



Restoring Dignity, Inspiring Change.

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Global Compact on Refugees
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Forms of Admission that increase the Speed of Integration

Statement by the International Catholic Migration Commission

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Partners and Colleagues,

When we think of “comprehensive refugee response”, of pathways of admission, and mechanisms for integration, we think of so many practical mechanisms that already exist—just not in enough places.

From our experience, we most appreciate existing mechanisms for admission that do both—or “double duty”: that is, mechanisms in which the *way* that people are admitted increases the *speed* of their integration. Mechanisms designed to connect global need for resettlement and other admission pathways with national, local and family interests and capacity for solid integration.

And the more we succeed at *integration* the more we all can succeed at admissions, beginning with greater resettlement of refugees who have nowhere else to go.

What are those mechanisms that do both admission and integration?

1. Work-based mechanisms: Across Europe, ICMC works with local and national Church groups and other partners in over 27 countries, in an EU-funded project called SHARE. Everywhere we see that when refugees have a job, the work both settles them economically and accelerates their practical integration.

What admission mechanisms promote jobs and accelerate integration? In designing the channel for the admission itself, *work-related entry visas* can match employers that need workers with refugees that can do that work. A number of countries do this, and we appreciate the new 1,000 such visas that Australia is soon making available. Within the design of these admissions, civil society partners can be contracted to tailor *pre-departure orientation, employment counseling, training, credentialing and job search* to help refugees of working age who are being resettled or otherwise admitted to find jobs in their new country as soon as possible. In North America as well as across Europe, ICMC resettlement programmes connect with Church and other civil society organizations doing precisely this in direct partnership with the governments.

2. Education-based mechanisms: In our work with the European Resettlement Network (ERN), we see how *education visas* enable refugee students to continue their studies and eventually find their place in the local labour market, often responding to labour shortages. Education itself fosters integration by enabling refugees to learn with and interact directly with the students who are nationals of their new country, and understand that country’s history, cultural orientation and values. For many years, ERN partner Foundation for Refugee Students UAF in the Netherlands has been providing education support for refugees, from university to professional training for better labour market integration. UAF studies show that once refugees officially begin their course of study, they advance more rapidly as compared to other classmates.

3. Family-based “private sponsorship” mechanisms, either within traditional resettlement or in Humanitarian Admission Programs (HAPs). Canada and the US have long and strong experience in recognizing *family anchors* for refugee admission and integration; Germany and Ireland more recently. Family anchoring is what brought Qefsere from Kosovo to New York, resettled by Catholic Charities with several of her brothers, a sister and their families, including small children. Of Qefsere’s own two children, one is now a high school teacher, the other working for his PhD in mental health. Mechanically, many of these family reunification opportunities include a type of ‘sponsorship’ component, that calls for—and secures, often with joy!—a financial commitment on the part of applying relatives or the community.

4. Communities of faith-based mechanisms which offer sponsorship and continued support for refugees. These are mechanisms that connect admission to *whole-of-community support* that is deeply motivated, non-discriminatory, and long-lasting! For example, the Humanitarian Corridors programmes of the Community of Sant’Egidio, the NGO Pope John XXIII, and the Catholic and Protestant Churches of France and Italy welcome Syrian and other refugees and family members by providing full personal accompaniment and helping support travel, housing, living expenses, health insurance and other costs. Recently, the program not only facilitated resettlement to Italy of a little Syrian refugee girl diagnosed with eye cancer but sponsored her family, too. Whether in new humanitarian corridors or traditional resettlement, the individual accompaniment of refugees by national and local communities of faith not only fosters practical integration—through, for example, language classes and cultural orientation—but also meaningful, day-to-day connection between both refugees and the wider community.

So many countries, communities and institutions that receive refugees are already using these mechanisms—just not enough. There is so much success—so much energy, achievement, social value—and joy in it!

The mechanisms are rights-based; centered on welcoming and helping refugees and their family members to re-build their lives within a new society. And the mechanisms *work*, actually doing “double-duty”: achieving admission and integration both, by design.

Finally, together, the mechanisms and numbers add up. A generation ago, 70 countries of the world, UN agencies, the International Organization for Migration, community groups, churches and NGOs like ICMC put themselves together to add numbers up. And 2 million Indochinese refugees, their family members were welcomed—and integrated—through resettlement, family reunification and labour migration admissions that were carefully designed and implemented. We don’t have to “re-invent the wheel” in the new Compact: we need to get it rolling more.

/Thank you.

The International Catholic Migration Commission is a Catholic Church-inspired, international non- governmental organization which protects and serves uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.

Founded in 1951 by Pope Pius XII, ICMC facilitates a network of national Catholic Bishops Conferences and other Catholic-inspired institutions worldwide. Headquartered in Geneva, ICMC has staff and programs in more than 50 countries, affiliated offices in Brussels, Washington DC and Boston, and operational offices in Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey.

In Syria, ICMC provides lifesaving assistance to internally displaced Syrians, as well as vulnerable Iraqis. In Jordan, ICMC delivers humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities. In Greece, ICMC works with the UNHCR to provide help to incoming refugees and migrants and to support the Greek government in its asylum reform. With funding from the US State Department, ICMC runs the Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and the Middle East, processing the application of refugees referred by UNHCR for resettlement to the US. ICMC also works with UNHCR on a separate program to deploy resettlement experts worldwide. In 2016, ICMC deployed 210 experts to 63 UNHCR offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America.

ICMC Europe convenes a broad range of stakeholders to promote welcome and integration to refugees across the continent. In March 2016, ICMC Europe published “*Building a Resettlement Network of European Cities and Regions - Experiences of the SHARE Network 2012-2015*”, a detailed summary of best practices, policy recommendations, resources and tools developed by ICMC Europe and SHARE Network members. The SHARE Network includes 1,200 local and regional resettlement and integration actors in over 27 European countries, including municipalities, NGOs, public services, churches and private sector actors.

Since 2011, ICMC has served as international coordinator of civil society activities in the Global Forum on Migration and Development since 2011, and in similar functions towards the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013 and the UN High-level Summit on Refugees and Migrants in 2016. ICMC initiated and is co-convenor of the civil society Action Committee, which brings together 24 leading refugee protection and migrant rights NGOs from around the world for joint follow-up to the 2016 Summit’s *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*.