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4.15.1.2. Implementing pledges

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icon for implementing pledges in resettlement

Several challenges were encountered by national administrations in implementing their resettlement programmes in 2022, which had an impact on national priorities in this area.

Some challenges were still linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as delays in the selection of people previously referred by UNHCR[1276] and difficulties in organising missions in certain geographical areas. Other challenges were directly due to crises in national reception systems [1277] due to the mass arrival of displaced citizens of Ukraine and the admission of hundreds of Afghan citizens at risk.

Some countries continue to face a major challenge with the reception crisis, resulting in a lack of sufficient accommodation places for resettled refugees. After the suspension of the Belgian resettlement programme in 2019 due to the lack of reception capacity, operations restarted in 2021. However, Belgium re-announced a deceleration of the programme in April 2022.[1278] Consequently, Fedasil was exploring alternative reception models to support resettled refugees upon their arrival, including the creation of a specific resettlement reception centre in 2023 that would better withstand fluctuations in the overall reception network *(see Section 4.7)*. It also planned to launch an awareness-raising campaign for local authorities and civil society organisations in the first quarter of 2023 to attract more reception partners for resettled refugees.

Similarly, the implementation of Dutch commitments was affected by shortages in housing. In August 2022, the Dutch government announced several measures to alleviate the situation in the national reception system *(see Section 4.7)*. In this context, temporary measures were introduced until the end of 2023, aimed at municipalities which are responsible for the provision of housing to beneficiaries of international protection, including resettled refugees.[1279]

The new regulation for the national reception system for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, including resettled refugees[1280] *(see Section 4.7)*, establishes different conditions for the stay of resettled refugees in each reception phase. It becomes 6 months in the first phase (reception phase) and a maximum of 12 months in the second phase (autonomy phase).

Other impediments were related to the fragile security situation in some countries of first asylum, making selection missions and the transfer of selected refugees difficult. This included natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria. Other challenges related to the management of expectations of refugees who are to be resettled, when misunderstandings and frustration can arise for them and their families. Extra resources and additional efforts are needed to provide sufficient information in these situations.1281

In the face of these challenges, civil society organisations have stressed the need for national administrations to urgently invest and prepare their systems, for instance, with long-term planning of reception capacity and resettlement programming. Their resettlement programmes would then not need to be placed on hold, delayed or suspended. In this context, a joint statement was signed by several NGOs in June 2022, where several recommendations were made for countries to increase their efforts in this area.1282

Several studies evaluating resettlement programmes were carried out during 2022. The Irish Ministry for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth published a report, "Voices of Syrians-Resettled Refugees in Ireland", in August 2022 which presents lessons to improve future integration outcomes of resettled Syrian nationals. Key areas identified in the report include planning, cooperation between stakeholders and housing security.1283

Similarly, in the framework of the research project “Reorienting Integration” of the Aarhus University, a report was published in November 2022 with key recommendations for national authorities on the resettlement of Congolese refugees from Rwanda arriving in Denmark.1284

New studies were already in the pipeline in some countries to optimise the implementation of national programmes. In Belgium, Fedasil, with the support of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe, is developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for their programmes, in particular for community sponsorship schemes. The first results are expected by the end of 2023.1285

To assess integration capacity and the needs of resettled refugees, the German Research Centre of BAMF will launch a 3-year research project in the second half of 2023. The study will cover recommendations for decision-makers and contribute to the development of the programmes. 1286

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