

## Humanitarian Corridors:

implementation procedures for their  
extension on a European scale.



The Handbook was prepared by the members of the Working Group of the Humanitarian Corridors Project - Upscale a promising practice for clearly linked pre-departure and post-arrival support of resettled people - AMIF - 2016 - AG - INTE.

The following collaborated in its drafting:

Pope John XXIII Community Association;

Italian Community of Sant'Egidio ACAP - non-profit organisation;

French Community of Sant'Egidio;

Salesiani per il Sociale, association for social advancement;

CNOS-FAP National Federation

(Centro Nazionale Opere Salesiane / Formazione Aggiornamento Professionale - National Centre of Salesian Works / Professional Training);

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(International Volunteering Association for Development).

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## FOREWORD

This “Humanitarian Corridors: implementation procedures for their extension on a European scale” handbook has been developed within the framework of the “Humanitarian Corridors - Upscale a promising practice for clearly linked pre-departure and post-arrival support of resettled people” project funded by AMIF (*Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*) of the European Union; AMIF-2016-AG-INTE.

The project began in December 2017 and is coordinated by the Italian association the Pope John XXIII Community in partnership with four Italian bodies: the Community of Sant'Egidio ACAP - non-profit-making institution; the VIS - Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (International Volunteering Association for Development); the Salesiani per il Sociale, non-profit organisation; and the CNOS-FAP National Federation (Centro Nazionale Opere Salesiane/Formazione Aggiornamento Professionale - National Centre of Salesian Works/Professional Training); as well as the French Community of Sant'Egidio.

The “Humanitarian Corridors” project is aimed at studying the model of Humanitarian Corridors in order to promote its extension and replicability on a European scale.

To this end, the project is divided into two main phases: a research phase and a pilot trial phase. The research work has had a double focus:

- the analysis of the Humanitarian Corridors carried out in the two-year period 2016-2017 on the basis of the first Protocol “Opening of Humanitarian Corridors” signed together with the Italian authorities by the Italian Community of Sant'Egidio, the Waldensian Church and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy;
- the assessment of the needs of refugees potentially entitled to international protection and of the countries in which the Corridors are already implemented or will potentially be adopted in the near future.

The research phase made it possible to identify the procedures for creating Humanitarian Corridors, which were then tested during the pilot phase, the true heart of the project, during which the legal and safe entry into Italy and France of 1,170 refugees from Lebanon and Ethiopia took place (data collected in May 2019), who were then supported along their integration pathway into the local social structure.

The Handbook is, therefore, the outcome of the results achieved and of the evaluations expressed following the implementation of the two work phases. Its objective is to constitute an operational reference on setting up Humanitarian Corridors, illustrating the standard procedures for the implementation of the model, applicable from/to any European country and in favour of refugees of different origins.

Further information on the project “Humanitarian Corridors - Upscale a promising practice for clearly linked pre-departure and post-arrival support of resettled people” may be found on the website: [www.humanitariancorridor.org](http://www.humanitariancorridor.org)



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# INTRODUCTION

# 1

## 1.1 Why this Handbook?

The European project “Humanitarian Corridors - Upscale a promising practice for clearly linked pre-departure and post-arrival support of resettled people” has its roots in the Humanitarian Corridors created by the Italian Community of Sant'Egidio, the Waldensian Church and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy, in the two-year period 2016-2017, with the collaboration of the Pope John XXIII Community Association through its Non-violent Peace Corps, “Operation Dove”.

Born in Italy from the desire to provide answers to the many refugees who, every day, are fleeing situations of war and poverty and seeking shelter in bordering countries or in Europe, the Humanitarian Corridors are a particularly significant and original case of *sponsorship* addressing people potentially entitled to international protection and in vulnerable conditions (as defined by European Directive 2013/33 of 26 June 2013.<sup>1</sup> Humanitarian Corridors are, therefore, a protected, safe and legal transfer programme in Europe and a model of social inclusion based on the participation of solidarity networks spread over all the national territories involved.

Humanitarian Corridors are created through memoranda of understanding signed with the competent public authorities by the proposing organisations of civil society.<sup>2</sup> They were implemented for the first time from Lebanon to Italy in favour of Syrian refugees who escaped the civil war which broke out in Syria in 2011. Their first implementation was possible thanks to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding called “Opening of Humanitarian Corridors” dated 15 December 2015, between:

- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation - Directorate General for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies;
- the Ministry of the Interior - Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration;
- the Community of Sant'Egidio;
- the Federation of Italian Evangelical Churches;
- the Waldensian Church.

The first Protocol allowed the safe arrival of 1,011 Syrian refugees from Lebanon, who were received in Italy - in 80 different cities in 18 regions - thanks to the collaboration of a dense network of associations and of informal groups of private citizens who

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter IV - Provisions for vulnerable persons, Article 21: “...*vulnerable persons such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation*”.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the protocols concluded, active and in the process of being activated, please consult section 4 of the handbook.

supported the integration of refugees in different local realities, according to the “widespread reception” model.

The “Humanitarian Corridors” project is divided into four Work Packages (WP). The first work package enabled the study of some significant European *relocation* and *resettlement* practices and the analysis of the experience of the Humanitarian Corridors in the two-year period 2016-2017, highlighting, first of all, the differences with the practices analysed, the strengths and weaknesses. During the second WP, the research team identified and analysed the specific needs and requirements of:

- refugees who were potentially beneficiaries of the programme (Syrians who fled to Lebanon; Iraqis; Eritreans, Somalis and South-Sudanese settled in Ethiopia);
- European countries which joined the pilot phase (Italy and France);
- European countries where dialogue for the adoption of Humanitarian Corridors had begun (Spain, Poland and Germany).

This first research phase led to developing the procedures for the creation of the Humanitarian Corridors to be applied to the subsequent pilot phase. During WP3, the partnership tested the procedures for implementing the Corridors<sup>3</sup> the legal and safe entry into Italy and France of 1,170 vulnerable refugees from Lebanon and Ethiopia was guaranteed on the basis of three active Protocols (data collected in May 2019). In addition, a selected target of 190 beneficiaries in Italy and 20 beneficiaries in France was further supported in the integration process, thanks to European Union funding for specific services, additional and complementary to those already implemented and supported by informal solidarity networks born in the two countries.

The results of the research phase of the project and the results of the activities carried out for the benefit of refugees who arrived in Italy and France through the Corridors in the period February 2018 - June 2019 form the basis for elaborating this Handbook.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Handbook.

The handbook “Humanitarian Corridors: the implementation procedures for their extension on a European scale” is intended to be a guide for implementing

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3 The “Humanitarian Corridors” project takes into consideration the following currently active Protocols: Lebanon/Italy; Lebanon/France; Ethiopia/Italy. The sponsoring organisations are those which signed the Protocols:

- for the Humanitarian Corridors from Lebanon to Italy: the Italian Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy, the Waldensian Church;
- for the Humanitarian Corridors from Ethiopia to Italy: the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI);
- for the Humanitarian Corridors from Lebanon to France: the French Community of Sant'Egidio, the Bishops' Conference of France, Caritas France, the French Protestant Federation, the Protestant Mutual Aid Federation.

Humanitarian Corridors and their extension and replicability on a European scale. The Handbook offers a detailed and timely explanation of the implementation procedures of the Humanitarian Corridors so that other European countries - in addition to Italy, France, Belgium and Andorra - may adopt the model, also in favour of refugees with different origins than those already affected by the active Protocols.

## 1.3 To whom it is addressed.

This guide is aimed at policymakers at a domestic and European level, at representatives of the States and institutions of the European Union competent in the field of immigration and the right to asylum, at representatives of civil society, at non-governmental organisations which already operate or intend to operate in the field of managing migration flows and of measures of *relocation* and *resettlement*.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.4 Structure.

The handbook is divided into five sections. The second section examines the general areas of applicability of the Humanitarian Corridors, the third section is dedicated to explaining the procedures for the implementation of the Humanitarian Corridors, divided into the following areas:

- pre-departure activities;
- obtaining a visa;
- safe journey;
- post-arrival activities and implementation of pathways of inclusion and integration towards socio-economic independence of refugees in the EU country of destination.

In addition, the procedures are complemented by indications of specificities or variations for the various areas of applicability, where necessary.

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4 The “humanitarian corridors” [provide for] the possibility that its beneficiaries are not identified among those for whom the UNHCR has ordered international protection, but differ from these as they do not presuppose, even if they do not exclude, the temporary nature of their stay, but rather aim at the best possible social inclusion in a scenario which in the short term should allow, also as a result of national policies to stop immigration for work purposes, the possibility of greater stabilisation of those who come to the European Union for reasons of asylum”. [...] “The difference between “humanitarian corridors” and the European framework for resettlement also concerns a second aspect, since it is the firm conviction of the promoters of the “humanitarian corridors” that they do not want to include them in the number of resettlements promoted by the European Union for individual Member States. In short, it is necessary to avoid that the drive for a greater commitment of solidarity of European civil societies should be an offset, thus everything in zero-sum terms, with the commitments that individual countries will need to take on with regards to the European Union and the UNHCR.” P. Morozzo della Rocca, I due Protocolli d'Intesa sui “Corridoi Umanitari” tra alcuni enti di ispirazione religiosa e il governo ed il loro possibile impatto sulle politiche di asilo e immigrazione. (The two Memoranda of Understanding on the “Humanitarian Corridors” between some bodies of religious inspiration and the government and their possible impact on asylum and immigration policies). Diritto, Immigrazione e Cittadinanza - File no. 1 2017.

Finally, the framework of the concluded and active Protocols and the results obtained from the application of the model in Italy and in the framework of the “Humanitarian Corridors” project are examined in depth in the fourth and fifth sections.

## 1.5 Supporting tools.

Thanks to the European Union funding the “Humanitarian Corridors” project, a web platform has been developed with the aim of supporting and facilitating the management of the huge flow of information generated by implementing the various phases and activities which make up the experience of the Humanitarian Corridors. The platform helps with the processing of data,<sup>5</sup> the monitoring of activities carried out, the storage of information, and the *matching* between the possible beneficiaries of the Programme and the opportunities for reception in Europe. Access to these functionalities is regulated by a system of permits and accesses differentiated according to the role played by the user within the project.

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<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the new European GDPR Regulation no. 279/2016.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### ARRA

(Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs) (Ethiopia)

### ETD

Emergency Travel Documents

### EURODAC

European Dactyloscopy

### HC

Humanitarian Corridors

### IO

International Organisations

### NGO

Non-governmental organisations

### PEP

Protected Entry Procedures

### UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

### UNRWA

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

### IOM

International Organisation for Migration

# HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS: GENERAL AREAS OF APPLICABILITY

## 2

### 2.1 General objectives.

Humanitarian Corridors aim to achieve the following general objectives:

- to avoid the death of migrants who try to reach Europe by sea;
- to enable people in a vulnerable situation (single women, children, sick/disabled people, elderly people, etc.) to access the international protection system through the safe and legal entry into Europe;
- to fight the exploitation by traffickers and trafficking in human beings;
- to test a good practice which can then be replicated in other European contexts, as it is based on European legislation: first, Article 78 of the Lisbon Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;<sup>6</sup>
- to offer a significant trial regarding the possibility of introducing/reintroducing the Sponsorship instrument in the legislative-operational contexts of the Member States, also on the basis of the most recent experiences (as in the case of Germany) and of those already in place for a long time in various countries of other continents (such as, for example, Canada and the United States).

The procedures envisaged for the implementation of the Humanitarian Corridors, reported below, have been prepared and tested to facilitate the achievement of these objectives, including in view of the replicability of the model in other contexts and in other European countries.

### 2.2 Who are the beneficiaries?

The “potential beneficiaries” of the Humanitarian Corridors are:

- persons in the conditions described in European Directive 2013/33 of 26 June 2013 and in vulnerable conditions due to age, sex, state of health (e.g. families with children, single mothers with children, disabled people, people with serious illnesses, victims of trafficking, torture, violence);

<sup>6</sup> Article 78 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union summarises the Common European System on Asylum, Subsidiary and Temporary Protection: “*The Union shall develop a common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection with a view to offering appropriate status to any third-country national requiring international protection and ensuring compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. This policy must be in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees, and with other relevant treaties. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt measures for a common European asylum system comprising: a) a uniform status of asylum for nationals of third countries, valid throughout the Union; b) a uniform status of subsidiary protection for nationals of third countries who, without obtaining European asylum, are in need of international protection; c) a common system of temporary protection for displaced persons in the event of a massive inflow; d) common procedures for the granting and withdrawing of uniform asylum or subsidiary protection status; e) criteria and mechanisms for determining which Member State is responsible for considering an application for asylum or subsidiary protection; f) standards concerning the conditions for the reception of applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection; g) partnership and cooperation with third countries for the purpose of managing inflows of people applying for asylum or subsidiary or temporary protection*”.



- persons falling within the cases provided for by Article 3 of the Memorandum of Understanding (or Project Protocol), which remains substantially unchanged with respect to the geographical areas of applicability of the different Humanitarian Corridors in force up to now, without preclusion or discrimination in relation to religious or social groups or personal characteristics;
- persons recognised by the UNHCR as *prima facie* refugees under the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol;<sup>7</sup>
- persons facing serious threats to their life or freedom due to armed conflict, endemic violence or systematic violations of human rights;
- people with relatives in the country of resettlement;
- persons capable of completing the process of cultural, social and economic integration envisaged by the project in the host country and of starting a new life in a cultural context other than that of their origin or that of their country of residence.

## 2.3 Possible regulatory developments.

Humanitarian Corridors are to be considered as a good practice, the introduction to two possible regulatory developments: one concerning the possibility of using the form of the humanitarian visa more widely (modifying the current discipline of art. 25, Regulation no. 810/2009); the other consisting of the affirmation **of Sponsorship as a channel of ordinary legal entry**.<sup>8</sup>

Humanitarian Corridors, included in the framework of *Protected Entry Procedures* (PEP) and based on the initiative of civil society, can be functional to the introduction of some ambitious reform proposals regarding asylum and immigration policies such as the introduction or re-introduction of the aforementioned instrument of *Sponsorship*,<sup>9</sup> albeit on a new basis compared with the experience acquired, for example, in Italy at the end of the '90s.

If the desired developments were to take place in practice and on a sufficiently large scale, many more lives could be saved. Newcomers would be accompanied along

7 "Person recognised as a refugee by a State or by the UNHCR, on the basis of objective criteria relating to the situation in the country of origin which justify the presumption that the person concerned fulfils the criteria of the current definition of refugee".

