

# JOINT EU RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS

## THE 2015 JOINT EU RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (20,000 persons)

In 2015, recent and protracted conflicts and crises around the globe caused record-high numbers of asylum-seekers and migrants to cross into Europe, often risking their lives in dangerous journeys. As European countries grappled with a rapid and significant increase in the numbers of arrivals, exposing weaknesses in the existing EU asylum system, the European Commission went on to present the [European Agenda on Migration](#), a guiding document pointing out short- and long-term measures to collectively respond to the numerous challenges EU Member States faced. Among the immediate actions to be taken, the Agenda highlighted the proposal for an emergency temporary mechanism to distribute within the EU persons in need of international protection who claim asylum on EU territory and belong to certain nationalities (relocation), and the establishment of an EU-wide resettlement scheme for refugees with specific needs and vulnerabilities to arrive from third countries.

In July 2015, following up on a Commission [Recommendation](#), EU Member States, together with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, adopted the [Council Conclusions](#) establishing the **resettlement of 22,504 individuals in need of international protection** over the period 2015-2017, through multilateral and national schemes. The Conclusions provided that resettlement beneficiaries, to be identified and referred by UNHCR, would be granted the right to stay in the resettling country and any other rights similar to those conferred on beneficiaries of international protection. Moreover, resettlement efforts would be directed towards North Africa, the Middle East, and Horn of Africa, prioritising those countries where RDPPs were implemented. As of [7 March 2018](#), more than 19,432 people – mainly from Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon - were resettled under the July 2015 scheme.

## RESETTLEMENT OF SYRIANS FROM TURKEY

In December 2015, the Commission presented a [Recommendation](#) providing for the voluntary admission to EU Member States of individuals displaced by the conflict in Syria and sheltering in Turkey. Within the framework entailed by the **Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme** (VHAS) with Turkey, participating States would admit persons in need of international protection who were registered by Turkish authorities before 29 November 2015. Upon admission, beneficiaries of the scheme would receive a temporary status, valid for no less than one year. The Standard Operating Procedures were agreed by the end of 2017, although the VHAS would require triggering from EU leaders.

In March 2016, under the [EU – Turkey Statement](#), the EU agreed that, for every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to an EU Member State. By March 2018, around 12,400 Syrian refugees had been resettled under this mechanism, although not all in addition to other parallel schemes, such as that of the July 2015 Council Conclusions. For a number of EU Member States, resettlement within the framework of the EU-Turkey Statement was considered as contributing to the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken with the July 2015 Council Conclusions.

## THE 2018-19 JOINT EU RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (50,000 persons)

During mid-late 2017, the European Commission launched a new **resettlement pledging exercise** and called on EU Member States to **resettle at least 50,000 persons in need of international protection** by October 2019. This was intended to address the gap between the end of the resettlement scheme under the 2015 Council Conclusions in mid-2017, and the expected adoption of the Union Resettlement Framework.



20 EU Member States pledges 50,030 places for resettlement for this period. Finally, a dedicated **Core Group focusing on resettlement and complementary pathways along the Central Mediterranean route, chaired by France**, was set up. The EU provided financial support to UNHCR's Emergency Transit Mechanism in Niger, a system through which refugees in need of resettlement are evacuated from Libya to Niger, before being resettled to European and non-European countries.

More than 34,000 persons had been resettled to the EU by end September 2018 - check the [SHARE Network graphic display series](#) to find out which Member States contributed to the programme, how they structured their resettlement programmes and which refugees they received.