

GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

European Union Resettlement Forum

On Friday, July 9th, representatives of the European Union and its member states, the United States of America, the Government of Canada, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and other organizations met at the European Union High-Level Resettlement Forum convened by Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs and Migration.



Speakers included Commissioner Johansson; Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marco Mendicino; Croatian State Secretary for European and International Affairs Terezija Gras; European Asylum Support Office Executive Director Nina Gregori; Finnish Minister of the Interior Maria Ohisalo; Director General of the International Organization for Migration António Vitorino; Italian Minister of the Interior Luciana Lamorgese; Slovenian Minister of the Interior Aleš Hojs; Spanish Member of European Parliament Juan Fernando López Aguilar; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi; and United States Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and Deputy Secretary of State Brian P. McKeon. Also in attendance were David Milliband of the International Rescue Committee and Anila Noor, refugee representative, founder of New Women Connectors, and member of the European

Commission Expert Group on the View of Migrants.

Participants spoke of their commitment to collaboration and sharing best practices in service of providing durable solutions for refugees at risk around the world, to promotion of and support for complementary pathways such as community sponsorship through partnership with the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative and other organizations, to increasing resettlement efforts, and to involving refugees in the resettlement process in a meaningful way. In addition to these commitments, participants shared stories that spoke to the refugee experience, either stories of newcomers to their states, or in some notable cases their own or their family members' lived refugee experience.

A [joint statement](#) was issued by the European Commission, Canada, the United States, and the UNHCR reiterating their commitment to resettlement and complementary pathways. The webcast of the Forum is available [here](#).

Are you a policymaker or civil society leader designing a refugee sponsorship program? Download the GRSI's policy design workbook.

GRSI marks World Refugee Day

A new GRSI animated video has launched! The video, titled "[Sponsorship School: Mobilizing Sponsors](#)" introduces a central character, Maya, as she begins her sponsorship journey.



Maya volunteers, engages with her community, and ultimately forms her own sponsorship group. The video was launched on World Refugee Day, June 20th, in keeping with the spirit of this year's theme: Together we heal, learn, and shine.



Support for community sponsorship in overhaul of Australian refugee program

In May 2021, Alex Hawke, Australian Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, indicated support for the Community Support Program in a [press release](#): "I look forward to ensuring the program becomes a genuine, successful partnership between community, business and the government, to provide beneficial outcomes to our refugee and humanitarian arrivals in Australia".

Advocates and community groups within Australia have indicated their support for expanding the number of refugees accepted in the Australian sponsorship program, lowering the costs of applying to be a sponsor, and making sponsorship spaces additional to the government resettlement quota. There has been a great deal of interest among sponsor groups, with almost 200 people, across 20 sponsor groups, having responded to a call-out last year by Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA), according to CRSA Executive Director Lisa Button.

Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada – 2021 Market Study

The Environics Institute, a Canadian survey research institute, [has released a market study](#) into the drivers of "sponsoring the stranger" in Canada. This large-scale study was the result of a partnership with Refugee 613, an Ottawa-based organization serving as a communications and advocacy hub for

refugee newcomers and those who support them. The goal of the survey was to identify a potential market for private sponsorship of refugees in Canada. Key findings include the information that close to one-fifth of the Canadian population could "definitely" or "likely" see themselves getting involved in refugee sponsorship in Canada. Furthermore, the survey found that among those who were aware of sponsorship and interested in sponsoring, knowing someone who had themselves sponsored newcomers was a major predictor of becoming a sponsor.

The survey results also highlighted that Canadians interested in sponsorship would like to be involved in a wide variety of ways, from assisting with logistics, to helping with language learning, to providing transportation, and to offering professional services, friendship, and emotional support.

From refugee to savior – the story of Majed and Joseba



From Bilbao, Spain comes a story highlighting how sponsorship is a two-way street, and how the experience of welcoming newcomers through sponsorship improves the lives of everyone in the community. Majed Arar, a butcher by trade, his wife Khatoum, and their

five children arrived in Bilbao in 2019. Joseba, a local butcher, had been living with ALS for years and used a wheelchair. When a mutual friend connected the two, knowing that Majed had the skill and experience to work with Joseba, a strong working relationship eventually turned into a deep friendship as the Arar family settled into their new lives in Bilbao. The story ultimately has a tragic ending, as Joseba passed away in April 2021, leaving behind family, friends, and a community in mourning over the loss of a great man and a great friend.

Italy signs protocol to bring 500 persons in need of international protection from Libya

Luciana Lamorghese, the Italian Minister of Interior, **announced this month** that a new protocol between the Italian government, the Community of Sant'Egidio, and the Italian Federation of Evangelical Churches will bring an additional 500 persons in need of international protection to Italy from Libya. Under the terms of the protocol, the Italian government will take responsibility for 300 of the people admitted, with the two organizations taking on responsibility for 200 people. To date, Italy has admitted over 3,000 people through its Humanitarian Corridors program.

Allies in Refugee Integration Project Outcomes

Allies in Refugee Integration, an Ottawa-based project led by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) in close collaboration with **Refugee613**, and funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, **released their final report** in June 2021. This report is the culmination of a project that began in 2018. Highlights include four key recommendations for IRCC, one of which is to create policy and financial support for an Intentional Connection practice to support pre- and post-arrival communication between sponsors and newcomers.

Anglesey woman's mission to bring fleeing families from war zones to North Wales



Pictured: Catherine Griffiths of Croeso Menai receives the New Group of the Year Award from Sponsor Refugees in 2019. Croeso Menai is the first sponsorship group formed in North Wales.

Croeso Menai, a community sponsor group in Menai Bridge, Wales, **welcomed their first sponsored newcomer family** to North Wales in the spring of 2021, after pandemic restrictions had put previous travel plans on hold.

The sponsor group consists of 11 core members but over 150 supporters within the community, including three Syrian women who, among other work, act as interpreters.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the family has settled in well, with the children in school and learning both English and Welsh.

What is GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of five organizations – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, The Giustra Foundation, The Shapiro Foundation, and the University of Ottawa. It aims to help other countries set up their own community-based refugee sponsorship programs, strengthening local communities and improving the narrative on refugees in the process.

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