



ERN+ webinar Series on complementary pathways of refugee admission

## Enhancing Humanitarian admission in Europe

Event Programme  
&  
Background Note

Date: **Thursday 23 March 2017**

Time: **15.00-17.00**  
**Central European Time (GMT+1)**

Webinar language: English

## Webinar Programme

15.00-15.10

**Welcome and introduction to the webinar:** Ms. Charlotte Hermans, European Resettlement Network (ERN+)

### **Part I: Other forms of Humanitarian admission in Europe as complementary pathway to Europe for persons in need of international Protection** (presentations by panellists: 15.10 – 15.40 + Q&A)

#### **1. Introduction**

- **What are the core components of Humanitarian Admission Programmes?** Ms Jo De Backer, IOM Brussels Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland, Resettlement and Relocation Specialist
- **How can visas issued on humanitarian grounds for protection seeking purposes facilitate humanitarian admission?** Ms Kristiina Lilleorg, IOM Brussels Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland, Immigration and Border Management Specialist

#### **2. Targeted Case Studies of Humanitarian admission programmes in Europe:**

- a. **HAP AUSTRIA:** Mrs Barbara Kurz, Integration, Migration and Asylum expert at Caritas Austria; ARGE Consortium - Project Coordinator for HAP
- b. **HAP for Syrian refugees - GERMANY :** Mr Janne Grote, Research Assistant and Policy Analyst at the National Contact Point of the European Migration Network, German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

15.40 – 15.55 **Questions & discussion on the introductory presentations** - Participants are invited to share their own experiences as well as submit written questions to the panellists and organisers before and during the interactive webinar.

### **Part II: The role of visas issued on humanitarian grounds for protection seeking purposes in the humanitarian admission of refugees in Europe** (presentations by panellists: 15.55 – 16.15 + Q&A)

- a. **Issuance of visas for asylum by French authorities** – Mrs Séverine Origny Fleishman, Deputy Head of Department, Asylum and Protection Law, French Ministry of Interior, Directorate General for Foreign Nationals in France.
- b. **Counseling Services on Humanitarian visa for entry to Switzerland** – Ms Judith Huber, Migration Specialist, Swiss Red Cross, Department of Social Integration and Migration

16.15 – 16.30 **Questions & discussion on the introductory presentations** - Participants are invited to share their own experiences as well as submit written questions to the panellists and organisers before and during the interactive webinar.

16.30 – 16.45 **Other relevant considerations & Concluding remarks**

See the end of this document for panellists' bios

## **Background**

In Europe and elsewhere, renewed debate on enhancing access to international protection has been brought about by the millions of people affected by global protracted displacement crises. According to UNHCR, 1.2 million people worldwide are in need of resettlement in 2017<sup>1</sup>. However, despite an increase in the number of resettlement programmes established in Europe, the contribution of EU Member States and Associate countries to global resettlement places remains modest.

Expanding safe and legal pathways for refugees to reach Europe in a way that is complementary to resettlement is therefore central to enhancing access to international protection and providing a durable solution for those in need. As stated in the New York Declaration which was adopted at the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016, those states signatories to the Declaration committed to strengthening and enhancing mechanisms to protect people on the move, have declared that they will “consider the expansion of existing humanitarian admission programmes, possible temporary evacuation programmes, including evacuation for medical reasons, flexible arrangements to assist family reunification, private sponsorship of individual refugees and opportunities for labour mobility for refugees, including through private sector partnerships, and for education, such as scholarships and student visas<sup>2</sup>.”

In line with the Declaration, and against the backdrop of an unprecedented number of protracted refugee situations worldwide - continuous conflict in Syria, Iraq and Yemen as well as conflict and persecution in the Horn of Africa - increased use of humanitarian admission to Europe could have the potential to offer a safe and legal pathway for those in need of international protection.

Humanitarian admission may be used for specific groups of refugees such as vulnerable persons, extended family members or individuals with medical needs and provides an expedited mechanism granting (temporary) international protection. However, various safeguards need to be in place in order to ensure that the legal status is clear, that protection needs - including the psycho-social well-being of refugees - are met and that beneficiaries do not find themselves in situations of expired residency, destitution or forced return to their countries of origin.

Over the past few decades, a number of humanitarian admission programmes have been put in place, of which some continue to this date. Across Europe, countries such as Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are or have been implementing humanitarian admission programmes (HAP) in response to protracted displacement crises<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2017, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/575836267/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2017.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1%20](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1%20)

<sup>3</sup> <http://resettlement.eu/page/new-icmc-ern-research-report-resettlement-and-other-legal-avenues-syrians>

Moreover, as intended in the set-up of several existing HAPs, such initiatives can also serve to establish the foundations for the reconstruction of post-conflict societies in the event that refugees choose to return to their home country in the future when it is safe to do so.

