



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
IMPACT ASSESSMENT BOARD

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Opinion

Title Impact Assessment on a joint EU resettlement scheme

(draft version of 24 April 2009)

Lead DG JLS

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

In the Hague Programme of November 2004, the European Council invited the Commission to develop EU-Regional Protection programmes, including a voluntary joint resettlement programme for Member States. In the June 2008 Policy Plan on Asylum, the Commission announced that it would make proposals on developing an EU resettlement scheme in 2009. In its conclusions of September 2008, the Council agreed that cooperation with UNHCR should be strengthened, in particular by moving on a voluntary basis, towards the resettlement within the EU of people placed under UNHCR protection. In February 2009, the Commission tabled a proposal to establish the European Asylum Support Office, which would support Member States and other stakeholders with practical cooperation activities, including those related to resettlement.

(B) Positive aspects

The report is accessible to the non specialist reader and provides a good overview of current resettlement activities in Member States.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.

General recommendation: The report should provide more concrete details on the content of the preferred option and how it will function in practice. It should explain how this option would increase incentives for Member States to participate in the resettlement activities. The report should make it clear on what basis funds available under the European Refugee Fund (ERF) would be allocated to

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resettlement activities, and what the implications of an increase in funding for resettlement would be for other asylum activities.

During the IAB meeting, DG JLS agreed to make the necessary changes in the impact assessment on this basis.

(1) Elaborate further the presentation of the preferred policy option. The report should make clear that option 2 corresponds to what the policy proposal will be, and that elements of option 3 will not also be included. It should be more explicit about the actual content of option 2, and explain that its basic mechanism would: (i) remove existing rigidities under the European Refugee Fund (categories/criteria); (ii) replace them by a dynamic process allowing for resettlement priorities to be set on a yearly basis (Commission decision on priorities in terms of regions/groups taken by comitology procedure); (iii) use the European Asylum Support Office for implementation and practical cooperation activities. The report should also explain on which basis it assumes that the projected increase of the total number of available resettlement places within the EU would be 15 % under this option.

(2) Explain how the preferred option would encourage Member States to participate in resettlement. The report should make clear how the proposed EU resettlement scheme (and in particular its political component) would affect the incentives of Member States to participate in resettlement and to increase total number of resettled refugees. In particular it should explain why an approach based on common European priorities would be used more by Member States compared to the current framework which already provides Member States with financial incentives and flexibility in terms of defining their own priorities. In this context, the report should also confirm that new framework would allow Member States to continue additional resettlement efforts according to their own priorities.

(3) Clarify the financial implications for the ERF. The report should elaborate further on what the impact of this initiative would be on the balance between the funds allocated to resettlement and to other asylum activities. It should provide details on the available increase of the global envelope under the ERF and the envisaged allocations of funds. The report should clarify how the estimated increase of costs of resettlement would be covered (approximately 11.5 million € according to the IA). The indicative arrangements for an ex-post evaluation of the scheme (when, by whom) should also be included in the report.

(D) Procedure and presentation

The different views expressed by Member States and other stakeholders should be reported more completely in the report.

2) IAB scrutiny process

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External expertise used	No
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