

Article prior to the conference

“Towards the common EU Resettlement Scheme - the road ahead” is the title of the conference to be held on 25–28 August in Sigtuna, Sweden, on the resettlement of refugees within Europe. It is being organised by CCME, *Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe*, within the scope of the ongoing ASPIRE project, *Assessing and Strengthening Participation In refugee Resettlement to Europe*. Discussions about a common European resettlement scheme are expected to enter a critical phase during the initial months of the Swedish EU Presidency. The conference is being held in cooperation with the Church of Sweden, the Christian Council of Sweden and the Sigtuna Foundation.

The discussions that have taken place recently at EU level and in the Member States show that, to an increasing extent, the resettlement of refugees will form part of the EU’s common strategy for protecting refugees. The Member States have expressed their interest in voluntarily participating in a joint EU resettlement initiative. Based on the results of the deliberations on a common European asylum system for the future, the European Commission will draw up more specific plans for a common European programme for resettlement. In parallel with this, a new programme spanning several years for an area of freedom, security and justice, which also encompasses the protection of refugees (the ‘Stockholm Programme’) will be completed during the latter part of 2009.

The conference has five main goals, including setting up a forum for discussion of the current situation, contributing to the debate on the EU’s resettlement programme, and discussing how cooperation between the various players on resettlement can be improved within the EU.

Participating are experts from the authorities concerned, MPs and other decision makers in the political sphere, along with representatives of the UNHCR, human rights organisations, NGOs, churches and other affected civil society organisations in the Member States.

The conference is open to everyone. Read more at www.skr.org