Within these programmes, **visas issued on humanitarian grounds (for protection-seeking purposes)** can be further explored as a tool to facilitate entry at the discretion of States. Unlike in refugee resettlement programmes, visas issued by EU Member and Associated State on humanitarian grounds may be requested directly by the person fleeing persecution and in need of international protection. This is done outside receiving States' territories through national embassies and consulates in third countries (with the intent of then applying for asylum upon arrival in the EU MS). When granted, these visas allow legal access to a country on the basis of humanitarian considerations. However, these visas do not provide a permanent residence permit, do not imply external processing, nor replace resettlement schemes – but rather complement all of the above-said. Given the nature of such visas as an instrument to facilitate safe arrival in a new country, envisaging the setup of humanitarian admission schemes using visas requires careful consideration of the safeguards and protection standards to be upheld as well as careful planning with regard to the post-arrival reception and integration stages.

Countries such as France and Switzerland have already introduced specific programmes making use of visas on humanitarian grounds (for protection-seeking purposes) for refugees. On an international level such practices exist, among others, in Argentina and Brazil albeit under somewhat different frameworks.

### **Objectives of the Webinar**

This webinar is the third in the European Resettlement Network series exploring complementary pathways of refugee admission to Europe. On 23 February 2017, a webinar was held to explore community-based private sponsorship as one such pathway and on 8 March a second dove deeper into student scholarships for refugees as a complementary pathway for protection in Europe. Following this, and with the overall goal of identifying ways to further build the capacity of stakeholders who aim to establish or enhance humanitarian admission programmes in European countries, this webinar seeks to address the possibilities and challenges, and contribute to the discussion on humanitarian admission opportunities in Europe. It will serve as a forum for the exchange of practice and discussion in the process of identifying potential models suitable to the European context.

The webinar will begin with an introduction to the essential elements that must be taken into consideration when developing a humanitarian admission programme, addressing core protection and technical aspects. Next, two European models in Austria and in Germany will be further presented in detail, and their lessons shared, with a view to understanding how this experience can be of assistance to other actors in Europe. Lastly, there will be a focus on the tools that could possibly facilitate humanitarian admission schemes such as visas issued on humanitarian grounds for protection-seeking purposes. A limited number of European Union Member and Associated States have put such a system in place. The webinar will examine two practices to further explore the potential scope for moving forward in the European context.

With contributions from IOM, Caritas Austria and the ARGE Consortium; the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF); the French Ministry of Interior; the Swiss Red Cross and UNHCR,

panellists will address central questions relevant to the subject matter. Key discussion points to be addressed by the panellists and discussed in the Question & Answer sessions include:

1. The process of identification and selection of candidates for humanitarian admission programmes.
2. Requirements for pre-departure support to contribute to refugees' successful integration into their new environments.
3. The key considerations for the development of humanitarian admission programmes, including the legal status granted and support provided after arrival during the granted residence period.
4. Financial obligations of relevant actors, as well as the nature of actors' commitments, successful partnerships between civil society and the public sector that can enable the development and sustainability of humanitarian admission schemes.
5. Prospects for the long-term, including the question of needs and expectations of refugees, integration, and the possibility of reuniting with family members in the new host country.
6. Future perspectives for enhancement or replication in other EU countries

#### **Background to the project: European Resettlement Network+**

Building on the experience that the European Resettlement Network has gathered since 2010, the ERN+ follow-up project, **“Developing Innovative European Models for the Protection of Refugees and Providing Support to New Resettlement Countries”**, seeks to demonstrate the complementary nature of pathways such as higher education scholarships to existing resettlement programmes, and to highlight the increased need to expand the European protection landscape. The Project is co-financed by the European Commission under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

In the framework of this project, various forms of admission are assessed, including community-based private sponsorship programmes and student scholarships, as well as other programmes of humanitarian admission in a range of forms such as, for example, enhanced family reunification schemes.

Using the established structure of the European Resettlement Network to communicate and inform on such pathways of admission, the project aims to bring together national, regional and local government, international organisations, civil society, think tanks, academia and refugees. Through a series of webinars, targeted roundtables and focused feasibility studies, the project seeks to identify possibilities for the implementation of pilot projects in selected European countries, while also further expanding the ERN community of practitioners and stakeholders. The project will build upon the experiences and the lessons learned in order to identify opportunities for the incorporation of these pathways as more permanent features of international protection in Europe.