8 Paolo Morozzo della Rocca, *I due Protocolli d'Intesa sui "Corridoi Umanitari" tra alcuni enti di ispirazione religiosa e il governo ed il loro possibile impatto sulle politiche di asilo e immigrazione*, Diritto, Immigrazione e Cittadinanza (*The two Memoranda of Understanding on the "Humanitarian Corridors" between some bodies of religious inspiration and the government and their possible impact on asylum and immigration policies*) - File no. 1 2017.

9 European Commission, *Towards a reform of the common European asylum system and enhancing legal avenues to Europe*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 6 April 2016. The Communication identified as one of the initiatives to be supported "Other initiatives, such as private sponsorship, where the costs of sponsorship and settlement support for persons in need of protection can be supported by private groups or organisations, can also play an important role in multiplying the legal entry possibilities".

virtuous pathways of social inclusion. Where implemented, these developments would contribute to improving the final outcome of the European Protected Entry Policies (PEPs), which currently rely almost exclusively on resettlement actions requested from Member States.<sup>10</sup>

The cooperation between the State and civil society, introduced by the Humanitarian Corridors and characterised, among other things, by the latter's funding of the direct costs of reception, makes this model more easily admissible by governments than other instruments. **Humanitarian Corridors are potentially replicable in many contexts, on the basis of the availability of civil society, as they do not entail significant economic or political costs for the hosting State.** The reception of refugees, in fact, is completely borne by the sponsoring associations,<sup>11</sup> just as the responsibility and organisation of the entry of refugees admitted to the countries of destination falls on said organisations, on the basis of specific protocols signed with the competent authorities.

## 2.4 The challenges which the Humanitarian Corridors respond to.

The table summarises the main challenges which the Humanitarian Corridors respond to through specific activities carried out both in the *pre-departure* and *post-arrival* phases, together with a list of the players involved. These subjects have an institutional/public or private nature and one that's attributable to the association/volunteering world. All these subjects are external to the project and the sponsors of the Humanitarian Corridors have activated memoranda of understanding or specific forms of collaboration with these, both in the countries of transit and of destination of the refugees, for implementing the project activities.

10 Krivenko, Ekaterina Yahyaoui, *Hospitality and Sovereignty: What Can We Learn From the Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program?* *International Journal of Refugee Law* 24(3): 579-602, 2012. "the private sponsorship of refugees program should be regarded as more than just an interesting way to implement states' obligations. It should be seen as an example of, and opportunity for, innovative development in international law, which could provide a more human dimension, enabling more persons to get the protection to which they are entitled."

11 Support to refugees in the destination country for their inclusion/integration into host communities lasts on average 1-1.5 years.



CHALLENGES	ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES	PLAYERS INVOLVED OUTSIDE THE PROJECT
<b>1</b> Prevent deaths at sea SAFE ENTRY --- <b>2</b> Fight trafficking in human beings LEGAL ENTRY --- <b>3</b> Strengthen security in Europe SECURITY	<p><b>Pre-departure activities:</b></p> <p><b>Accurate assessment (on site) of applications received from potential beneficiaries</b> living in transit countries (e.g. refugee camps): assessment of personal conditions and experiences, possible vulnerabilities, <b>motivation and understanding</b> of the project and, as far as possible, of the <b>aptitude/ability to live in the European</b> countries of destination (at least three assessment interviews).</p> <p>Cultural-linguistic orientation and transfer of knowledge concerning rights and duties in the countries of destination for people admitted to the project.</p> <p><b>Visas issued pursuant to art. 25 of EC Regulation no. 810/2009</b>, on the basis of protocols signed by the project sponsors with the competent authorities of the EU countries.</p> <p><b>Different levels of security checks: three different checks</b> carried out by the competent authorities, both in transit countries and in destination countries, as required by the current protocols.</p> <p>Entering names in the Schengen database.</p> <p>Pre-departure photo identification operations.</p>	<p>NGOs and local associations, churches and religious organisations (not signatories to the protocols) involved in selection and pre-departure activities.</p> <p>UNHCR and government agencies in the countries where the refugees are staying (outside the project).</p> <p>Police authorities, both in transit countries and in EU destination countries: responsible for the different levels of checks and for security controls.</p> <p>Ministry of Home Affairs and other competent authorities in the countries hosting the potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>Ministries of Home Affairs in EU destination countries.</p> <p>Ministries of Foreign Affairs in EU destination countries.</p> <p>Embassies and consulates of EU destination countries in countries hosting potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>Police and/or Immigration Authorities of countries in transit for the necessary controls and for departure authorisations.</p>

CHALLENGES	ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES	PLAYERS INVOLVED OUTSIDE THE PROJECT
<b>4</b> Sustainable reception of refugees SPONSORSHIP --- <b>5</b> Effective inclusion and autonomy pathways INTEGRATION	<p><b>Post-arrival activities:</b></p> <p>Activation of <b>“widespread reception systems”</b> by civil society (associations, groups of individuals, parishes, organisations, families, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• satisfaction of refugees' basic needs (food, shelter, goods and services), particularly during the first months after their arrival;</li> <li>• support to access the health system and medical care;</li> </ul> <p>Support in the process of applying for asylum/international protection, residence permit/travel permit.</p> <p>Cultural guidance, awareness-raising actions, transfer of knowledge and skills concerning the various stages of the integration process for those responsible and for operators in local communities hosting refugees.</p> <p><b>Integration pathways geared towards people's autonomy:</b> language courses; vocational training; support for job integration; inclusion and integration of refugee children into the education system and extracurricular support.</p>	<p>Associations/organisations and individuals at local level (host “communities”).</p> <p>Competent authorities in the EU countries in charge of the procedure for the recognition of legal status and for residence permits.</p> <p>Public/private associations and organisations (training centres, schools, etc.) at national and local level involved in the implementation of integration pathways.</p> <p>Subjects in charge of healthcare.</p>
<b>6</b> Intercultural mediation NEGOTIATION	<p><b>Continuous intercultural mediation support:</b> the presence and support of mediators - who do not perform a mere function of translation or interpretation, but especially of support and guidance - is ensured both before departure and during the refugees' stay in the local communities receiving them.</p>	<p>Universities and Higher Education Centres (intercultural mediation courses)</p>

## 2.5 Key players in the implementation of Humanitarian Corridors procedures.

PERSONS INVOLVED	DESCRIPTION
<b>Operators and Intercultural Mediators in Transit Countries</b>	<p>They belong to the various organisations working in transit countries. They provide assistance to people living in refugee camps who may be included in the Humanitarian Corridors programme as beneficiaries.</p> <p>The operators have the task of understanding any situation related to the refugees and their families and of gathering all the information (personal and family situation, problems and expectations, etc.). The information collected is then carefully analysed in relation to their possible inclusion in the project. Operators are also required to carry out preliminary checks on the existence and availability of all documentation relating to refugees which, on the basis of the specific and applicable legislative context, is necessary to leave the Country and enter Europe.</p>
<b>Operators in host countries and intercultural mediators</b> (at a local level)	<p>These are the contact persons of the associations/organisations hosting refugees in the EU countries.</p> <p>Host associations and organisations are responsible for looking after one or more individuals or families and for providing them with material and moral support. They help refugees to complete their inclusion/integration project in the country of destination and in the local communities in which they live. Operators are therefore required to provide a wide range of goods/services/activities to be offered to refugees, such as: food and shelter; awareness raising; identification of training opportunities (language courses; vocational training; etc.) and other activities aimed at their social inclusion and integration, including work, in the local host communities.</p>
<b>Coordinators</b>	<p>They belong to the organisations sponsoring the Humanitarian Corridors (signatories of the Protocols with the national authorities) and act as a point of contact between the operators of the transit countries and those of the destination countries in charge of the reception activities.</p> <p>Thanks to the work of the coordinators, the <i>matching</i> between the needs and expectations of the refugees (individuals and families) in the transit countries and the possibility expressed by the local communities (also in terms of housing and integration opportunities for the persons received) in the destination countries is achieved. Coordinators are responsible for the project and in charge of maintaining relations with the competent Ministries and Authorities, in the transit countries and in Europe. Coordinators confirm and validate the inclusion of the beneficiaries within the project, provide for their accommodation in the various local communities, and maintain relations with the associations in the area with the support of the Operators of the sponsoring subjects.</p>

# HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS: DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES



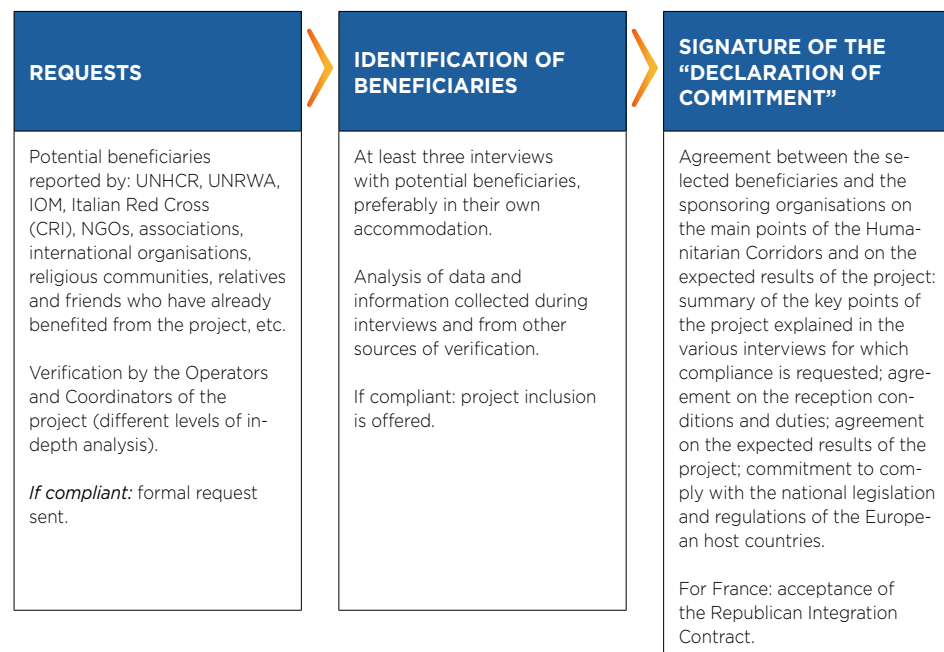
### 3.1 Identification and selection of Beneficiaries.

#### ACTIVITY:

Identification and selection of beneficiaries.

This activity is carried out in the countries of origin (here also called “transit countries”) of the refugees (Lebanon, Ethiopia).

#### MACRO-PROCEDURE:



#### OBJECTIVE:

To identify refugees who may join the Humanitarian Corridors and benefit from international protection in accordance with EU legislation.

#### ORGANISATION/STAFF INVOLVED:

- project coordinators;
- operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations in the transit countries;
- NGOs and local associations in transit countries (in close contact with the sponsoring organisations) – *external to the Project*;
- UNHCR – *external to the Project*.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES:

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	ORGANISATIONS / PEOPLE
1	Collection and examination of applications.	List of potential beneficiaries and reports (origin, personal conditions, family ties, etc.).	Country of transit.	NGOs and local associations.  Coordinators.  Staff/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
2	Interviews with potential beneficiaries.	<p>A. Data and information provided by potential beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal data;</li> <li>- Vulnerability;</li> <li>- Family status;</li> <li>- Judicial situation;</li> <li>- Other relevant personal and social conditions;</li> <li>- Personal and family histories, including transfers made;</li> <li>- Reasons for the will to move to Europe;</li> <li>- Identification and story validation documents.</li> </ul> <p>B. Information provided by Coordinators/Operators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Method of inclusion in the project and its operation;</li> <li>- Applicable legislation on asylum and international protection;</li> <li>- Difficulties to be faced in the destination countries, once included in the project, in terms of cultural, social and work inclusion.</li> </ul>	Country of transit.	Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	ORGANISATIONS / PEOPLE
3	Verification and evaluation of the truthfulness of the personal history described by the potential beneficiaries.	Data and information collected from various sources (personal contacts, databases, etc.).  Translation of documents requested by consular authorities (for France).	Country of transit.	Staff/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
4	Verification and assessment of the personal judicial situation by the competent authorities in the countries of transit and arrival.	Data and information collected from different sources, according to the regulations in force in the countries of departure/transit and destination, for people included in the list of potential beneficiaries of the project.	Country of transit.  EU countries of destination.	Competent authorities in transit and destination countries.
5	Reconnaissance and collection of the necessary documents for each selected beneficiary required for the transfer to Europe, in case of inclusion in the project.	File regarding each beneficiary/family.	Country of transit.	Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
6	Identification of geographical locations and accommodation for refugees in the country of destination, based on personal and family needs.	Geographical location and housing data.  Information on reception contexts.	EU countries of destination.	Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
7	Collection of fingerprints of potential beneficiaries at the embassy of the country of destination.	Fingerprints.  Data entered in the EURODAC and Schengen databases.	Country of transit.	Competent authorities.  Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations (supervision and organisation).
8	Confirmation of selected beneficiaries to be included in the project.	Declaration of Commitment with beneficiaries (signed and activated).	Country of transit.  EU countries of destination.	Coordinators.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	ORGANISATIONS / PEOPLE
9	Data entry.	Data and information collected at each stage and entered in the Web Application.	Country of transit.  EU countries of destination.	Staff/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations  Coordinators.

The implementation of the activities is reserved for the project sponsors and their operators on site.

Other local players, often institutional, are listened to carefully but are not involved in the procedures for identifying beneficiaries. This is in order to ensure compliance with the project requirements, based on two main criteria:

- the objective eligibility of potential beneficiaries in relation to their personal characteristics and, in particular, their condition of “*vulnerability*”;
- the effective understanding of the rules of the Humanitarian Corridors and their express assent by the selected beneficiaries.

These elements are both crucial to avoid secondary movements once the beneficiaries have reached their destinations in Europe.

The process for beneficiaries' access to the Humanitarian Corridors is preceded and accompanied by constant and complete information concerning the project's operating mode and the rules it encompasses, which is provided to the identified persons. This is fundamental information, as each beneficiary must be aware of the entire migration project and be strongly motivated to undertake the path of adaptation to integrate into their new European reality.

European Directive 2013/33 of 26 June 2013, Chapter IV Provisions in favour of vulnerable persons, Article 21:

*“...vulnerable persons such as minors, [...], disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilations.”*

## PROCEDURE 1

### Collection and examination of applications.

The applications for admission to the Humanitarian Corridors submitted by the potential beneficiaries reach the organisations sponsoring the project through various channels: associations, international organisations, religious communities, relatives and friends already in Europe (even arrived previously through the Humanitarian Corridors), etc.

Where possible, in order to also respond to the numerous requests, the associations sponsoring the project verify the possibility of using legal and safe alternative entry routes to the Humanitarian Corridors that are already in force in national legislation (for example: procedures for family reunification or cohesion with a European citizen).

