



Resettlement and humanitarian admissions

The information presented in this fact sheet is extracted from the [EASO Asylum Report 2021](https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-asylum-report-2021/section-416-resettlement-and-humanitarian-admissions). Direct link to the section: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-asylum-report-2021/section-416-resettlement-and-humanitarian-admissions>

Resettlement is a durable solution by which third-country nationals or stateless persons in a situation of vulnerability are selected and transferred from a first country of asylum to the territory of a third country which has agreed to admit them as refugees with a permanent residence status.ⁱ In the EU context, resettlement programmes are voluntary and persons in need of protection are identified as eligible by UNHCR.ⁱⁱ

Resettlement is an expression of international solidarity, involving several national and international stakeholders. EU resettlement schemes aim to manage migration based on predictable timelines and ensure common grounds for eligibility, while carrying out rigorous security checks. Since the introduction of the first European Resettlement Scheme in July 2015, the process has remained an important point on the policy agenda.

10,640 were resettled in EU+ countries in 2020



58% less than in 2019



Key developments extracted from the EASO Asylum Report 2021

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on resettlement operations which were planned by EU+ countries for 2020. The closure of borders and restrictions to movement resulted in the suspension of the main activities, including the cancellation of selection missions to countries of first asylum and the suspension of transfers of already-selected refugees. Consequently, this led to a decrease in the total number of resettled persons in the EU+ for the first time in 7 years.

- One of the solutions for some countries became selection based on dossiers.¹ This means that new cases were decided without organising a selection mission or interviewing an applicant in person. While some countries, such as **Finland**, **Lithuania**, the **Netherlands**, **Norway** and **Spain** clarified that they would not increase dossier-selection quotas for the year, other countries are considering increasing the number of cases processed in this way. For instance, **Italy** announced that in view of the current situation they will process all cases based on documentation until their 2020 pledge is achieved.
- Digitalisation allowed national systems to continue to function and helped to stop backlog accumulation. Remote interviews were carried out to process resettlement cases referred by UNHCR and virtual pre-departure orientation were used to carry out preparatory activities for the integration of already-selected refugees.
- After the formation of a new government in **Ireland** in June 2020, the management of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) and the Irish Humanitarian Admissions Programme (IHAP) was divided between two government departments. Responsibility for the Irish Refugee Protection Programme transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in 2020, while the responsibility for the Irish Humanitarian Admission Programme remained with the Department of Justice.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **France** also implemented an organisational change. The French Ministry of Interior approved^{iv} the decentralisation of the system, with the aim of enhancing the role of regional authorities in the integration of resettled refugees within the regional *préfectures*.^v
- The **Spanish** Supreme Court [ruled](#) that refugees who are resettled in Spain through a government-approved programme, in cooperation with UNHCR, automatically become beneficiaries of refugee status (and not beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) and must be granted a residence permit.
- With the aim of aligning the national reporting system with data reported by UNCHR and Eurostat, the Dutch Minister of Migration also announced a new method to report on national quotas which are based on the arrival date of resettled refugees instead of the date of selection. A new multiannual resettlement policy framework for 2020-2023 was established in the Netherlands, including a commitment to resettling 2,000 refugees in 4 years (500 per year, as established in previous frameworks).^{vi} On top of the multiannual policy framework, the **Netherlands** also partakes in resettlement efforts in the framework of the EU's migration cooperation with third countries. The quota is established either on a yearly basis or for the duration of an EU resettlement programme. Under the EU-Turkey Statement, the Netherlands has committed to resettling 1,000 Syrian refugees annually from Turkey.

¹ The selection of refugees based on dossier means that the country of resettlement will decide based only on the documentation provided by UNHCR, without requiring a direct interview with the applicant. Before the COVID-19 crisis, this method has been typically used only in emergency and urgent cases, for instance based on medical grounds or when the refugee faces an immediate risk of *refoulement* to the country of origin where there is a risk of suffering persecutions.

- In the context of pre-departure orientation, and with the aim of facilitating the integration of resettled refugees into **Swedish** society, the Swedish Migration Agency developed guidance and tools on preparatory measures for refugees waiting to be resettled. This is part of a pilot project to be implemented by the IOM with assistance from UNHCR. The project was tested for the first time in Kampala, Uganda and several more are planned for 2021. The project will then be evaluated to form the basis of a regular 3-day pre-departure orientation programme and will be fully implemented in 2021.
- In addition to its contribution to the EU resettlement scheme, **Germany** decided on a national level to admit asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection from Greece. In 2020, a total of 1,519 persons were admitted from Greece to Germany: 1,485 asylum seekers and an additional 291 beneficiaries of international protection under the national humanitarian admission programme.

