

Section 7. Harmonised approach for resettlement and humanitarian admission

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icon for resettlement

Resettlement means the admission to the territory of a Member State, following a referral from UNHCR, of a third-country national or a stateless person from a third country to which that person has been displaced, who is eligible for admission pursuant to the Regulation (EU) 2024/1350 establishing the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework, Article 5(1), does not fall under the grounds for refusal set out in Article 6 of that regulation and is granted international protection in accordance with Union and national law and has access to a durable solution.330

Resettlement and humanitarian admission are an expression of international solidarity, involving several national and international stakeholders. Under the new Union Resettlement Framework, EU resettlement and humanitarian admission schemes are based on 2-year national contributions corresponding to the number of third-country nationals that Member States commit to admit on a voluntary basis. They aim to manage migration based on predictable timelines and ensure common grounds for eligibility, while carrying out rigorous security checks.

Political, operational and financial constraints limited developments in the area of resettlement and humanitarian admission during 2025. While resources were often re-allocated and increased to prepare for the application of the Pact on Migration and Asylum by June 2026, Member States continued to implement the 2024-2025 scheme.

In December 2025, the Council approved the first Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Biannual Plan for 2026-2027, defining the total number of admissions by Member State and their geographical priorities.331 The plan took account of UNHCR’s report Projected Global Resettlement Needs for 2026332 and discussions during the second High-Level Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Committee, which called for broader geographical scope to ensure flexibility.333 Flexibility in the implementation of the contributions enables Member States to shuffle priorities and needs depending on the situation on the ground. Member States also voiced the importance of this flexibility in view of the ensuing integration

process. An effective coordination between the political and the operational aspects of the process may be key to the success of resettlement and humanitarian admission schemes.334

The significant reduction in national commitments echoed the general downscaling in admissions at the EU level. The planned resettlement efforts for 2026 at the EU level remained insufficient when considering UNHCR's estimations that there are approximately 2.5 million refugees worldwide in need of resettlement.335 Nine countries submitted their contributions for the 2026-2027 Union Plan with a total of 10,430 places. This includes 8,330 resettlements and 2,100 humanitarian admissions. This was a drastic 83% drop in pledges compared to the previous period. Some civil society organisations noted that country commitments to the Solidarity Mechanism – which was approved just a few days before the Union Plan was adopted – may have contributed to the lower commitments towards resettlement and humanitarian admission.336

Similarly, schemes continued to be limited outside of EU Member States. Switzerland, which suspended resettlement programmes in April 2023 due to the pressure on the asylum system but still approved a 2024-2025 resettlement programme, extended its implementation up to 2027 by a decision of the Federal Council in March 2025.337 The Norwegian government, which has reduced its commitments in recent years (from 1,000 in 2024 to 500 in 2025), proposed further reductions for 2026 and a budget reprioritisation.338

icon for complementary pathways for admission

7.1. Resettlement and humanitarian admission at the national level

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icon for resumption of resettlement programmes

7.2. Challenges in the area of resettlement

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  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (24 June 2025). 2026 Projected Global Resettlement Needs (PGRN).

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  European Commission. (17 March 2025). 2nd meeting of the High-Level Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Committee.

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  European Commission. (17 March 2025). Second Meeting of the High-Level Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Committee Public Report.

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  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (24 June 2025). 2026 Projected Global Resettlement Needs (PGRN).

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