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COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP
FOR MIGRANTS IN EUROPE



Funded by the
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NextGenerationEU



Netzwerk
Fluchtforschung

Towards A European Model of Community Sponsorship for Migrants and Refugees: The Legal Perspective

Research Projects of National
Interest (PRIN 2024-2025)

Active Refugee Admission
Network (ARA) meeting,
October 16, 2024

Daniela Vitiello



The Project

- PRIN – Research Projects of National Relevance
- **competitive funding** for “free”, not-oriented research activity by the Italian Ministry for Universities (MUR)
- **evaluation criteria:** scientific quality of the proposals in terms of originality and innovation; scientific experiences of the research teams
- Key priorities
 - sustaining and promoting university research
 - attaining a more effective and efficient public investment on R&D
 - strengthening the academic network of excellence by supporting research functions within universities



The Research Questions

- 1) if and under what conditions access/integration through sponsorship can promote pathways of **active participation** and **migrant/refugee re-subjectification** at the local level / social cohesion and inclusive societies for all (EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027)
- 2) whether and to what extent models of community sponsorship can be **exported or replicated** from one national/regional context to another and/or scaled up at EU level

The Guiding Principles

- (i) the public interest and the needs of host communities
- (ii) respect for the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees to enhance their participation and 'agency'
- (iii) administrative sustainability



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The Consortium

- 3 Interdisciplinary Research Units
- 3 case studies

(i) university corridors for refugees

(ii) private sponsorship for urban and rural employment

(iii) public-private partnerships for mass displacement



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The PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD



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The Project

- What is the normative and theoretical backbone of a European model of 'community sponsorship'?

1) LEGAL AND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS THROUGH COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP: IN SEARCH FOR A DEFINITION

2) COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP AS A MULTI-PURPOSE AND MULTI-STAGE TOOL: NAVIGATING THE COMPLEX NEXUS BETWEEN ADMISSION, RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION

3) COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP AS A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE: EU INSTITUTIONS, NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS AND PRIVATE SUBJECTS & ENTITIES

4) LOOKING AHEAD: TOWARDS A EUROPEAN MODEL OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP



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1) IN SEARCH FOR A DEFINITION

- Regulation establishing a Union framework for resettlement, adopted on 14 May 2024
- Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1364 on legal pathways to protection
- Commission's aim 'of developing a European model of community sponsorship, which can lead to better integration outcomes in the longer term.' (COM (2020) 609 final, p. 23)
- EUAA Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network / EUAA Working Group on Community Sponsorship: waiting for the guidelines on community sponsorship
- **Going beyond the traditional notion (personal scope – functional approach)**

Definition(s)

Programme offering a complementary **legal pathway** to **resettlement** for **refugees** in need of **international protection** in which responsibilities are shared between the government, civil society organizations and local communities who provide financial, social and/or emotional support in order to facilitate their **integration** in the **host country**.



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2) CS AS A MULTI-PURPOSE AND MULTI-STAGE TOOL

- MULTI-PURPOSE TOOL
 - INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIP
 - LEGAL MIGRATION / INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION
 - RECEPTION IN CASE OF MASS ARRIVALS
- MULTI-STAGE TOOL (WHOLE OF ROUTE APPROACH)
 - ENTRY selection, pre-departure
 - RECEPTION post-arrival, early-integration
 - INTEGRATION durable solutions
- **Going beyond the traditional notion (addressing the issue of fragmentation of legal statuses connected to the establishment and implementation of CS schemes)**



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3) CS AS A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

- Soft coordination role of the European Commission and EU Agencies Commission's aim '
- Member States' executive discretion
- Public entities and civil society
- **Addressing the issue of EU competences, responsibility-sharing, fragmentation & policy transfer, proximate jurisdiction, transnational solidarity & additionality**



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4) THE WAY AHEAD: A EUROPEAN MODEL OF CS

- *Protected entry as a panacea?*
- *The role of the judiciary in strengthening a principled approach*
- *The dyad solidarity-responsibility: Moving beyond classical EU paradigms?*

- *A human-centred approach to community sponsorship in Europe: Goals, principles and values*
- *Addressing the Accountability Gap in Private Sponsorship*

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN MODEL OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP FOR REFUGEES: ACCESS, RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION

MILESTONE 1

MAPPING & COMPARING CSS IN SELECTED EU MS AND TC

Micro-level analysis – UNIBO

Mapping and comparing refugee tertiary education pathways in selected TC and EU MS (Canada, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, USA)

Case study: The role of universities and local communities as a sponsor and its contribution to refugee agency and integration in Italy

Meso-level analysis – UNITO

Mapping and comparing the role of regions and cities across the EU as promoters of CSS (selected States: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA)

Case study: The uptake of CSS by regions and cities across the EU: a pilot project for the EU partnership on integration

Macro-level analysis – UNITUS

Channelling solidarity towards refugees through a whole-of-society response to mass displacement: policy approaches in selected EU MS and TC (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, UK, USA)

Case study: Catalysing a whole of society response to mass displacement through community sponsorship: lessons learnt from the war in Ukraine

MILESTONE 2

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY TRANSFER & ROLE OF THE EU

Micro-level analysis – UNIBO

Expanding tertiary education pathways for refugees in Europe. Case study implications for policy transfer to “proximate jurisdictions” and added value of an EU reference framework

Meso-level analysis – UNITO

Empowering regions and cities across Europe: the EU as a norm entrepreneur for community sponsorship. Case study implications for policy transfer to proximate social systems and the role of EU’s incentives and funding

Macro-level analysis – UNITUS

Developing community sponsorship for humanitarian admission of large flows as a contribution to an EU model of community sponsorship. Case study implications for intra-EU solidarity and responsibility-sharing in the field of asylum

MILESTONE 3

POLICY SETTING FOR A EUROPEAN MODEL OF CS

Micro-level analysis – UNIBO

The role of the EU in knowledge sharing and global advocacy for community sponsorship: strategic orientations for a fruitful EU partnership with the Global Refugee Sponsor Initiative

Meso-level analysis – UNITO

The EU reference framework on community sponsorship as a blueprint for EU external action on migration and asylum: policy diffusion and capacity building in neighbouring countries

Macro-level analysis – UNITUS

The contribution of an EU principled definition of community sponsorship to international standard setting: potential, pitfalls and challenges

**FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS**



SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS (1st year)

- (i) the common denominator of promising EU schemes*
- (ii) the minimum administrative and operational conditions for policy transfer*
- (iii) the potential of these forms of responsibility sharing for the protection of fundamental rights and the development of transnational solidarity in the EU*

Examples of outcomes



(i) The university corridors for refugees (UNI.CO.RE) program in Italy (2019-2023) Evaluation Report

(ii) GROWTH - International Rescue Committee Focus Group on Innovation to scale community sponsorship programs

(iii) Edited volume (forthcoming 2025)

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Thanks!

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