

PROTECTION MISSIONS FOR THE RESETTLING OF REFUGEES IN EUROPE

As part of a holistic approach to the challenges of migration and asylum, and complementing the efforts of the various European, African and multilateral partners in the fight against irregular economic immigration networks, as well as in promoting voluntary returns of irregular migrants to their countries of origin, Sahel countries situated on migration routes towards Libya and the Mediterranean could receive European support, bilaterally and through the EU, in their efforts to assist people in need of international protection, in liaison with the UNHCR.

This proposal is consistent with the EU's priorities and draws fully on trials already conducted by European countries with the UNHCR for the resettling from Turkey and the Middle East to Europe of refugees, as well as from the Sahel countries for resettlement in other host countries in liaison with the UNHCR.

It should allow Europe to add a new dimension to the already valuable EU solidarity with Sahel countries which face the challenges of development, terrorism, and migrant flows.

This proposal will be implemented in the framework of the current exercise of the resettlement programme launched by the Commission on 4 July 2017, taking into account the importance of resettlement from other Central Mediterranean route countries and the need to continue resettling from other migration routes.

The chosen approach should more specifically focus on the following key goals:

- Opening of a legal migration channel for persons in need of protection according to international and European law, in particular those who are most vulnerable according to UNHCR criteria for resettlement and are likely to migrate towards Europe;
- Preventing additional population displacement effects, primarily through use of closed lists of candidates for resettlement.

The mechanism could draw on the following points, in the framework of European States' resettlement commitments:

- identification by the UNHCR, following registration by the country of first arrival, of persons who could be eligible for resettlement, using closed lists and on the basis of commonly determined criteria that could include:
 - o relevance of the case under asylum rules;
 - o link to transit towards Europe;
- Interviews and security assessment in the country of reception of candidates by missions of the relevant authorities of resettlement ;

- For selected candidates, resettlement to a European country in liaison with the IOM and UNHCR and with EU financial support.

These proposals could be the subject of discussions involving the European Union and European and non-European countries of resettlement keen to take part in this initiative, each country of first reception in the Sahel region wishing to be involved, and the UNHCR.