## PROCEDURE 2

### Interviews with potential beneficiaries.

At least three interviews are carried out, at different times, for each person/family group identified; preferably in the home/place of residence or temporary residence of the persons concerned. The presence of intercultural mediators is usually very useful and can be activated at one or more meetings. The Coordinators and Operators of the sponsoring organisations explain to the potential beneficiaries the motivations and operating methods of the Humanitarian Corridors, as well as the current legislation on the right of asylum which will be applied to them in the countries of destination. During the interviews, the Coordinators and Operators answer the questions posed by potential beneficiaries and provide them with useful information (cultural, social, economic, etc.) on the host country.

During the interviews, operators verify that they have the necessary documentation to leave the transit country and/or the necessary actions to obtain or supplement this in accordance with the applicable rules. Particular attention is paid to evaluating the motivational aspects which induce the interviewees to ask for international protection and to be included in the project.

At the end of the interviews, should the conditions be met, a “declaration of commitment” is proposed for signature, written in Arabic or in the beneficiary’s mother tongue, containing the main points of the project for which the beneficiary’s commitment is requested. The declaration contains the following elements:

- the reasons that led the sponsoring associations to create the Humanitarian Corridors, (directly bearing the costs);
- essential information on asylum procedures in force in Europe and applicable to the beneficiaries;
- the rights and obligations of the beneficiaries of the project, which will be applicable to them once they have been admitted to the project;
- the beneficiaries’ commitment to remain in the host country;
- full information on the impossibility for the beneficiaries, once included in the project, to return to the country of transit and origin (except for the possibility of waiver of status);
- the reception methods and schedule, with particular reference to the concrete commitments which the signatory beneficiary will have to honour in order to successfully complete the integration process: learning the language of the host country and the obligation to achieve independence and that of the family within the time limits set by the project.

## FIRST INTERVIEW - SECOND INTERVIEW - THIRD INTERVIEW

Composition of the family and circle of relatives.

Cultural background and education.

Personal history and events which led the person and/or the family to leave their country.

Reasons for their application for international protection.

Verification of the personal documentation in their possession.

At the end of the interviews, a “declaration of commitment” may be proposed for signature

## PROCEDURE 3

### Verification and evaluation of the truthfulness of the personal history described by the potential beneficiaries.

The truthfulness of the personal/family history described by the potential beneficiaries is carefully analysed and evaluated through various verification sources: databases, information provided by other people in the field, region, city, etc. The Operators and Coordinators of the project sponsoring organisations are responsible for this procedure.

## PROCEDURE 4

### Verification and assessment of the personal judicial situation by the competent authorities in the countries of transit and arrival.

This procedure consists of checks carried out by the competent authorities to

ascertain the personal judicial situation of potential beneficiaries, in particular the absence of criminal records, to which the persons responsible for the identification and selection of potential beneficiaries (operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations), NGOs/local associations outside the project with which formal or informal cooperation agreements are in place, ensure maximum cooperation. A second-tier check is carried out by the competent authorities in the countries of destination and transit.

## **PROCEDURE 5**

### **Reconnaissance and collection of the necessary personal documents for each selected beneficiary required for the transfer to Europe, in case of inclusion in the project.**

This procedure is implemented after the end of procedure 3 and in parallel with procedure 4. It consists in creating a file relating to each beneficiary/family in order to evaluate the possible admission to the project and, therefore, to prepare all the necessary documentation for the journey and that will be useful at the moment of arrival in Europe as regards bureaucratic formalities and reception. In the case of France, translations of the documents requested by the consular authorities are prepared.

## **PROCEDURE 6**

### **Identification of the geographical location and accommodation in the destination countries according to personal and family needs.**

On the basis of the personal and family characteristics of the individuals, the Coordinators have the operators in the designation countries draw up a preliminary list of the possible suitable geographical locations where the refugees can be accommodated, taking into account their specific needs (e.g.: appropriate accommodation and social-economic context for large families, for the elderly, for people with disabilities, etc.). Subsequently, the list is evaluated and further checked by the project operators and by the Coordinators themselves. If all the requirements are met, the geographical locations and accommodation are temporarily associated with the persons and families and are proposed to them. Should family members be present, an attempt is made to promote proximity between members of the same family.

## **PROCEDURE 7**

### **Collection of fingerprints at the Embassy of the country of destination.**

When both levels of control under procedure 4 are successfully completed, the

person can be designated as the beneficiary of the project. The status of “beneficiary” is then validated by the Coordinator (see Procedure 8). Beneficiaries’ fingerprints are taken and stored at the embassy of the European country of destination. The data are entered into EURODAC (the EU database of migrants), and then sent to the forensic police of the country of destination for another level of checks. Local police also carry out their own controls, in accordance with the legislation in force. Once all checks have been carried out, the competent authorities will issue a visa clearance.

## **PROCEDURE 8**

### **Confirmation of selected beneficiaries.**

The Coordinator confirms and validates the designation of the beneficiaries of the project; the signed declaration of commitment (see Procedure 2) therefore becomes enforceable. The Coordinator activates all the other phases envisaged for the transfer of the beneficiaries to the European countries of destination, after having carried out and completed all the other pre-departure activities (see Macro-procedure 3.2).

## **PROCEDURE 9**

### **Data entry.**

All relevant data and information produced in each phase are managed by the competent operator and stored in the Web Application.





## THE STORY OF YOUSSEF

### Cultural and linguistic mediator in Lebanon

**Youssef Atais** is 45 years old and arrived in Italy 20 years ago. He met the Community of Sant'Egidio at the School of Italian Language and Culture. Supported by the Community, he obtained the diploma of intercultural mediator. Now an Italian citizen, he is the father of a wonderful five-year-old girl. For many years now, he has collaborated with the Community of Sant'Egidio for mediation activities in services for immigrants (School, Reception, Consultation, etc.). **Since 2016, the year in which the Corridors started, he has been involved in pre-departure activities in Lebanon and in accompanying refugees.**

More than four years after beginning his work in Lebanon, Youssef and his colleagues working in the field have now acquired a profound knowledge of the multifaceted reality of the refugees present in all areas of Lebanon, both in Beirut and in the various cities of the country, from the camps in the north and the Bekaa Valley to the Palestinian camps of Sidon and Tyre.

The work consists **in accompanying the people who will arrive in Italy or Europe through the Humanitarian Corridors throughout the various stages of selection and preparation for departure.**

*"Various interviews are carried out for each refugee/family group selected, at different times and preferably in the homes of the persons concerned. In addition to gathering information on the composition of the family and of the family circle, on the cultural formation of each person, on the history and events that led the person and/or family to leave their country, we pay great attention to the reasons for their request for international protection. People must, in fact, be aware that, once they arrive in Europe, they will not be able to go back."*

For this reason, Youssef and the team with which he works, under the coordination of Maria Quinto of the Community of Sant'Egidio, are very careful to explain to refugees

the motivations and methods of the Humanitarian Corridors, the legislation on the right of asylum which will be applied to them, and any other useful information about the host country.

*"Above all, explains Youssef, it is necessary to evaluate the depth and determination of the motivation with which the person involved adheres to the Humanitarian Corridors project. **Adhesion is the determining element, which will allow people to tackle the difficulties which inevitably come with any migration project.**"*

The work of mediators like Youssef is fundamental. Communication and understanding with the people in situ must be clear, and factual, otherwise the consequences, including those of unmet expectations, could be negative, to the point of delaying or invalidating the integration project in the destination countries and the reception communities.

The selection criteria depend primarily on vulnerability. But the motivation and willingness to face the challenge of recreating a new life and a better future in a linguistically and culturally different reality must be carefully considered. Other indicators are, therefore, taken into consideration by the people who carry out the delicate work which precedes the departure of the beneficiaries: among these, there is certainly the possibility of accessing the asylum and protection system, but above all, the real prospects, for the persons and families interviewed, of integrating themselves into the social and economic context of the destination countries.

***"We try to understand whether the people in front of us will be able to find their way in Europe"***, says Youssef.

For this reason, field workers dedicate a significant part of their time to get to know the conditions of the persons and families reported: composition, presence of particular psychological or psychiatric fragilities, etc. For example, *"in relation to large families, we sometimes pay attention to providing a type of care that takes into account the fact that, often, these families are composed mainly of children, minors not of working age, and the elderly. In general, the possibility of people of working age integrating and finding work is always carefully evaluated."*

*"Usually, at least three meetings are necessary before people are offered the opportunity to commit themselves to the project"*, continues Youssef. This commitment is formalised in a statement (made in the mother tongue of the people concerned) which expresses the main points of the project. ***"The commitment of the subscribers is fundamental. It is necessary that the people who arrive should be well aware of everything related to the project, including the method and timing of the reception. They will have to complete a path which is never easy, until they reach independence. They will always be accompanied, in every phase of the integration, but they will have to personally commit themselves and put a lot of effort into this"***, concludes Youssef.

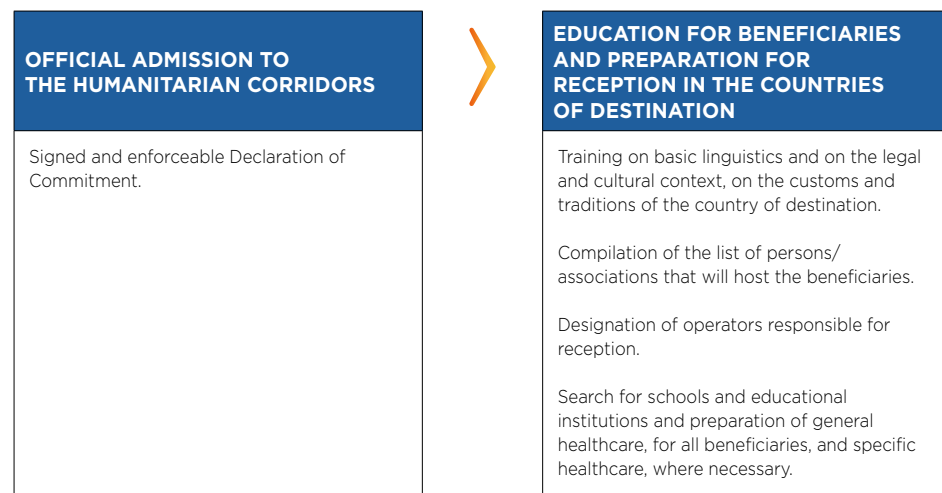


### 3.2 Pre-departure activities: preparation of beneficiaries.

#### ACTIVITY:

- Information, through interviews, concerning the regulations which affect the legal framework (particularly in the field of immigration) and the culture of the destination country. The activities are carried out in the transit country for the beneficiaries admitted to the project;
- Preparatory meeting with the host communities and preparation for the reception of beneficiaries in the host country.

#### MACRO-PROCEDURE:



#### OBJECTIVE:

- to provide the beneficiaries, prior to departure, with basic linguistic and cultural training and an introduction to the legal and cultural context of the host countries;<sup>12</sup>
- to organise the material hospitality (housing, education for children/minors, healthcare, etc.) of the beneficiaries in the local host communities, according to the widespread reception model.

<sup>12</sup> Nel caso della Francia, i beneficiari vengono specificamente informati sui contenuti del "Contratto di integrazione repubblicana" che saranno chiamati a sottoscrivere e che contiene alcune clausole che richiedono un'informazione e un'accettazione specifica (ad esempio, il divieto per le donne di indossare il velo nelle scuole pubbliche).

#### ORGANISATION/STAFF INVOLVED:

- project coordinators;
- operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations in the transit countries.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES:

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	PEOPLE
10	Basic language training and training on the legal and cultural context.	Reports on individual levels of training.	Countries of transit.	Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Staff/Volunteers of partner organisations.
11	Designation of operators responsible for post-arrival activities.	List of operators.	EU countries of destination.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators belonging to national/local associations in host contexts.
12	Awareness events in host communities.	Reporting on events and achievements.	EU countries of destination.	Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators belonging to national/local associations in host contexts.
13	Search for and confirmation of available accommodation for the beneficiaries.	Final list of available accommodation in local host communities.	EU countries of destination.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators/Volunteers from local host communities.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	PEOPLE
14	Selection of schools and educational institutions. Contact with health professionals and hospitals where beneficiaries suffering from chronic diseases or in need of immediate assistance will be temporarily admitted.	List and address book of selected schools, general practitioners and hospitals.	EU countries of destination.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators/Volunteers from local host communities.
15	Booking and undertaking of health checks for beneficiaries.	Booking.  Medical examinations.	Destination countries.	Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators/Volunteers from local host communities.
16	Data entry.	Data and information collected at each stage organised in the Web Application.	Countries of transit.  Destination countries.	Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Coordinators.

## PROCEDURE 10

### Basic language training and training on the legal and cultural context.

The activities are carried out for beneficiaries in transit countries (e.g. Lebanon, Ethiopia) before their departure for the European countries of destination. As part of the framework of the “Humanitarian Corridors” project in Ethiopia, all activities are carried out in Addis Ababa, mainly by VIS, while APG23 carries out the courses in Lebanon.

## PROCEDURE 11

### Designation of operators responsible for post-arrival activities.

The Coordinators and heads of associations and organisations at local level identify the operators who will be responsible for coordinating and carrying out the

reception activities for refugees (accommodation, material support, organisation of training activities and social inclusion actions, etc.). During this phase too, the role of the intercultural mediators is very important, as they can be activated whenever their support is needed to facilitate the interaction and integration process of the beneficiaries.

## PROCEDURE 12

### Public awareness events in host communities.

In the local contexts where the beneficiaries are welcomed, operators organise public events aimed at explaining: the specific objectives of the project, the planned activities, the stories of the beneficiaries who will be hosted and their social status in the countries of origin and transit, the reasons why they left their country, etc. All other information useful to preparing the host communities before the arrival of the beneficiaries and to supporting them during the subsequent phases of the project is also provided.



## SENTIERI DI PACE AND THE KENEGDO GROUP

**Among the many  
associations which have  
joined the Humanitarian  
Corridors... solidarity  
doubles!**

The association Sentieri di Pace was founded in 2004 with the aim of promoting the culture of active non-violence through:

- training courses for elementary and secondary schools in the territory of Boves ('martyr' city of the resistance where the Scuola di Pace [School of Peace] with which the association actively cooperates is located),
- meetings for the citizens of the Cuneo area with experts who practise active non-violence on a daily basis,
- theatrical courses for teenagers and adults and animated readings for children and families with themes on the culture of Peace.