National resettlement quotas

- The COVID-19 pandemic halted the upward trend in the number of resettled persons that had been taking place over the previous six years. The only exception was **Denmark**, which had not received any resettled person in 2019 and received 30 in 2020.
- **Sweden** was the main receiving country for resettled third-country nationals, accounting for one-third of all persons resettled in EU+ countries in 2020. Nonetheless, this represented a 28% decrease when compared to 2019. Sweden had initially pledged 5,000 places, but about 1,400 refugees could not be effectively resettled during the year.^{vii}
- Other top receiving countries in 2020 included: Germany (with 1,685 resettled refugees, representing a 66% decrease compared to 2019), Norway (1,525, -45%) and France (1,340, -76%). After having started face-to-face interviews, **Germany** suspended its missions to Egypt and Niger and its planned face-to-face interviews in Jordan, Niger and Kenya. However, remote interviews were conducted in Lebanon in the summer of 2020. Its quota for 2020 was to resettle 5,500 refugees, but by the end of the year, the arrival of about 3,815 refugees was still pending.
- While resettlement operations slowed down in **Finland**, authorities continued to process emergency and urgent cases based on dossiers. It carried out pre-departure hybrid and virtual courses for all accepted resettlement cases to Finland, combined with face-to-face orientation for Syrian refugees in Turkey.^{viii} By the end of 2020, Finland had resettled 660 refugees.
- In **France**, on the other hand, operations came to a complete halt from mid-March to July 2020 while efforts were focused on issuing decisions to approve or reject applications submitted in the previous year and at the beginning of 2020. The transfer of refugees resumed as of August 2020, and physical missions started again in October 2020 to various first asylum countries. While France had announced a quota of 5,000 resettled refugees for 2020, the country could only resettle 1,340 refugees.^{ix}
- The **Netherlands** conducted remote pre-departure orientation with selected refugees in Lebanon and Turkey and made some decisions on a dossier basis. However, 1,075 places

were not covered from the country's 2020 pledge for 1,500 refugees. This represented a 77% decrease compared to 2019.

- Other notable decreases, in relative terms, occurred in **Ireland** (195 resettled refugees, -75%) and **Italy** (350, -74%). By the end of 2020, most countries had not met their national quotas and had to request a transfer to the following year.
- When initial pledges could not be met, the European Commission announced a mechanism to transfer quotas to 2021. Thus, a new procedure was established through AMIF funds by which countries could carry over the pending quota that could be fulfilled by the end of 2021. In the national guidelines for the reception of resettled refugees in 2021, the French authorities announced the extension of their 2020 pledge to be progressively achieved during 2021, in combination with possible additional quotas for the year, depending on state of the pandemic.^x

To read about Community Sponsorship Programmes, consult the EASO Asylum Report: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-asylum-report-2021/4164-community-sponsorship-programmes>

To search for more developments by topic, country or year, consult the [EASO National Asylum Developments Database](#).

To read more case law related to asylum, consult the [EASO Case Law Database](#).

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Sources

Please see the [Bibliography for the EASO Asylum Report 2021](#) for the full list of over 1,000 references.

ⁱ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (April 2018). *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and Country Chapters*. <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html>

ⁱⁱ European Migration Network. (2021, May 12). *Glossary: resettlement programme*. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/resettlement-programme_en

ⁱⁱⁱ Disability, Equality, Human Rights, Integration and Reception (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2020, October 16, 2020. <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2020/si/436/made/en/print>

^{iv} The framework for intervention remained the same, but the Circular *Nouvelle organisation de l'accueil des réfugiés réinstallés à partir de l'année 2020*, NOR INTV1929397J, was replaced by: Instruction relative aux orientations de la politique d'accueil des réfugiés réinstallés pour l'année 2021 [Instruction on the guidelines for the reception policy for resettled refugees for the year 2021], February 24, 2021. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf/circ?id=45143>

^v European Web Site on Integration. (2021, May 2.000Z). France: Orientations de la politique d'accueil des réfugiés réinstallés pour 2021 [France: Guidelines for the reception policy of resettled refugees for 2021]. <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/france-orientations-de-la-politique-daccueil-des-refugies-reinstallés-pour-2021?lang=en>

^{vi} Ministry of Justice and Security | Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2020, May 26). *Kamerbrief over Meerjarig beleidskader hervestiging 2020-2023* [Parliamentary brief on the Multannual policy framework on resettlement 2020-2023]. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/05/26/tk-meerjarig-beleidskader-hervestiging-2020-2023>

^{vii} Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (2021, March 19). *The Swedish resettlement programme*. <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Our-mission/The-Swedish-resettlement-programme.html>

^{viii} Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto. (2021, March 5). *Quota refugee statistics for 2020 published – the coronavirus pandemic affected the selection process*. <https://migri.fi/en/-/quota-refugee-statistics-for2020-published-the-coronavirus-pandemic-affected-the-selection-process>

^{ix} Instruction relative aux orientations de la politique d'accueil des réfugiés réinstallés pour l'année 2021 [Instruction on the guidelines for the reception policy for resettled refugees for the year 2021]. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf/circ?id=45143>

^x Instruction relative aux orientations de la politique d'accueil des réfugiés réinstallés pour l'année 2021 [Instruction on the guidelines for the reception policy for resettled refugees for the year 2021], February 24, 2021. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf/circ?id=45143>