More information is available at: [www.resettlement.eu](http://www.resettlement.eu)

## Panelists' Bios

### **Jo De Backer, IOM Brussels Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland, Resettlement and Relocation Specialist**

Jo De Backer works as regional thematic specialist at the IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area and NATO in Brussels since 2014, providing policy advice and technical support for the design, development and implementation of specific thematic activities related to Emergency & Post-Crisis and Resettlement and Relocation at regional and global level and liaising with International and EU stakeholders at Commission, Parliament and Council as well as with civil society organizations active in the field of resettlement and relocation.

Before occupying the current position, she worked as project development and liaison officer and established together with UNHCR and ICMC the European Resettlement Network. Previously, she had been assisting in the management of a large regional resettlement programme at IOM Thailand. She has a post graduate degree in Criminal Justice Policy from the London School of Economics and Political science and a masters in Sociology from the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

### **Kristiina Lilleorg, IOM Brussels Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland, Immigration and Border Management Specialist**

Kristiina is Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Thematic Specialist for IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area and NATO in Brussels. She is supporting RO Brussels' liaison work by providing expert advice to the EU Institutions, agencies and EU Member States on IOM policies and activities on IBM related matters and more generally the EEA country missions, as well as other regions with EU funding, on EU IBM institutional and programmatic aspects.

Kristiina previously worked in Abuja (Nigeria) where she worked as Regional Migration Management Specialist for the 10th regional EDF project supporting the implementation of ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols, from 2013 through 2016. Prior to that, she was posted in IOM Afghanistan as IBM programme manager. Kristiina joined IOM in 2008 in HQ, Geneva, and before joining IOM, she worked as migration specialist with the Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board. She has an MA in Political Science from Moscow State University for International Relations.

### **Barbara Kurz, Caritas Austria, Project Coordinator for the ARGE Resettlement - Humanitarian Admission Programme**

Barbara Kurz studied cultural & social anthropology and law at the Vienna University. After working in the field of torture prevention and human rights, she started working for Caritas Austria in 2015. She is in charge of the coordination of the Humanitarian Admission Programme in Austria for the ARGE Resettlement (Caritas, Red Cross and Diakonie).

### **Janne Grote, Research associate and policy analyst and German National Contact Point of the EMN - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)**

Janne Grote is research assistant and policy analyst at the German National Contact Point of the European Migration Network, based at the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Nuremberg. I. a. he is the main author of the German national EMN focused studies on "Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes in Germany" and "Family reunification of third-country nationals to

Germany” ([www.emn-germany.de](http://www.emn-germany.de)). Furthermore, he has recently published a book on “Refusal, discrimination and violence amongst adolescents in the German (post)migration society” (“Ablehnung, Diskriminierung und Gewalt bei Jugendlichen in der (Post-) Migrationsgesellschaft”).

**Séverine Origny Fleishman, Deputy Head of Department, Asylum and Protection Law, French Ministry of Interior, Directorate General for Foreign Nationals in France.**

Séverine Origny Fleishman is Deputy Head of Department at the Asylum and Protection Law Unit of the Directorate General for Foreign Nationals in France, linked to the French Ministry of Interior since 2012. This Department covers both national as well as European Asylum Law and is in charge of operational refugee reception (Resettlement and Asylum Visa)

Previously she was working as Deputy Director of the Experimentation Fund for the Ministry of Youth and Responsible for the Francophone Africa programme in an American NGO for Development Cooperation on HIV Prevention and Maternal Health based in New York. Before, she was a legal expert at the French State Secretary for disabled persons and working at the Ministry of Health.

Graduate of the Regional Institute of Administration of Nantes, Séverine holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Rennes 1, an International Business certificate from NYU, and a certificate of Public Health and Development of the CNAM.

**Judith Huber, Migration Specialist, Swiss Red Cross, Department of Social Integration and Migration**

After graduating from University, Judith Huber studied social anthropology in Berne, where she began to work as a legal counselor for refugees and foreigners in different Swiss cities from 2008-2013. During that same period, she was also a volunteer for the Peace Brigades International (PBI), is a human rights organization, doing international accompaniment for human rights defenders who are in danger because of their work, both in Switzerland and in Mexico (Oaxaca). Between 2012 and 2013, she was also a member of the committee for the political referendum against the aggravation of the asylum law in Switzerland and coordinating the national campaign. Finally she has been working as a Migration Specialist for the Swiss Red Cross since 2014.