*"Over the years, we have repeatedly asked ourselves how we can concretely practise non-violence in the complex world which surrounds us", says Giorgio Falco, president of the association, "until the opportunity arose to open the doors of our association to reception". Sentieri di Pace's headquarters was granted to the association as a free loan by the Diocese of Cuneo, which proposed that the institution should start welcoming homeless people. "This is how Carla, an exquisite lady from Turin, arrived in 2016 and, thanks also to our help, was able to rebuild her life by finding work and accommodation."*

In 2017, Sentieri di Pace was approached by Operation Dove, the non-violent peace corps of the Pope John XXIII Community Association, for the reception of a Syrian couple from the Tel Abbas refugee camp in Lebanon. *"We could not say no! To us, it seemed like the answer to many of our questions. In 2018, Randa and Houli arrived and the group of volunteers expanded from 8 to 100 people in just a few months",* explains Giorgio. Thanks to the involvement and commitment of many volunteers, Randa and Houli are integrating perfectly into the territory and, after more than a year on from their arrival, they are also financially independent.

*"In 2019, we received a new request from Operation Dove to welcome a couple who, for various reasons, had to flee Lebanon urgently. The group's response was positive, but the biggest surprise was to discover that a group of young people from a parish near Cuneo wanted to take charge of the reception."*

The Kenegdo group was born in the autumn of 2018 from the will of a dozen young people who attend parish groups to get involved, to get to know and deal with different realities, and to improve in a concrete way their lives and those of people in need. The group was immediately interested in the reception project of Syrian families fleeing the war and refugee camps in Lebanon and when the request to welcome a couple arrived, it immediately decided to take care of it. Through various information and awareness meetings, the young people of Kenegdo reached out to a large number of people who decided to support and help them in many different ways in the new adventure which was about to begin. Hanaa and Ahmad arrived in Boves with the Humanitarian Corridors on 30 March 2019.

*"Everyone worked together in welcoming Hanaa and Ahmad according to their time, characteristics, knowledge and skills. There are those who deal with Italian lessons, those who take care of the bureaucratic issues and documents, others who deal with health issues, and those who simply offer to accompany them for a walk. Everyone is important", they say. "Throughout this period, from the initial group of about ten young people, we have moved on to obtain the help and support of a hundred people. In the meantime, relations within the group itself are also getting stronger, thanks to the meetings, the opportunities to exchange information and for discussion, and thanks to the pursuit of common goals which can only be achieved through collaboration between all the volunteers. Certainly, the group is not complete, anyone wishing to join is welcome; new ideas, energy and proposals to continue along this path are always necessary!"*

says Claudia, a young woman of just 19.

Today there are almost 200 volunteers involved in the two reception groups!



### PROCEDURE 13

#### Search for and confirmation of available accommodation for the beneficiaries.

Starting from the preliminary lists prepared under Procedure 6 and in close contact with the Project Coordinators, the operators finalise the lists and activate contacts at a local level with the associations and people who have expressed their willingness to welcome refugees. The confirmation of the locations and accommodation takes place only after the Coordinators have positively evaluated the applications, considering them suitable for the needs of the beneficiaries who will be accommodated.

### PROCEDURE 14

#### Selection of schools and educational institutions. Contact with health professionals and hospitals where beneficiaries suffering from chronic diseases or in need of immediate assistance will be temporarily admitted.

In collaboration with associations and volunteers at a local level, the coordinators and operators of the sponsoring organisations, make contact with: schools and educational institutions in the area, to allow children to start or continue their schooling and to fit into further educational and training contexts; and with primary care physicians and specialists, health facilities and hospitals, to allow beneficiaries to access basic healthcare and to provide specialist assistance to people in need of care due to having suffered physical and/or psychological damage (for example, because they come from war situations) or because they suffer from chronic diseases, etc.

### PROCEDURE 15

#### Booking and performance of health checks for beneficiaries.

Promoters and local operators/volunteers support refugees in booking medical examinations, screening and health services (e.g. compulsory vaccines for children). In the cases provided for, beneficiaries are enrolled in public healthcare, or support networks are set up for them to access other forms of healthcare. The beneficiaries are accompanied to the visits by the staff/volunteers of the associations and, where necessary, by intercultural mediators to improve the dialogue with the healthcare staff and the understanding of the objectives and results of the examinations carried out.

### PROCEDURE 16

#### Data entry.

All relevant data and information produced during each phase are managed by the competent operator and entered into the Web Application.



## OPERATION DOVE

### Non-violent Peace Corps of the Pope John XXIII Community

Operation Dove is the Non-violent Peace Corps of the Pope John XXIII Community (founded by Don Oreste Benzi); it is a project born in 1992 from the desire **to concretely practise non-violence in war zones.**

Initially, it operated in the former Yugoslavia where it helped to bring together families divided by the different fronts, to protect (in an unarmed way) minorities, to create spaces for meeting, dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

Over the years, the experience gained in the field has led Operation Dove to set up stable presences in many conflict areas around the world, from the Balkans to Latin America, from the Caucasus to Africa, from the Middle to the Far East, involving over 2,000 volunteers.

The main characteristics of the intervention of Operation Dove are:

- sharing;
- non-violence;
- equal proximity to all victims of conflicts (regardless of ethnicity, religion, political affiliation...);
- popular participation.

The activities which Operation Dove carries out in conflict zones are: **the protection of civilians** most exposed to war violence (through international presence and with non-violent actions); the **promotion of dialogue and reconciliation pathways**; **support for the most immediate needs** of people with whom daily life is shared; **advocacy**, denunciation and promotion of alternative solutions to conflict, at a political and institutional level.

Currently, Operation Dove is present in **Albania, Colombia, Palestine and Lebanon** in the Syrian refugee camps.



## PRESENCE IN LEBANON ALONGSIDE SYRIAN REFUGEES

Operation Dove has been active in Lebanon, alongside Syrian refugees, since September 2013.

The situation in Syria, where a war between various pro-government and anti-government forces has been ongoing since 2011, remains disastrous: 400,000 dead, 6 million displaced persons, 5 million refugees forced to leave the country, more than a million of whom have sought refuge in neighbouring Lebanon (with only 4.5 million inhabitants). The volunteers of Operation Dove live in the north of Lebanon, in tents, in the refugee camp of Tel Abbas: an **international, non-violent and neutral presence**, which is a source of **greater security** for Syrian refugees. Through daily sharing, the volunteers favour, for example, the **connection** between the actual needs of the refugees and those who can satisfy them (UN, institutions, associations, etc.); they are also called to mediate tensions which develop with the Lebanese local community and to promote a Proposal for Peace, elaborated and supported by the refugees, which asks for **the return to Syria in safe Humanitarian Zones**.

### THE PRESENCE IN LEBANON, IN THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CAMPS, IS STRUCTURED OVER THREE LEVELS.

**The first**, which is the one which motivates everything, is the **daily life at the Tel Abbas camp, made up of moments of sharing and listening, playing with children and support**. We have a constant presence in the tents alongside the families who, every day, struggle to face the harshness of their situation: refugee and poor, they have no future neither in Lebanon nor in Syria.

At the military checkpoints along the roads, refugees who try to move within the country are arrested daily (Lebanon has not signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Refugees), so most of the daily activities consist in **accompanying** people to the hospital for surgery or medical exams.

**The international support (civilian escorts) provided by Operation Dove volunteers, discourages their arrest** at checkpoints placed along the way between the refugee camps and the hospitals in the cities. The volunteers of Operation Dove also accompany children, mothers and wives to search for news of their loved ones in detention centres. They then visit Syrian families, especially the ones most fragile and in need, trying to create a link between the needs of these

refugees and the real options that can meet them (UNHCR, International Red Cross, NGOs, local municipalities).

The **second** level, from February 2016, consists in supporting, in collaboration with the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Waldensian Church and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy, the departure of refugees through the **Humanitarian Corridors** towards Italy, France, Belgium and Andorra. Volunteers are involved in both the pre-departure and post-arrival phases. Operation Dove, in fact, is responsible for indicating potential beneficiaries of the Humanitarian Corridors - who live in the Tel Abbas camp and in the neighbouring territories in which it operates - to the three proposing bodies dealing with the selection of beneficiaries. Volunteers accompany individuals and pre-selected families to the various interviews for the final selection and to Embassy appointments for completing the bureaucratic procedures for the issuance of humanitarian visas. In addition, they organise **Italian language and culture classes inside the refugee camp** aimed at selected beneficiaries waiting to leave for Italy through the Corridors.

Operation Dove also plays a key role in Italy, in the various activities aimed at raising the awareness of civil society and in preparing the reception. The volunteers of the non-violent peace corps, in fact, organise and participate in **public events to raise awareness and to provide information** about the civil war in Syria and the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and collaborate with groups that decide to receive Syrian refugees through the Humanitarian Corridors channel to better prepare their reception. Finally, the volunteers use their knowledge of the Arabic language and the context of origin of the refugees to support the welcoming groups and **to mediate in possible critical situations and conflicts** between the two sides. This is an important work of bridging and facilitating relationships, which, on the one hand, allows beneficiaries to have constant emotional support from those who know their context of origin well, and, on the other, allows the informal groups which have decided to welcome them to have an interlocutor with whom to deal constantly.

**The third** level of action is the support and dissemination of the **Peace Proposal** drafted together with the Syrian refugees: it is the attempt to give political space to those who claim a role in the future of their country, to give strength to the unheard voice of the many civilians who want the end of the war, the reconstruction of a just, fair Syria, without violence, and who legitimately want to return home.



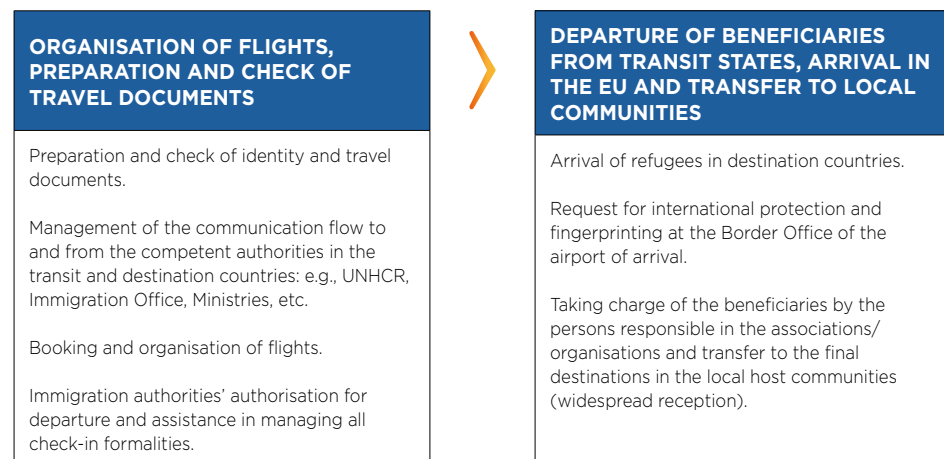
### 3.3 Transfer to destination countries.

#### ACTIVITY:

Transfer of beneficiaries to the countries of destination in Europe:

- organisation of travel;
- individual application for international protection on arrival and transfer to the cities of destination.

#### MACRO-PROCEDURE:



#### OBJECTIVE:

- to manage in an appropriate and timely manner the flow of personal information and data relating to beneficiaries and relations with international organisations and the competent authorities on the ground aimed at allowing the departure of beneficiaries to Europe;
- to organise the transfer of beneficiaries to the EU country of destination and the local host communities (widespread reception).

#### ORGANISATION/STAFF INVOLVED:

- project coordinators;
- operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations in the transit countries;
- operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations in the EU countries of destination;
- operators belonging to the associations responsible for the reception of refugees.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES:

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRIES	PEOPLE
17	Preparation of the list of outgoing beneficiaries.	Preliminary list of beneficiaries for departure.	Countries of transit.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
18	Transmission of the list to the competent authorities in the transit countries; acquisition of proof of registration.  Checking the list.	<i>Proofs of registration.</i> <sup>13</sup>  Consolidated list of beneficiaries of the Humanitarian Corridors.	Countries of transit.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
19	Application for and collection of travel documents, in accordance with the legislation in force; <sup>14</sup> preparation of the final list for the competent authorities in the countries of destination.	ETD (Emergency Travel Documents, in the case of Ethiopia) / Travel Documents (for each applicant, based on current applicable law).  Final list of beneficiaries sent to the airline and to the competent authorities in the countries of destination.	Countries of transit.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
20	Organisation of flights and transfers.	Places assigned and associated to each beneficiary.	Countries of transit.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.

<sup>13</sup> In Ethiopia, registration is the responsibility of ARRA (Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs), representing the Government of Ethiopia. Due to the limited operational capacity of Ethiopian institutions, UNHCR provides support to the government for managing the database containing the data of each individual refugee present in the country. UNHCR and ARRA regularly update the registers. As is well known, in Lebanon, the protection area for Syrian refugees has been greatly influenced by a series of measures put in place by the Lebanese government since 2015. Entry into the country is only possible for those who can provide valid identity documents and proof that their stay in Lebanon falls within one of the permitted reasons for entry. The search for a refuge in Lebanon is not included in the list of valid reasons for entry, but may be so only in exceptional circumstances and with the specific authorisation of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The registration of Syrian refugees by the UNHCR in Lebanon was suspended by the government in 2015. Whilst continuing to update data on the population registered before 2015. For asylum seekers of non-Syrian nationality, the UNHCR provides refugee status determination (RSD), with the aim of identifying international protection needs and durable solutions (<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/refugees-and-asylum-seekers>). Every foreign citizen who has been irregularly resident in Lebanon must have an exit visa affixed to his/her travel document in order to leave the country. In order to obtain this document, Lebanese authorities require the payment of a fine. In order to avoid such a payment by the person concerned, the coordinators of the humanitarian corridors have obtained, together with the Lebanese Authorities, the issuance of free authorisations.

<sup>14</sup> COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 23.2.2016 amending Implementing Decision C(2013) 4914 establishing the list of travel documents which entitle the holder to cross the external borders and which may be endorsed with a visa. ANNEX 1.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRIES	PEOPLE
21	Organisation of pre-departure medical examinations.	Update of personal medical records.	Countries of transit.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
22	Pre-embarking operations and issuance of entry visas to the country of destination.	Baggage tags and personal badges.  Copies of ETDs (for Ethiopia)/travel documents (sent to destination countries).  Airline tickets issued and checked.  Completed individual visa application forms, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- photographs;</li> <li>- copy of airline ticket;</li> <li>- copy of ETD (for Ethiopia) / travel document;</li> <li>- copy of proof of registration;</li> <li>- list of departing persons.</li> </ul> Entry visa <sup>15</sup>  Asylum application forms to be submitted to the border police.  Pre-departure party with beneficiaries.	Countries of transit.	Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRIES	PEOPLE
23	Arrival in Europe, request for international protection, transfer to final destination.	Welcome party on arrival, with beneficiaries and host communities.  Transfer of beneficiaries to the host locations, by the sponsoring organisations/ private associations.  Reception at structures identified and financed by the sponsoring associations, which also ensure the subsequent paths of socio-cultural integration, without any charge being borne by the State.	EU countries of destination.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.
24	Data entry.	Data and information collected at each stage organised in the HC Web Application.	Countries of transit.  EU countries of destination.	Coordinators.  Staff/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations.

