



PORTUGAL

EU COUNCIL

INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The increase in the number of refugees arriving at the EU's borders, and the rising loss of life on the continent's doorstep, has prompted a swift intervention by countries that has been taking place for some time now. Procedures exist through institutions such as NGOs or the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR). In the field of international cooperation, Portugal assumes greater responsibility in the international and European protection system, in mechanisms of resettlement and solidarity, and ensures that those who are granted protection have the possibility to develop and integrate. It has taken the horrors of two world wars that claimed the lives of millions of people around the world for the international community to cooperate with each other in order to currently demonstrate at all times a spirit of teamwork, partnership and networking, essential forms of cooperation and collaboration to achieve clear objectives, to ensure a new life for these people who had to leave everything behind in search of a new opportunity.

At the national level, resettlement is one of the three durable solutions available to refugees, alongside voluntary repatriation and local integration. Portugal has taken a number of initiatives that will allow us to welcome these people who are more vulnerable due to the situation they are facing.

First of all, they will be efficiently and transparently identified in order to ensure their continued protection. We have 7 categories that will determine which ones have the greatest need. This is based on the principle that "all citizens are equal before the law" without any discrimination.

Subsequently there will be a selection phase which will be given by a selection mission in which an interview will be carried out to get to know the refugee more deeply and to determine what specific initiatives to implement.

There will be a pre-departure assistance programme to help the refugee set realistic goals and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed in their new environment, followed by the travel phase to the resettlement country.

Once they land, they will be provided with all the necessary support to facilitate their stay in the country and they will gradually have to adapt to a new life.

Portugal has the support of different NGOs and institutions that help to provide asylum assistance to these people. In the first place UNHCR

The CPR, which has intervened strongly in these matters, in order to ensure a more informed reception partnership on the issue of refugees.

On 1 March, a resolution was adopted that will speed up the temporary protection of Ukrainian refugees so that they can be received in a simplified process.

In addition to institutions, there are also bodies such as the Refugee Reception Centre (CAR), which are establishments designed to provide accommodation, urgent psychological and primary assistance, among others, with the aim of facilitating and integrating people seeking asylum into the community.

In Portugal there is not yet a model of integration to follow, that is, each institution works in a different way, so the fact that it is a decentralised process allows institutions greater freedom to follow the strategic path that best suits the reality experienced. Currently, refugees from the resettlement programme are arriving in Portugal from third countries via UNHCR. They also arrive from hot-spots in Italy and Greece through the quota to which Portugal committed itself in the framework of the European Refugee Resettlement Programme, which currently stands at 10,000 refugees, unlike other member states that have refused to take in any and have closed their borders. Technically, this programme runs for 18 months, in which a series of entities are organised to manage the entire reception process until, at the end of the period, these people will be incorporated into the labour market, allowing them to move on with their lives in an autonomous manner.

At the national level, the supervising and centralised governmental entity is the "High Commissioner for Migration" (HCR), articulating its work at the same time, with the various reception entities, highlighting 2: "The Portuguese Council for Refugees" (CPR), NGO representative of the UNHCR in Portugal and the Platform of support to refugees, made up of local civil society organisations, as well as UNICEF and CPR.

The people resettled in our country are mainly families and young people between 18 and 35 years old. In the case of being granted an international protection permit, the person has a 3-year residence permit. Portugal's decision to accept large numbers of migrants is mainly due to Portuguese political, economic and demographic needs.

According to Natasha's testimony: "I don't want my daughter to know what war is like" From the first day when the war broke out in Ukraine, Portugal organised humanitarian flights organised by the Portuguese government. Thanks to actions like these since the beginning of this war we are saving lives every second.

Nowadays, it has become a leader in receiving refugees in the European Framework, providing various international programmes, a change that is evidenced by the official figures of the country, which two decades ago, did not even receive hundreds.

Refugees' search for safety and a better life is made through the extremely dangerous crossings they are subjected to. In recent years, our country has been able to develop new strategies to accommodate the resettlement of refugees in an immediate manner and to provide them with as much assistance as possible from the moment they set foot in the

country. We have institutions, which facilitate our work and are able to control everything. We are very satisfied with what we have achieved so far, although there are still many decisions to be made and mistakes to be corrected along the way, but we will always have a clear message: "we will not let one more life be lost if the power is in our hands".