders involved in the programmes since October 2022. 1299

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