<sup>15</sup> Security checks are carried out by the competent authorities of the European country of destination both before and after the visa is issued. As regards Italy, for example, the Ministry of the Interior guarantees security checks are carried out before the issuance of the visa and also afterwards, upon arrival in Italy, at the airport of Rome Fiumicino, where pictures and fingerprints are taken.





## THE “DUNOIS ACCUEIL ET SOLIDARITÉ” RECEPTION GROUP

### Châteaudun

*“Marika is a lone girl of Syrian nationality. She arrived in Châteaudun on 22 November 2018 and was welcomed by members of our association “Dunois Accueil et Solidarité” and hosted in a small furnished apartment located near our headquarters.”*

Being alone, the host group immediately organised French language lessons and a few activities which could facilitate her integration. In addition, she was put in touch with people of Armenian origin (like her) and with an Egyptian person with whom she could speak Arabic. Marika made friends very quickly and, thanks to her new friends, has become a member of a sports club. She is part of the Secours Populaire association and volunteers in a used clothing collection centre. Relationships with the members of the association at the beginning were a little difficult because of the language barrier, *“...but Marika is a friendly and sociable girl and gradually relationships became very pleasant.”*

Over time, Marika discovered that her asylum documents were proceeding slowly, which was why she tended to be depressed and sometimes closed in on herself. The reception group understood that she was sometimes bored and that during those moments she was overwhelmed by her worries.

*“It wasn’t always easy to cheer her up. But all the people around her did their best to reassure her while she waited for the convocation and then the response of OFPRA”* (the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, Ed.). During this waiting period, Marika spent four days in Lyon to meet some Syrian friends and see if life in the city suited her better.

The intensive French courses, funded by the Community of Sant’Egidio and the European Union as part of the “Humanitarian Corridors” project, allowed her to

progress rapidly, to become more autonomous and at the same time to fill up her days. Marika thus found her motivation to get to know and meet new people.

Her state of mind, however, was very up and down until the positive response by OFPRA. After finally obtaining a response to her asylum application, Marika became fully aware that her life was now in France, and thus started to project herself into the future. With the help and support of the Community of Sant’Egidio, she decided to move to Lyon. *“A few days before her departure, we organised a dinner with all the volunteers of the association and all the people she met in Châteaudun, to say goodbye. It was very moving to see that, despite the difficulties, Marika had established many relationships during the seven months spent in Châteaudun.”*

On 4 July 2019, the volunteers of “Dunois Accueil et Solidarité” accompanied her to Lyon. There she is staying in a private room in a house of nuns, the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, where she will continue her already advanced integration path.

*“Our goodbyes were moving. We hope to stay in touch with her. We are preparing a photo album to remind her of her time with us. Should the opportunity arise again, we will be very happy to welcome a new person.”*

## PROCEDURE 17

### Preparation of the list of outgoing beneficiaries.

Development of a preliminary list with data and information on the beneficiaries selected for departure. This list, prepared by the Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations, contains the following elements for each beneficiary:

- an individual code assigned by the UNHCR, or
- a code assigned to the family, or
- a food card number and a telephone number.

An individual photo of each person, a photo of the family and the history of each family member are entered into the Web Application.

## PROCEDURE 18

### Transmission of the list of potential beneficiaries to the competent authorities of the transit countries; acquisition of proof of registration. Final check of the list.

The list drawn up in Procedure 17 is sent to the competent authorities to obtain the authorisations and to prepare the necessary documentation for departure. The following main data and information are provided:

- name;
- surname;
- date and place of birth;
- individual codes, family code, food card number (or at least one of the three);
- map of family ties/relationships between beneficiaries (family booklet).

Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations acquire *proofs of registration*,<sup>16</sup> translate identity documents into English and verify the correspondence between the data and the information in the list drawn up by the competent Authorities (e.g.: UNHCR) and those in their own list.

In the cases provided for by the regulations in force, the list of beneficiaries is also sent to the Immigration Office (or to another competent authority) before collecting

<sup>16</sup> The registration of refugees aims to protect and assist refugees waiting to implement durable solutions. The registration of refugees and asylum seekers is an essential tool for their protection from eventualities such as repression, arrest and arbitrary detention. It also provides access to the fundamental rights, services and assistance they need. The registration of minors guarantees family unity and, in the case of children separated from the family, helps in their reunification. Registration is also the primary source of information on the persons concerned: who they are and where they are, what their skills/profiles are and what their specific needs are. Registration allows UNHCR, its partners and the governments of transit countries to identify persons in need of special assistance and to respond promptly to their needs.

the travel document for each beneficiary.

In the case of Ethiopia, the list is sent to the ARRA and to the Ministry of the Interior, using special forms. Subsequently, ARRA requests the following documents for each beneficiary:

- a form completed and signed by the beneficiary to be deposited at the Immigration Office;
- biometric data;
- telephone number and address;
- a photograph.

## PROCEDURE 19

### Application for and withdrawal of travel documents, in accordance with the legislation in force. Preparation of the final list for the competent authorities.

Once the documents mentioned in Procedure 18 have been deposited, the competent authorities issue the travel documents for the beneficiaries, also carrying out a specific check aimed at ascertaining the congruence between the data of each beneficiary (e.g. fingerprints).

At this stage, on the basis of the data contained in the travel documents, the competent authorities in the countries of destination may request further information concerning the beneficiaries. In the case of Italy, the Ministry of the Interior requests the completion of a form containing the following main information for each beneficiary:

- personal identity document;
- destination city.

When the final list of beneficiaries is ready and approved, it is sent to the airline (see Procedure 20) and to the competent authorities in the destination countries (police). In the case of Italy, the following information is transmitted:

- composition of families;
- address of residence of the beneficiaries once they arrive in Italy;
- personal data and telephone number of the person responsible for their reception in Italy.

## PROCEDURE 20

### Organisation of flights and transfers.

Based on the number and personal conditions of the beneficiaries, the Coordinators

and Operators of the sponsoring organisations contact the airlines to book the flights. The flight number is recorded together with other associated information (number of seats available on board, date, time and place of departure and arrival, etc.).

Subsequently, the list with the data of the beneficiaries is sent to the airline. Checking the spelling of personal data on the booking documents is very important, in order to avoid transcription errors which may result in the non-departure of the beneficiary. This operation is handled directly by the Coordinators, with the support of the Operators and the Mediators.

The transfer of beneficiaries from their place of residence to the airport of departure is organised and managed by the Coordinators and the Operators.

## PROCEDURE 21

### Organisation of pre-departure medical examinations.

Medical checks differ according to personal conditions, are provided for all beneficiaries and are normally carried out one week prior to departure. The relative documentation, with a photograph of the beneficiary, is entered in the personal medical sheet of each person and made available to the competent health authorities in the country of destination.

## PROCEDURE 22

### Issuance of entry visas for the country of destination and pre-embarking operations.

Once the list has been approved by the relevant authorities of the country of destination (see procedure 19), the consular authorities issue the entry visa, on the basis of Article 25 (EC) No. 810/2009 of 13 July 2009, with limited territorial validity and with the sole purpose of authorising the legal and safe entry of beneficiaries, affixed to the passport or to the laissez-passer issued by the embassy.

The procedures for boarding the beneficiaries towards the countries of destination consist of the following main activities, carried out by the Coordinators and Operators in the country of transit:

- preparation of baggage tags and personal badges for each beneficiary;
- forwarding copies of travel documents (e.g.: ETD) to the country of destination (also functional to the provision of some basic services and to the request for telephone cards which will be used by the beneficiaries for communicating in the country of destination);
- checking tickets before check-in and departure (e.g. verifying that the names of the beneficiaries on the travel document and on personal documents match what is written on the flight ticket).

Before the beneficiaries' departure, a pre-departure party takes place. This party is an important moment as it marks the beneficiaries' break between their old life in the transit countries and their new life in Europe.

## PROCEDURE 23

### Arrival in Europe, request for international protection, transfer to final destination.

The application for international protection is submitted by each beneficiary to the Border Office at the airport of arrival. Each beneficiary is required to provide his or her fingerprints again and they are photo-identified. Beneficiaries are supported by the Coordinators and the Operators/Intercultural Mediators in carrying out the operations related to fulfilling the bureaucratic procedures on arrival.

Once the formalities have been completed, beneficiaries immediately meet the persons responsible for their reception at the airport of arrival. Together they all take part in a Welcome Party, which takes place in the atmosphere of welcome and friendship which characterises the Humanitarian Corridors. The party is useful to reduce the refugees' fears and to illustrate the essence of the project: the choice of many European citizens to be supportive and welcoming. Concrete gestures and ways of being through which lasting relationships are established.

At the end of the celebrations, the people in charge of reception accompany the new arrivals to their destination (*widespread reception*).

## PROCEDURE 24

### Data entry.

All relevant data and information produced during each phase are managed by the competent operator and entered into the Web Application.



## HIBA E BILAL'S STORY

### Paris

Hiba and Bilal celebrated their 25th and 22nd birthdays respectively in France. On both occasions they had a nice party - even several! - surrounded by their new friends.

Hiba, Bilal and their two sons, Kadar and Walid, arrived in France in May 2018 with five other Syrian and Iraqi families. This young couple from Homs met the Community of Sant'Egidio in the camp of Tel Abbas, in northern Lebanon, where they had taken refuge in 2013.

From their arrival in France until today, they have been accompanied and supported by a group of volunteers from the Federation of Protestant Churches, partners of the Community of Sant'Egidio for the Humanitarian Corridors in France. They live in the northern part of Paris.

Little Kadar, 5 years old, was promptly enrolled in the school located near the apartment that the group of volunteers rented for the family. Kadar now speaks French fluently and teaches her parents to sing the French nursery rhyme *"Pomme de reinette et Pomme d'Api..."*.

Her parents also received French lessons right from the start and are now able to express themselves very clearly. They have been granted refugee status and are happy with their lives in France. Bilal signed his first contract of employment for a small security agency and Hiba will soon start an internship in the restoration sector.

*"We are very happy to have been welcomed by a group of volunteers in such a supportive fashion. It was difficult at first. France was a totally foreign country for us. The main difficulty was adapting. To adapt, you first need to know and understand how daily life works here, which is very different from that of our home or Lebanon. **We were very lucky to be able to live with the volunteers especially Arlette, our main helper, every day.** We trust her, and we can ask her all the questions we have*

*without being afraid. She's like a grandmother to our children! And then we were also lucky to find a French friend who had lived with us in the Tel Abbas camp for a while. We had become friends in the camp and now he lives in Paris. We meet often at weekends and he helps us understand how the country works. We often also go to meetings of the Community of Sant'Egidio, to Christmas dinners and barbecues, where we have made friends. The bonds of friendship and trust have allowed us to integrate, to properly understand things more quickly and more easily. They are precious."*

Bilal and Hiba are grateful. With each new arrival through the Humanitarian Corridors, Bilal is at the airport to welcome the new refugees with us. Sometimes he meets friends from the camps in northern Lebanon and the greetings are affectionate. Bilal welcomes them as well as all the others who have been arriving for the past year, wishing them good luck for the future.

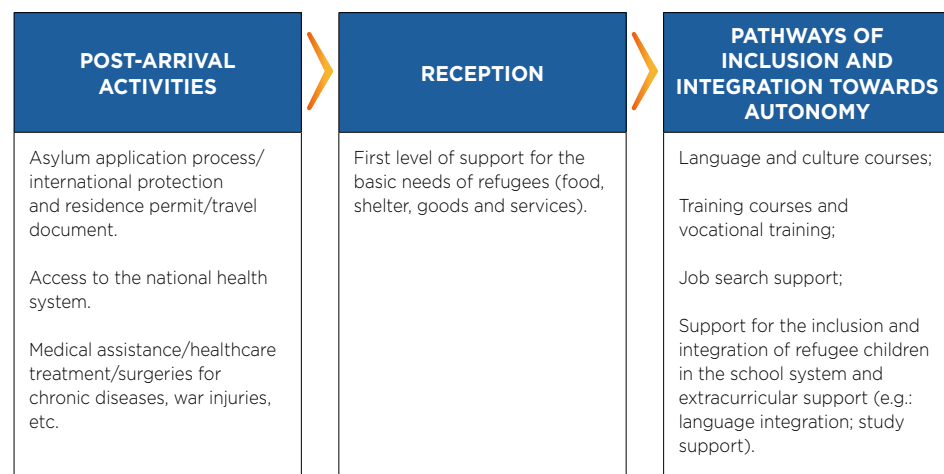
### 3.4 Post-arrival: widespread reception and pathways of inclusion and autonomy in the EU country of destination.

#### ACTIVITY:

Beneficiaries are supported in the implementation of post-arrival activities, and in particular: in executing the bureaucratic procedures related to obtaining international protection and residence permits; in medical care; and, in some cases, in supporting those who have to undergo health treatment or surgery (people with chronic diseases, injured in war situations, etc.) and their families. Beneficiaries in the local host communities receive basic material support in the first few months of their arrival: food, shelter, goods and services, which are provided by the local organisations responsible for the reception.

The paths of inclusion and integration of the beneficiaries are carried out, therefore, in the places where the beneficiaries are hosted, mainly in urban contexts, according to the model of “widespread reception”.

#### MACRO-PROCEDURE:



#### OBJECTIVE:

- to support the beneficiaries in the process of obtaining international protection, residence permits/travel documents;
- to support beneficiaries in the process of enrolling in the National Health Service or other form of healthcare;

c. to support persons in need of medical care/health treatment/surgery (e.g. in case of chronic diseases, war injuries, etc.);

d. widespread reception: to meet the basic needs of refugees (food, shelter, goods and services) during the first months after their arrival;

e. to support beneficiaries in implementing inclusion and integration pathways towards economic and social autonomy.

