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7.2. National commitments for 2024-2025

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icon for complementary pathways for admission

Data on resettled refugees should be interpreted in the context of pledges made by Member States. Under the 2024-2025 EU Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission scheme, 14 EU countries provided 61,000 pledges for resettlement and humanitarian admissions underpinned by EU financial support.313 In 2024-2025, the focus continues to be on resettling Afghans, refugees in countries along the Central Mediterranean route, as well as from Central and South America. While Syrians have been at the forefront of EU efforts in recent years, the suspension of processing applications for international protection by Syrians in several EU+ countries until the situation stabilises in the country has also impacted decisions on the status of Syrian nationals identified for resettlement.

In addition to pledges by EU countries, Norway and Switzerland made adjustments to their commitments during the year. For example, Switzerland approved its national programme to receive 1,600 refugees during 2024-2025, although all operations have been suspended since April 2023 due to the pressure on its reception system.314 Norway approved a decrease in the number of resettled refugees from 1,000 to 500 refugees in 2025 (while more than 1,400 refugees arrived in 2024), with the aim to ensure that they receive adequate support in reception and are successfully integrated into the society.315 The lack of accommodation places was seen across EU+ countries, hindering the implementation of resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes. In addition, access to general services, such as education and health, were also impacted by the continued high number of applicants for international protection and support provided to displaced persons from Ukraine. In France, relocation under the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism also had an impact on reception capacity.

To alleviate the situation in some countries, dedicated groups within municipalities were set up to assist refugees in finding housing and private individuals provided support. In some countries, such as Switzerland316 and Belgium,317 the shortage in reception capacity resulted in the authorities putting their resettlement programmes on hold.

Solutions to better integrate refugees in their local communities continued drawing the attention of countries and other stakeholders. For example, as part of the admission procedure, the new Regulation on the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework includes the

possibility for countries to show preferences for third-country nationals or stateless persons who demonstrate social links or other characteristics that can facilitate integration into the country of resettlement, including language skills or previous residence in the country. Civil society organisations and academia framed this as the concept of ‘potential integration’ and assessed that interpreting this concept in a broad manner could lead to discrimination and may result in the instrumentalisation of resettlement.318

Some EU+ authorities noted that internal challenges related to procedures and insufficient human resources affected the processing time for the registration of resettled refugees upon arrival or delays in issuing their residence permit.

At an operational level, the volatile security situation in the Middle East due to the war in Gaza, the fragile security situation in Lebanon and the fall of the Assad regime in Syria in December 2024 had a considerable impact on the organisation of selection missions, pre-departure orientation sessions and travel arrangements for selected refugees in those areas. High inflation in several countries of first asylum significantly increased operational costs. In terms of refugees’ transfers, challenges persisted in obtaining exit permits from countries of departure, such as Iran, Lebanon and Pakistan, where exit fees are applicable.

Several national administrations turned to community sponsorship programmes319 to ease pressure on receptions systems and to foster inclusive and welcoming communities for integration. Through these programmes, municipalities and local communities, including companies and private individuals, assist refugees in finding long-term housing and access to public services to facilitate a smooth transition to self-sufficiency.320

The focus of the programmes varies depending on multiple factors. Many EU-funded projects continued in 2024, for example the Complementary Pathways Network (COMET) which is a supra-national platform that brings together different schemes, the Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E) pilot project implemented in Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland and the UK which focuses on labour integration, EU-Passworld, a 3-year project linking community sponsorship to labour and education pathways and which creates a multi-stakeholder consortium in Belgium, Ireland and Italy, HUMCORE which aims to foster integration by improving the procedures and practices of the humanitarian corridors, and the Reunification Pathways for Integration (REPAIR) project which assesses and aims to reduce obstacles in family reunification.

The difficulty in mobilising and recruiting sponsor groups, along with securing affordable housing, have been cited as hindrances in expanding community sponsorship programmes. In addition, civil society organisations advocate for finding long-term solutions, such as the possibility for sponsors to directly nominate individuals for admission when in the country of first asylum, which is being piloted in Ireland and Italy.321

In November 2024, the EUAA published “Guidelines on the EU approach to community sponsorship” to establish minimum quality standards for the various phases of community sponsorship programmes. The report provides recommendations and examples of good practices to assist all stakeholders involved in the implementation of these programmes.322

Labour pathways, which prioritise the selection of refugees based on their professional skills and jobs available in the country of resettlement, continued to be an option for the arrival of refugees in 2024. For example, Spain received Nicaraguan refugees through a pilot project which was started in 2023.

EU+ countries continued with the implementation of their existing humanitarian admission programmes, including humanitarian corridors implemented by faith-based organisations, without major developments in 2024.

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