#### ORGANISATION/STAFF INVOLVED:

- project coordinators;
- operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations in the EU countries of destination;
- operators belonging to the associations responsible for welcoming refugees in local reception contexts.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES:

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	PEOPLE
25	Support in the process of obtaining international protection, residence permits/travel documents ("subsidiary protection").	Reports to/from bureaucratic processes and hearings at the relevant committees, according to the legislation in force.	EU host countries.	Coordinators (supervision).  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Associations responsible for reception in the local host communities.
26	Access to the national health system and support for medical care.	Registration with the national health system (or other healthcare system, according to the legislation in force).  Updating of personal health records.	EU host countries.	Coordinators (supervision).  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Associations responsible for reception in the host communities.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	PEOPLE
27	Meeting refugees' basic needs (food and shelter, goods and services).	Data and information concerning the direct supply of goods and services, i.e. the distribution of vouchers, prepaid cards and pocket money (tools used to stimulate the accountability of beneficiaries, the development of relations in the social contexts of reference, knowledge of the territory, orientation towards personal and family autonomy).  Reports on the assistance provided (according to the specific procedures in place for the type of goods and services and the specific source of funding activated).	EU host countries.	Coordinators (supervision).  Operators/Mediators/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators/Mediators/Volunteers of the Associations in charge of reception in the local communities.
28	Cultural and language training courses, vocational training (provided by external organisations/ experiences) and work orientation.	Information and data on the provision of training courses: list of activities carried out; register of courses; certifications obtained by beneficiaries; job opportunities found and offered to beneficiaries.	EU host countries.	Coordinators (supervision).  Operators/Mediators/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations.  Operators/Mediators/Volunteers of the Associations in charge of reception in the local communities.
29	Support for the inclusion and integration of refugee children in the school system and extracurricular support (e.g. linguistic integration).	Information and data on the activities carried out: list of activities; progress made; etc.	EU host countries.	Coordinators (supervision)  Operators/Mediators/Volunteers belonging to the sponsoring organisations  Operators/Mediators/Volunteers of the Associations in charge of reception in the local communities.

N.	PROCEDURES	DATA / INFORMATION REPORTED	COUNTRY	PEOPLE
30	Data entry.	Data and information collected at each stage and organised in the Web Application.	EU host countries.	Coordinators.  Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations.





# THE STORY OF HASSAN

## From Idlib to Trento

Hassan Mbarak is a 45 year old man from a small rural village near Idlib, Maarat al-Numan, one of Syria's most depressed and poor places, even in the decades before the armed conflict. A region characterised by a lack of social, health and educational services and by a low rate of economic development.

Hassan's family has always made a living with agriculture, cultivating the land and raising grazing animals to make cheese, milk and other by-products. Their house was simple but spacious.

In 2011 and 2012, at the beginning of tensions and hostilities, the area in which Hassan lived was the epicentre of a strong and determined opposition to the Bashar al-Assad regime. The state's response was violent and authoritarian. Hassan was detained by Syrian government forces in 2013, **subjected to torture and humanly degrading treatment**, and was violently interrogated.

In 2014, following the escalation of armed clashes and the Islamist radicalisation of some rebel factions, like hundreds of thousands of others, **he attempted to reach Turkey with his family by turning to human traffickers**.

At the Syrian-Turkish border, Hassan was arrested and deported back to Syria, where he was taken over by a jihadist formation and then imprisoned with his wife and children.

After his release, Hassan and his family took the road to Lebanon and in 2015 joined their family members who had settled in the village of Tel Abbas, in the northern district of the country on the border with Syria. There, Hassan met volunteers from Operation Dove and other Syrian refugee families.

***"There is no war in Lebanon, but it is hard to survive. Without papers, because of the restrictive policies of the Lebanese authorities, and unable to get a legal job, I***

*supported my family by working illegally in the fields and factories in the area."*

During 2016 and 2017, Hassan was arrested several times by the Lebanese police, due to a lack of legal documents and residence. In the Lebanese prisons, he was beaten and humiliated on several occasions, as well as threatened with deportation to Syria. Volunteers from Operation Dove in Tel Abbas supported Hassan and his family during the years of their stay in the refugee camps, visiting them and staying with them during the times of greatest fear and tension. In 2019, after much effort and suffering, a window of hope opened towards Italy.

At the end of March 2019, Hassan arrived in Trento with his wife and children, where he was welcomed thanks to the support of the Centro Astalli and began his journey of integration in Italy, supported also with funds from the European Union through the "Humanitarian Corridors" project.

***"The children attend school, my wife and I attend Italian language courses. We are lucky. Today, after so many years, I feel safe and protected and I have hope for the future of my children"***. Hassan and his wife Ilham don't stop worrying about their relatives and friends in Lebanon, but they can't hide the emotion of watching their children grow up in a safe place, and for that they are deeply grateful.



## PROCEDURE 25

### Support in the process of applying for asylum/international protection and residence permits/travel documents (“subsidiary protection”).

Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations and the associations of local communities support individual beneficiaries and families in completing the procedures for obtaining international protection. Procedures and time frames vary according to the legislation in force in the host country.<sup>17</sup>

## PROCEDURE 26

### Access to the national health system and support for medical care.

All beneficiaries undergo medical examinations on arrival. They are also enrolled, where required by national legislation, in the national health system, or other form of healthcare service. The number and type of services which beneficiaries may access depend, of course, on the health and social protection system in force in the host country. Therefore, additional services not guaranteed by the public health system may be needed, especially for the most vulnerable people (e.g. elderly people, people with chronic diseases, etc.). In addition, a good number of vulnerable people included in the project are “serious medical cases”.<sup>18</sup> These people require medical treatment or specialist surgery. Refugees and their families receive the support of the operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations and local associations when setting up contacts with health structures, specialists and hospitals at every stage of the medical course.<sup>19</sup> In addition, support is also provided for booking compulsory vaccines for children and for activating the procedures for the recognition of the state of disability for people with disabilities (see also Procedure 15).

17 In the case of Italy, the law provides for hearings at the Territorial Commissions for the Granting of Refugee Status or other forms of protection; the process for obtaining these can last up to 12 months. In France, there are many steps to obtain asylum and there is a long waiting time: communication of one's residence (the waiting time to obtain this can last up to five months); a one-month temporary residence permit (“APS”) which the applicant must send within 21 days to OFPRA (the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons), the institution that grants refugee status to the migrant or subsidiary protection (the average time required to make a decision varies from three to seven months).

18 More than 25% of the people who arrived in Italy with the first Protocol, in the period February 2016 - December 2017, can be classified as a “serious medical case”.

19 Among the beneficiaries of the first Protocol, the most common diseases were: advanced cancers, low vision/blindness, physical disability (of various magnitudes), rare and/or genetic diseases (thalassaemia, osteogenesis imperfecta), diabetes, deafness, Alzheimer's and other diseases related to old age, injuries due to war devices, fires or building collapses. In general, the following disorders/pathologies have been found in all refugees: sleep disorders and phobias; disorders of the digestive system; high cholesterol and blood pressure; teeth problems; skin disorders.

## PROCEDURE 27

### Meeting refugees' basic needs (food and shelter, goods and services).

All refugees are received and accommodated by local communities in different cities. The accommodation selected during Procedure 13 is confirmed and activated through the networks created by the Coordinators and Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations and to the associations responsible in the various territories. Refugees are housed in different types of facilities, such as: family apartments, shared apartments, rooms in reception centres, rooms in private homes, etc.

The reception is offered by: parishes, religious or confessional associations, individuals or groups, relatives already in the country. All refugees/families also benefit from food, goods and services to meet their basic needs and from the distribution of prepaid cards and/or vouchers.

## PROCEDURE 28

### Language training courses, vocational training (provided by experts/external organisations) and career and work guidance.

In order to facilitate the integration process, priority is given to language training courses for all beneficiaries. Upon arrival, beneficiaries attend courses for learning the language spoken in the host country (e.g. 18 hours per week). The main forms of access to language learning are:

- language courses provided by specialised schools or institutes;
- individual lessons;
- university language courses.

Since autonomy can only be considered as achieved when people have a stable job, one of the main activities implemented by the local networks dedicated to reception is to activate formal and informal networks of companies, training centres, groups of friends, etc. In fact, these networks can facilitate the search and selection of job and training opportunities for beneficiaries able to work.

Sponsoring organisations sign memoranda of understanding with training centres with the aim of: including refugees in training courses which enable them to acquire or improve professional skills; encouraging self-employment in particular for those who have been self-employed in their country of origin. Operators belonging to the sponsoring organisations and local networks support the beneficiaries throughout the process of acquiring their autonomy. They assist beneficiaries in their search for training and employment opportunities. Beneficiaries are therefore supported in filling in the forms, preparing for interviews, accessing training courses or available jobs. The role of intercultural mediators is also very important at this stage.

## PROCEDURE 29

### Support for the inclusion and integration of refugee children in the school system and extracurricular support.

The operators of the sponsoring organisations and local associations contact the selected schools (see Procedure 14) to include children and minors in the classes corresponding to their age. Extracurricular support (outside school hours) is also provided to speed up learning and fill existing gaps. The learning pathway is monitored and agreed with the school and the host coordinators.

## PROCEDURE 30

### Data entry.

All relevant data and information produced at each stage are managed by the competent operator and entered into the database of the Humanitarian Corridors Web Application.



## THE STORY OF MICHELE TEWELDE

### From Eritrea to Catania

**Michele Tewelde was born in Segheneity in Eritrea and is 23 years old.** In Eritrea, he attended school until his graduation, but he didn't get his degree. After school, he spent a year in the National (Military) Service and was then forced to work as a policeman in Assab, a small town in the south of the country.

After three years he left the service and fled. The first stop of his escape was the small village of Badme, on the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. He spent 11 days there, waiting for the right time to escape to Ethiopia. At the border he was among the lucky ones who managed to get past the blockade and not get arrested. *"Crossing the border is very dangerous, many people have been killed or have stepped on a bomb."*

After eleven days of walking, he reached the UN camp in Inda Aba Guna. After a month, he was transferred to the Maiani camp, where he lived for seven months. *"Life in the camp was very difficult... because of the lack of food and the almost total absence of any toilets. We all lived together, men and women in small rooms, the men in fact slept outdoors at night..."*

Seven months later, Michele asked the camp manager if he could go and meet a friend in Addis Ababa, received a permit valid for a month and left for the capital. After two days of travelling by bus, he reached the city and, hosted by a friend, found a job at a supermarket where he worked for two years.

By attending the church of Santa Chiara, he met a nun of Eritrean origin who helped him to find a better job and put him in touch with the Community of Sant'Egidio in Ethiopia. The operators on site pushed Michele to return to the Maiani camp in order to regularise his documents and after about three months he had the opportunity to leave for Italy. *"I have never met such good people, if I had not met the people in charge of Sant'Egidio, I would have returned to Eritrea to my family and to my*

*previous situation to help my mother suffering from cancer”.*

**On 30 October, Michael arrived in Rome and was welcomed by a group of volunteers from the Don Bosco 2000 association,** belonging to the Salesians’ Social Assistance association, with whom he left for Catania, to begin his new life in Italy with other young refugees at the Colonia Don Bosco.

In Catania, he studied Italian at the association for the first time and then began to attend state school at the CPIA. In the same period, he was supported by the operators of Don Bosco 2000 to obtain a residence permit and received the necessary medical assistance. Michele participated with great interest in many of the initiatives organised by the association, sharing these experiences of socialisation, dialogue and meeting with many young volunteers and migrants.

*“During my stay at the Don Bosco colony, I helped in the kitchen. I had some very interesting experiences which helped me to get to know many Italian people. I took part in meetings with young people who attend the Salesian school to introduce myself and talk about my history and experience. During Lent, I was able to participate in a Eucharistic celebration in Pietraperzia where the priest involved many young immigrants for the feet washing rite. I had the opportunity to participate in a meeting with the university where I met young university students of my age who are not against the reception of immigrants and I felt encouraged.”*

He loves sport and started playing in a football team in February, having the opportunity to take part in trips outside Catania. Since April, he has attended the professional school of mechanics at the headquarters of CNOS-FAP, in preparation for an internship in Catania.

*“That’s my story for now and I hope I can have other good things to tell in the future.”*



## THE STORY OF ANNA

The woman who welcomed a Syrian family in Cosenza

***“I’d do it again. One can dare, it’s definitely worth it.”***

Anna Pagliaro lives in Italy, in the province of Cosenza, in the south of the country. She became aware of the Humanitarian Corridors through the press. *“I was convinced by this project, so I took some lessons and tests with the Community of Sant’Egidio, which lasted some months. Then we took the plunge. There are always some risks in life, why not take a risk for this?”*

Anna hosted a family from Aleppo which arrived in Italy thanks to the Humanitarian Corridors in February 2017.

*“Before the arrival of the Syrian family, everyone in the building was worried. I said: I can’t guarantee that everything will go perfectly, but let’s take this risk together. Now everyone gets on wonderfully: meeting the other always helps to calm down the anxiety.”*

Today, Anna’s risk has paid off. Two years after opening her doors to a family from Aleppo, who **are now autonomous**, Anna decided to continue the path she had begun, welcoming a new Muslim family from Idlib into the same apartment, left vacant by the first family: father, mother and five children. The eldest is 10 years old, the youngest is just one. They arrived together with **58 other Syrian refugees** on 4 June 2019 at Fiumicino airport.

The first family hosted by Anna is composed of Armenian Syrians, who, as such, have a “doubly tragic history of persecution”. Father, mother, three children and an uncle, the father’s brother. Now the children are 15, 10 and 4 years old. For them, Anna had arranged an apartment: after lessons in Italian, the family became perfectly integrated and, a little more than two years after their arrival, was able to become independent, moving to another apartment. The girls have been placed in school and

are achieving excellent results. They work in the parish and attend a scout group. Anna was able to learn about the trauma of this family fleeing the war. When asked why she wanted to take part in this reception experience, Anna replies: *"I wanted to do it because I felt a sense of helplessness about what was happening. I felt called to do something."*

*"At first it was an adventure, a leap in the dark for me. I was alone, but, surprisingly, people reached out, people I didn't know before the experience. Important, significant doors gradually opened, and this encouraged me to move forward. Now there is a small support network ready for the second family. I couldn't say: now we're stopping here. The experience encouraged me to move forward."*

This is Anna's story, for whom the widespread reception provided by the Humanitarian Corridors is an effective solution which, especially in provincial cities, helps to reassure those who are currently afraid of immigrants. *"It reassures those who are afraid"*, says Anna. *"The more we act, the more we dispel fear."*

The experience that Anna has decided to relive with a new family arriving from Idlib will be important, because, from the beginning, Anna will now be able to rely on the support network which, in less than two years, was created inside the Calabrian town. Thanks to this support network - made up of people, associations, families and businesses - there will be no need to start from scratch.

The newly welcomed family will have the house all to itself, to use as a free loan, and will be able, little by little, to become autonomous. This is one of the methods tested in many reception places of the Humanitarian Corridors, in Italy as in other countries. Giving them this responsibility allows refugees to motivate themselves even more along the path towards full autonomy.



Anna describes herself as *"a free citizen who believes it is possible to dare"*.

It takes courage, but the support from sponsors in the project and the network of solidarity created in the local community has helped her to overcome all the difficulties.

According to Anna, the conclusion is that *"we free citizens can dare to get involved, because the help is there. I was sure that the Community of Sant'Egidio and the other sponsors of the project could offer support if I failed. So, I took a risk, but it was a calculated one."*

## HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS: ACTIVE PROTOCOLS

# 4

## DECEMBER 2015

*"Opening of Humanitarian Corridors"*  
Memorandum of Understanding  
15 December 2015

### SPONSORS:

*Min. For Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation;  
Directorate General for Italians Abroad and Migration  
Policies;  
Ministry of the Interior;  
Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration;  
Community of Sant'Egidio;  
Federation of Italian Evangelical Churches (FCEI);  
Waldensian Church.*



1,011  
REFUGEES



LEBANON > ITALY



ENDED IN  
November 2017

## JANUARY 2017

Memorandum of Understanding  
12 January 2017

### SPONSORS:

*Italian Bishops' Conference;  
Italian Caritas;  
Fondazione Migrantes;  
Community of Sant'Egidio.*



500  
ERITREAN,  
SOMALI AND SOUTH  
SUDANESE REFUGEES



ETHIOPIA > ITALY



ENDED IN  
January 2019

## MARCH 2017

Protocol for opening Humanitarian  
Corridors in France

### SPONSORS:

*French Community of Sant'Egidio;  
French Bishops' Conference;  
Caritas France;  
Protestant Federation of France;  
Protestant Mutual Aid Federation.*



500  
REFUGEES



LEBANON > FRANCE



ON-GOING  
two-year period  
2018-2019

## NOVEMBER 2017

THE extension of the first Protocol  
has been agreed upon

Protocol for opening  
Humanitarian Corridors in Belgium

### SPONSORS:

*Belgian government;  
Community of Sant'Egidio;  
Local churches;  
Jewish and Muslim Communities.*



ON-GOING  
two-year period  
2018-2019



150 VISAS  
FOR SYRIANS



LEBANON  
TURKEY > BELGIUM



ENDED

## MAY 2018

Protocol for opening Humanitarian  
Corridors in the Principality of Andorra

### SPONSORS:

*Ministers of Foreign and Interior Affairs  
of Andorra;  
Community of Sant'Egidio.*

Spain and France will cooperate with  
refugees passing through their airports.



20  
REFUGEES



LEBANON > ANDORRA



ON-GOING  
two-year period  
2018-2019

## MAY 2019

Protocol for the arrival of asylum  
seekers in Italy

### SPONSORS:

*Italian Bishops' Conference  
(Caritas - Fondazione Migrantes);  
Community of Sant'Egidio;  
Italian authorities.*



600  
ASYLUM SEEKERS



ETHIOPIA  
NIGER > ITALY  
JORDAN



ON-GOING  
two-year period 2019-2020  
first arrivals scheduled for  
September/October 2019



## 4.2 France: Claire's account of the French Community of Sant'Egidio on the functioning of the Humanitarian Corridors.

France adopted the model of the Humanitarian Corridors back in 2017. The Protocol for the Opening of Humanitarian Corridors was signed in March 2017 by the French Government and five civil society associations: the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Bishops' Conference of France, Caritas France, the Protestant Federation of France and the Protestant Mutual Aid Federation.

The Protocol provides for the arrival of **500 people of Syrian and Iraqi nationality from Lebanon** in the two-year period 2018 - 2019 and the Community of Sant'Egidio has the role of coordinator.

Since the beginning of the project, 364 people have been welcomed in France (as of May 2019), distributed throughout the country on the basis of reception opportunities. Each reception project provides for the availability of independent accommodation and the presence of a group of at least 10 volunteers.

In about two years, **more than 1,600 volunteers** have been involved in the reception and support of refugees arriving through the Humanitarian Corridors; they are scattered in 36 different departments of the country, in more than 70 cities and small towns.

The Community of Sant'Egidio in France did not have an pre-established reception network, nor a large network of active volunteers, as in Italy; it had very few resources, both human and economic, therefore it had to start **a pathway of information, training and awareness of civil society in the country** in order to create and gradually expand the reception capacity.

Communication about the project played an essential role. Talking about and ensuring people should talk about the Humanitarian Corridors is imperative in order to reach an increasing number of people. Once contact with a local community has been established, thanks to the involvement of parishes, informal groups, friends, neighbours, etc., the Community of Sant'Egidio organises an informative meeting. The volunteers of the association go personally to the various places in the country. These meetings create an opportunity to meet people, to establish relationships of trust and, above all, to explain in a precise and concrete way what the Humanitarian Corridors are. Many topics are covered. One of the priorities is to explain what the refugees are fleeing from: the civil war in Syria and the situation of the refugee camps in Lebanon. In addition, it is necessary to try to introduce a few issues concerning the right of asylum in France and the rights and duties of refugees, and to be clear and transparent with respect to the difficulties of reception and of the integration path, both for those who host and for the beneficiaries. Honesty is undoubtedly a requirement for these meetings, as it helps in breaking down prejudices and

preconceptions, and facilitates the creation of a relationship of trust and a healthy discussion between the reception groups and the organisations sponsoring the project.

Since 2017 up to today (July 2019), the Community of Sant'Egidio has organised over 40 information and awareness meetings in more than 25 French cities, in order to get to know potential groups of volunteers and to start reception projects. **90% of the groups which have been met, are currently receiving Syrian refugees or are about to do so**, and this shows that, despite the few forces in the field, Humanitarian Corridors can be successfully implemented in any European country.

The creation of a reception project takes time; at least three months on average elapse from the first information meeting to the actual reception of the families of beneficiaries. This time is necessary to find adequate accommodation, to create and consolidate a sufficiently large group of volunteers, to raise funds and notify the various institutions in charge.

Moving from theory to practice is often easier when a refugee family is introduced to the group of volunteers. Giving refugees a name, a face and a story makes the prospect of reception more concrete.

The choice of the beneficiary family is made to a certain extent together with the host group. The volunteers describe the characteristics of the available accommodation (composition, size, available access for the disabled, geographical location, proximity to schools, hospitals, etc.), the Community of Sant'Egidio tries to assign the host group a family whose needs can easily be met by the characteristics of the accommodation. The exchange of information takes place between the Community of Sant'Egidio, the group of volunteers and the team in Lebanon, where the families are preparing to leave. This exchange enables the reception group and the beneficiary family to begin to get know each other and, above all, it allows the latter to begin to familiarise itself with the future reception conditions.

From the refugees' arrival in France, the Community of Sant'Egidio entrusts the families to the groups of volunteers, but continues to visit them regularly, especially in the event of critical situations. Continuous support is essential. In case of serious problems, the team working in the field in Lebanon may also be involved as it knows the beneficiaries in depth and can play the role of mediator between the parties, if necessary.

Visits to the beneficiary families are also **visits of friendship**; friendship with the family and friendship with the volunteers. It is the core element of the project



## EVERYTHING CAN CHANGE:

### Ghassan and his children, from Syria to France

Ghassan and his children (Carla and Michaël, 14 and 17 respectively) arrived in Paris through the Humanitarian Corridors on 27 February 2018. They are Syrians. This family was welcomed in the centre of Paris, an experience made possible thanks to Sant'Egidio and to the Community of the Daughters of Charity. To date, it is the only family which has arrived through the humanitarian corridors that has been housed in Paris.

The Daughters of Charity have provided three rooms for a period of one and a half years. Now, 15 months since they arrived, the family is ready to move into a rented apartment: a decisive step in their integration journey. Ghassan and his children are happy and relieved.

Over these 15 months, Ghassan and his children were surrounded and accompanied by the affection of the welcoming community and numerous volunteers from Sant'Egidio, but also by other bodies and associations of civil society, such as the Daughters of Charity and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The family relied on this network to take its first steps in France and now shares a deep friendship with it.

As soon as they arrived, the two children attended intensive French courses. In September 2018, they were ready to start school. Michaël enrolled in a computer engineering school, while his younger sister, Carla, began the first year in a high school for scientific studies. Less than a year has passed since then: today, Carla is achieving top marks in French, while Michaël has passed his first year of studies with flying colours. Ambitious goals, which required a lot of work!

As for the father, Ghassan, learning French required a bit more effort. Compared with his children, his results, of course, were not up to scratch. But, constantly spurred on by Michaël, Carla and new friends, Ghassan isn't giving up. Ghassan is a former entrepreneur. In Syria, before the war, he used to work in the field of robotics. When

he arrived in France, as he is a deeply pragmatic man, Ghassan said he was willing to work in any other sector, in order to be independent. He saw two main obstacles: learning French and the time needed to obtain his refugee status (which, according to French law, is also accompanied by the recognition of the right to work). The first difficulty was overcome, albeit through a difficult path, thanks to Ghassan's commitment. Now Ghassan understands French perfectly and can speak it, despite some shyness. The second one was solved after a few months. Ghassan, therefore, found employment for the first time. After a first short-term contract, in July 2019 he was hired as a warehouse management IT officer for an industrial components company. Ghassan finally has a long-term contract in his hands, which could turn into a permanent job.

In addition to school, Michaël and

Carla are very involved in social work. In 2018, they both

took part in the annual Sant'Egidio Youth for Peace meeting, which was held in Rome. With the Youth for Peace in Paris, the two

young people carry out many activities: Carla regularly visits the elderly, while her brother meets the homeless. At this year's

meeting in Krakow, Michaël and Carla were able to share their experience with many other young people from many countries around the world.



Although Ghassan has found a job, he continues to give his free time to the elderly on Saturday afternoons and Sundays: he keeps them company, helps them with their daily needs, and accompanies them to moments of prayer and to weekly mass.

Integration is a long path, which requires patience and resilience: to have a good job, to be able to pay for housing, to complete bureaucratic procedures, which sometimes seem long and tortuous. Days are made of ups and downs. But, in the end, everything is possible, and everything can change. Today, Ghassan and his children have a new country, new friends and a new home. Now, they are just waiting for the utilities to be connected (but it's only a matter of days)!



### 4.3 Belgium: A successful example of the Humanitarian Corridors model spreading through Europe.

Belgium is an emblematic case of **successful adoption of the Humanitarian Corridors model in Europe**.

The Community of Sant'Egidio, which has been present and active in Belgium for a long time, has been greatly involved in advocacy and awareness actions in the country leading to this result.

On 22 November 2017, the protocol for opening the Humanitarian Corridors in Belgium was signed. The signatories were: the Government of Belgium, the Community of Sant'Egidio and the local Churches, with the support of the Jewish and Muslim communities.

The protocol provided for 150 visas for Syrian nationals from Lebanon and Turkey. On the basis of the protocol, the Community of Sant'Egidio assumed the role of coordinator of the project.

A few weeks after signing the agreement, just before Christmas 2017, the first group of Syrians arrived in Belgium from Lebanon. Now, less than two years on from the entry into force of the protocol, all 150 planned refugees have arrived in the country. Many of them are now part of Belgian society, having already achieved family autonomy (they have found a job which allows them to provide for the needs of the family) or, at least, semi-autonomy (the beneficiaries depend on support associations only for housing).

How was it possible to open the Humanitarian Corridors in Belgium and to achieve the defined results in less than two years?

The willingness of the Belgian government and of civil society to promote reception and integration has certainly been a very important element. The Community of Sant'Egidio was therefore able to rely on help from all corners, as well as on the collaboration between all the Christian Churches (Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Orthodox and Anglican), which also received support from the Jewish and Muslim communities.

The main elements which made it possible were:

- the advocacy carried out by the Community of Sant'Egidio in the country from 2016, awareness-raising campaigns, and involvement of civil society through public events and technical meetings;
- the availability of effective implementation procedures, already successfully applied in Italy, further tested and refined thanks to the new arrivals in Italy and to opening the Humanitarian Corridors in France.

Awareness raising, which took place during one of the most difficult periods in

Belgium's recent history, achieved results beyond expectations in a relatively short time. The terrorist attacks of 2016, in fact, had spread a feeling of growing distrust in the country, if not of real closure towards the immigration phenomenon. In this context, the Community of Sant'Egidio acted in direct contact with civil society, constantly seeking its involvement. Various public initiatives (e.g., in the Molenbeek district) were aimed at gradually activating public energy, to produce a shared feeling concerning the Humanitarian Corridors, illustrating it as an effective instrument able to offer legal, protected and safe entry to the refugees and, at the same time, to ensure compliance with internal security and the delicate balance of coexistence.

The fact that the Humanitarian Corridors had already been successfully implemented in other contexts contributed to consolidating a positive perception. In particular, the Humanitarian Corridors model and its operative procedures (widespread reception by families, associations, parishes, etc., rather than accommodation in large immigration centres; the methods for selecting beneficiaries in the transit countries, which provide for multiple controls in collaboration with the authorities of the transit and destination countries; and the planned integration paths), were explained patiently, with open dialogue, and were, therefore, the key which allowed the shift from generic adhesion to operative involvement.

The protocol is not aimed at a specific ethnic/religious group of the population, but indiscriminately in favour of Christians and Muslims. Some of the refugees who arrived in Belgium with the Humanitarian Corridors had their own families already residing in the country. The presence of family members made the integration process even more effective.<sup>20</sup> The project was viewed positively by the Belgian authorities for its correctness, transparency and compliance with the protocol signed.

Humanitarian Corridors in Belgium are also characterised as an ecumenical and interreligious project. Implementation is entrusted to a committee ("Together for Peace") which includes, among others, the Protestant Church, the Evangelical Church, the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church, with the support of the Jewish and Muslim communities.

Most of the refugees were welcomed by the Belgian Bishops' Conference, in collaboration with the local Caritas associations.

Regardless of local management and organisational specificities, **the Humanitarian Corridors procedures have been successfully applied without the need for**

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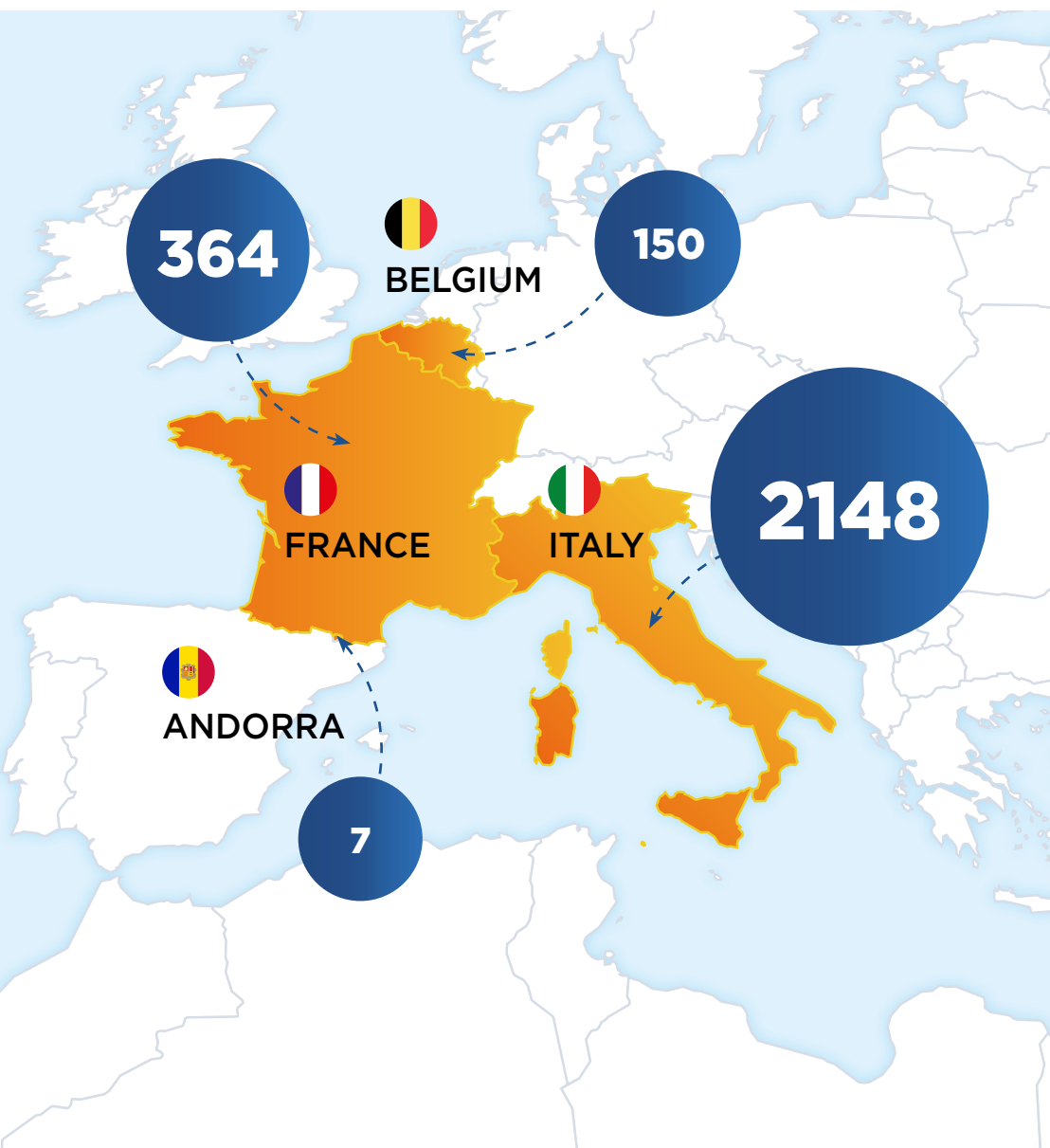
<sup>20</sup> Often those who try to reach Europe from third countries have family members already living in the European Union from whom they find the economic resources to tackle the journey, relying on human traffickers, when there are restrictions on family reunification in the member states. The growing reasons and cases for which family reunification is allowed in European countries would help to avoid the suffering caused by these trips and, at the same time, would reduce human trafficking, as well as promote the path of integration. By providing a legal and safe route of access to Europe, Humanitarian Corridors are a virtuous tool.

**substantial changes, confirming their adaptability to the different European legal, social and economic contexts.**

It is, in fact, a model which marks a substantial distinction from resettlement programmes: while the latter are aimed at people who have already obtained refugee status from the UNHCR at the time of their entry into the resettlement country, Humanitarian Corridors envisage, however, that, upon their arrival in the country which granted the visa, beneficiaries must apply for asylum and follow the procedure common to any asylum seeker. The entire cost is borne by the sponsoring subjects and by civil society. This favours - as also proved by the case of Belgium - a positive collaboration between the sponsoring associations, those who have committed themselves to reception in support of these, and the institutions of reference.

## RECEPTION NUMBERS AND THE PROGRESS OF THE INTEGRATION PATHWAY

REFUGEES ARRIVED 2015 - 2019



## INTEGRATION IN FIGURES: THE ITALIAN CASE



### RECEPTION

#### 145 different hosts

(associations, groups of friends, parishes, religious orders, families, etc.).

More than **3,000 volunteers** involved.

**83% of adults attended courses in Italian language and culture** for at least six months.

**Minors were enrolled in public schools**, generally in the classes for their age, achieving good results (especially considering that most of them never attended school in the camps in Lebanon and Ethiopia).

**Out of 1,011 refugees supported thanks to the first protocol** (Dec. 2015 - Nov. 2017), about a year after arriving in Italy:

- 104 had a stable job;
- 24 had attended professional training courses;
- 36 had taken part in a training internship;
- 26 had enrolled at university;

Considering that these are vulnerable or very vulnerable people and that children constituted about 40% of the total number of refugees accepted, **this is an excellent result in terms of the autonomy of family units.**

After two years of reception, 151 people have achieved full autonomy and 304 have achieved semi-autonomy, that is, they depend on the associations only for housing.

**HUMANITARIAN  
CORRIDORS:  
THE SUCCESSES OF  
THE “HUMANITARIAN  
CORRIDORS” MODEL  
AND PROJECT**

5



ITALY

ITALY

ETHIOPIA

ETHIOPIA



**451**  
REFUGEES  
ARRIVED



People who need protection;  
people who have suffered  
violence and torture; people  
who need medical assistance;  
people requiring family  
reunification, families with  
minors; senior citizens; people  
who have no prospect of  
integration locally.



**139**  
FAMILIES  
FROM 3 TO 9  
MEMBERS



**26%**  
BETWEEN 18 AND  
30 YEARS OLD  
MORE MEN THAN WOMEN



+ THAN **40%**  
CHILDREN AND  
MINORS



**7/8%**  
VICTIMS OF TORTURE

+ THAN **40%**  
UNDER THE AGE OF 10

ORIGIN:



72% ERITREA  
13% SOMALIA  
13% SOUTH SUDAN  
2% YEMEN

RECEPTION:



17 out of 20  
Italian regions,  
61 municipalities.



ITALY

ITALY

LIBANO

LEBANON



**481**  
REFUGEES  
ARRIVED



**90%**  
FAMILIES



**50%**  
WOMEN



**43%**  
CHILDREN



Families/single parents with dependent children; victims of war; victims of torture; disability; serious medical cases; single women; senior citizens; people with psychiatric problems.



**50%**  
ADULTS (30%) AND  
YOUNG ADULTS (18/29)



**4%**  
ADULTS  
OVER 55 YEARS

RECEPTION:



14 out of 20  
Italian regions,  
51 municipalities.





**FRANCE**

**FRANCE**



**LEBANON**



**LEBANON**



**238**  
**REFUGEES**  
**ARRIVED**



**48%**  
**WOMEN**



**60%**  
**UNDER 30 YEARS**



**80%**  
**SYRIAN FAMILIES**



**59%**  
**FAMILIES**  
**AVERAGE OF 4 PER**  
**FAMILY**



Families/single parents with dependent children; war victims; victims of torture; disability; serious medical cases; single women; senior citizens; people with psychiatric problems.



**43%**  
**MINORS**



**16%**  
**CHILDREN**  
**UNDER 5 YEARS**



**4%**  
**ADULTS**  
**OVER 55 YEARS**

**RECEPTION:**



34 different departments  
(French administrative units),  
60 municipalities.

# CONCLUSIONI

## 6

“Humanitarian Corridors” are a concrete example of how civil society, associations, and institutions can do good when working together to address the issue of refugees and migration.

Between 2016 and the present day (May 2019), more than 2,100 refugees have arrived safely and legally in Europe (Italy, France, Belgium and Andorra) through the “Humanitarian Corridors”.

The driving force behind this initiative is the desire to take action in the face of many - too many - deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, particularly since 2013. The need to react to this problem has arisen, and we must start as a civil society by creating safe passage for people in third countries bordering those from which the refugees are fleeing.

The “Humanitarian Corridors” are aimed at vulnerable people and/or people who have a family network in the host countries, and who are forced to live in the limbo of third countries, such as Lebanon and Ethiopia, from which they hope to escape especially through dangerous sea crossings.

It all starts right from where the migrants are. Here associations and interlocutors identify a list of potential beneficiaries of the operation. These are, above all, particularly fragile people, chosen in consultation with the operators of the Community of Sant'Egidio and with the other associations involved in the project. Single women, children, the elderly, the sick, the disabled, and victims of torture are among the prioritised beneficiaries.

But the operation is not completely objective, since it is very important to evaluate the migratory path, the history, and context of each individual refugee. Family conditions, for example, are considered a priority and often family units are favoured in this selection. Care is taken, therefore, not to divide close family ties and to allow travel to relatives or individuals who can be reunited with parents, husbands, wives, children, siblings already present in the European countries of destination.

Once the lists have been drawn up, they are submitted to the consular authorities of the European Countries of destination and of the countries involved for inspection. Consulates in the countries concerned issue **“visas with limited territorial validity”**, in accordance with the provisions of Article 25 of the Community Code on Visas.<sup>21</sup> Refugees, therefore, **can arrive in Europe on safe flights**, without the risk of death, suffering or exploitation. Thanks to the visa, they are in fact legally protected and can proceed with their asylum application.

<sup>21</sup> REGULATION (EC) No. 810/2009 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code).

“Humanitarian Corridors” aim, therefore, to concretely counter **the groups of people smugglers and human traffickers**, reducing the travel costs of refugees. Those who decide to take ‘boats of desperation’ to escape are often forced to squander their life savings, increasing their poverty.

**Security and legality**, words that politicians and civil society have frequently invoked in recent years when discussing migration, are therefore guaranteed. And integration becomes possible.

Once they have arrived safely in Europe, the refugees are accompanied along a **pathway of integration** by the associations sponsoring the corridors. They therefore receive hospitality, financial support, guidance to find work, and education and legal assistance, everything being financed with funds from the same associations.

In Europe, the model is beginning to take off. In Belgium, the agreement between the Belgian government, Sant’Egidio and all the religious authorities of the country, with the support also of Jewish and Muslim communities, has allowed for the reception of 150 Syrians.

Right from the start, the model offered by Sant’Egidio proved to be contagious: in 2016, the Pope brought 12 refugees with him from Lesbos, entrusted them to the Community for reception and for the integration process with the financial assistance of the Vatican. The Republic of San Marino welcomed a group of Syrian refugees.

France was the first European country, after Italy, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to import the “Humanitarian Corridors” model. The Community of Sant’Egidio, the Bishops’ Conference of France, Caritas France, the Protestant Federation of France and the Protestant Mutual Aid Federation signed the agreement to promote the safe arrival of approximately 500 **Syrians and Iraqis**. By May 2019, 364 refugees had already arrived in the country, most of whom were families stuck in the uncertainty and despair of Lebanese camps.

Andorra has started “Humanitarian Corridors”, preceding the signing of the memorandum by a special law which allows entry for humanitarian reasons. Spain and France are collaborating with Andorra to allow the passage of refugees in their airports, as did Italy for a group of refugees received in the Republic of San Marino.

The model of the “Humanitarian Corridors” is intrinsically linked to the concept of Sponsorship. The idea is that it is not only the States who deal with which and how many refugees should arrive on European soil. **Civil society**, in this reception formula, can play a primary role. Citizens, associations, non-profit organisations, and parishes have the opportunity to intervene in the migration phenomenon as key players. They

can, therefore, guarantee the acceptance and treatment of immigrants by providing resources and solutions.

As emerged from the experience of Anna Pagliaro from Cosenza - one of the people who welcome refugees in Italy, whose story has briefly been outlined in this handbook - the “Humanitarian Corridors” reception method is an effective solution, particularly in provincial cities, which helps to reassure those who today are afraid of migrants. *“It reassures those who are afraid”*, says Anna. *“The more we act, the more we dispel fear.”*

The central role of civil society in the project is also given by the fact that the funding of the operation is totally borne by the sponsoring organisations, without any financial burden on the State. Capturing an essential element, Giuseppe Sangiorgi wrote:<sup>22</sup> *“Two forms of intervention, among others, have emerged over time as the strengths of a strategy capable of countering together the opposing attitudes of subordination and aversion that face each other with respect to migration. These two forms are the widespread reception on the territory (for a balanced distribution of the impact represented by the phenomenon), and the collaboration between public and private spheres, between the representative democracy of institutions and the participatory democracy of social bodies.”*

It is the widespread reception on which the “Humanitarian Corridors” rest, made up of people who are close to the refugees, who form a human nucleus emotionally involved in the reception. During the years taken to implement the “Humanitarian Corridors”, there have been many, significant responses by local networks in various parts of Europe. Social cohesion has worked and produced small but significant stories of integration.

The challenge is to move from good practice, for which cohesion with institutions is important and functional, to a broader scheme of private sponsorship which can ensure the effective integration of a greater number of beneficiaries in the social and economic fabric of the Member States.<sup>23</sup> A political and regulatory proposal made possible thanks to the role of civil society organisations and the strong involvement of local communities in the identification, pre-departure, reception and integration

22 Giuseppe Sangiorgi, “La via italiana dei Corridoi Umanitari”, in *libertàcivili*, January-February 2017, pp. 45-50.

23 The objective of strengthening the existing schemes of private Sponsorship in Europe was recently expressed by the European Commission, which adopted the conclusions of a study commissioned and finalised in October 2018: *“Private sponsorship schemes share one common characteristic: they involve a transfer of responsibility from government agencies to private actors for some elements of the identification, pre-departure, reception, or integration process of beneficiaries. With a strong involvement of local communities and civil society organisations, these schemes allow strengthened capacities at local level to provide adequate support for integration and usually lead to better integration outcomes of the persons concerned.”* Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs Directorate Migration and Protection. October, 2018: Study on the feasibility and added value of sponsorship schemes as a possible pathway to safe channels for admission to the EU, including resettlement. Final Report. EUR DR-04-18-846-EN-N.

process of beneficiaries.

“Humanitarian Corridors” are not the solution to the phenomenon of migratory flows, but they represent an effective response to inclusion which respects the rights of all.

As Umberto Eco said,<sup>24</sup> [...] “*Europe has been, since the fall of the Roman Empire, the result of a successful cultural crossbreeding*”. What Umberto Eco states is also true for immigration, that is, that “*the fundamental principle which sustains human affairs is that of negotiation*”[...], “*at the heart of cultural life itself*”. This allows us to resist and to make plans for the future.

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**HUMANITARIAN  
CORRIDORS**

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