



EUROPESE COMMISSIE

SECRETARIAAT GENERAAL

ONTVANGEN 17 DEC 2008 *jus*

Brussel, 17/XII/2008

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PERMANENTE
VERTEGENWOORDIGING VAN
NEDERLAND BIJ DE EUROPESE
UNIE
Hermann-Debrouxlaan, 48

1160 BRUSSEL

**Betreft: KENNISGEVING OVEREENKOMSTIG ARTIKEL 254 VAN HET EG-
VERDRAG**

Het Secretariaat-generaal doet U hierbij, voor doorzending aan zijne
Excellentie de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, bijgaande Beschikking van de
Commissie toekomen.

Voor de Secretaris-generaal



Karl VON KEMPIS

Bij : C(2008)8351 def.

NL



COMMISSIE VAN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN

Brussel, 16.12.2008
C(2008) 8351 definitief

NIET VOOR PUBLICATIE

Ontwerp

BESCHIKKING VAN DE COMMISSIE

van 16.12.2008

**waarbij in het kader van het Europees Vluchtelingenfonds het
meerjarenprogramma 2008-2013, het jaarprogramma 2008 en de medefinanciering voor
2008 voor Nederland worden goedgekeurd**

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(Slechts de tekst in de Nederlandse taal is authentiek)

DE COMMISSIE VAN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN,

Gelet op het Verdrag tot oprichting van de Europese Gemeenschap,

Gelet op Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 23 mei 2007 tot instelling van het Europees Vluchtelingenfonds voor de periode 2008–2013 als onderdeel van het algemeen programma Solidariteit en beheer van de migratiestromen¹, en met name op artikel 18, lid 5, en artikel 20, lid 5,

Overwegende hetgeen volgt:

- (1) Op 29 april 2008 heeft Nederland bij de Commissie een ontwerp-meerjarenprogramma voor de periode 2008-2013 ingediend. Het ontwerp-meerjarenprogramma werd vervolgens herzien, waarna op 5 november 2008 een definitieve versie is ontvangen. Het programma bevat de in artikel 18, lid 1, van Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG voorgeschreven elementen. De Commissie heeft het overeenkomstig artikel 18, lid 3, van Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG gecontroleerd en getoetst op overeenstemming met Beschikking 2007/815/EG van de Commissie van 29 november 2007 tot uitvoering van Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad wat de goedkeuring van strategische richtsnoeren voor de periode 2008-2013 betreft²;
- (2) Op 26 mei 2008 heeft Nederland bij de Commissie een ontwerp-jaarprogramma voor 2008 ingediend. Het ontwerp-jaarprogramma werd vervolgens herzien, waarna op 4 november 2008 een definitieve versie is ontvangen. Het programma bevat de in artikel 20, lid 3, van Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG voorgeschreven elementen en is opgesteld in overeenstemming met het meerjarenprogramma;
- (3) Op 4 oktober 2007 heeft Nederland overeenkomstig artikel 32, lid 2, van Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG een beschrijving van de beheers- en controlesystemen ingediend die de in laatstgenoemd artikel voorgeschreven elementen bevat. Na controle van deze beheers- en controlesystemen werd op 9 september 2008 een herziene beschrijving ontvangen;

¹ PB L 144 van 6.6.2007, blz. 1.

² PB L 326 van 12.12.2007, blz. 29.

- (4) De bedragen die aan de lidstaten worden toegekend in de vorm van medefinanciering moeten worden vermeld;
- (5) Er moet een einddatum worden vastgesteld voor de subsidiabiliteit van de uitgaven, overeenkomstig punten I.4 en V.3 van bijlage XI bij Beschikking 2008/22/EG van de Commissie van 19 december 2007 tot vaststelling van regels voor de uitvoering van Beschikking nr. 573/2007/EG³;
- (6) De in deze beschikking vervatte maatregelen zijn in overeenstemming met het advies van het bij artikel 56, lid 1, van Beschikking nr. 574/2007/EG⁴ ingestelde comité,

HEEFT DE VOLGENDE BESCHIKKING GEGEVEN:

Artikel 1

Het meerjarenprogramma dat Nederland voor de periode van 1 januari 2008 tot 31 december 2013 heeft ingediend en dat als bijlage 1 bij deze beschikking is gevoegd, wordt goedgekeurd.

Artikel 2

Het jaarprogramma dat Nederland voor 2008 heeft ingediend en dat als bijlage 2 aan deze beschikking is gevoegd, wordt goedgekeurd.

Artikel 3

Voor het boekjaar 2008 wordt in totaal 3 237 566,70 euro uit het Europees Vluchtelingenfonds toegekend in de vorm van medefinanciering.

Artikel 4

Voor het jaarprogramma 2008 is de einddatum voor de subsidiabiliteit van de uitgaven 31 december 2009 voor acties en 30 september 2010 voor technische bijstand.

Artikel 5

Voor het jaarprogramma 2008 voor Nederland vormt deze beschikking een financieringsbesluit in de zin van artikel 75, lid 2, van Verordening (EG, Euratom) nr. 1605/2002 van de Raad van 25 juni 2002 houdende het Financieel Reglement van toepassing op de algemene begroting van de Europese Gemeenschappen⁵, en van artikel 90 van Verordening (EG, Euratom) nr. 2342/2002 van de Commissie van 23 december 2002 tot vaststelling van uitvoeringsvoorschriften van Verordening (EG, Euratom) nr. 1605/2002 van

³ PB L 7 van 10.1.2008, blz. 1.

⁴ PB L 144 van 6.6.2007, blz. 22.

⁵ PB L 248 van 16.9.2002, blz. 1.

de Raad houdende het Financieel Reglement van toepassing op de algemene begroting van de Europese Gemeenschappen⁶.

Artikel 6

Deze beschikking is gericht tot het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.

Gedaan te Brussel, 16.12.2008

Voor de Commissie
Jacques BARROT
Vicevoorzitter



⁶ PB L 357 van 31.12.2002, blz. 1.

BIJLAGE 1

Meerjarenprogramma 2008-2013 van Nederland

ANNEX 1

ERF MULTI-ANNUAL PROGRAMME

MEMBER STATE: the Netherlands

FUND: European Refugee Fund

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: Director of the Directorate of Aliens Policy at the Ministry of Justice

PERIOD COVERED: 2008-2013

This multi-annual programme deals successively with the:

- a) *asylum procedure;*
- b) *reception of asylum seekers;*
- c) *integration of refugees with a status based on the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees enjoying a form of protection in the sense of Council Directive 2004/83/EC;*
- d) *resettled refugees (including the integration and reception of these persons).*

1. SITUATION IN THE MEMBER STATE

1.1. The national situation and the migratory flows affecting it

A. Asylum procedure

Whether asylum seekers can qualify as refugees is assessed in the Netherlands based on the Aliens Act 2000 (Vw 2000). The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) researches and decides on behalf of the Secretary of State for Justice whether an alien is eligible for asylum. This is generally the case:

- if the alien in the country of origin has a justified fear of persecution due to his race, religion, nationality, political conviction or association with a certain social group (the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees);
- if the alien has justified grounds to assume that there is a real risk in the country of origin of being subjected to inhuman treatment, for example, torture (article 3, ECHR);
- if he has had certain traumatic experiences in the country of origin;
- if the Minister believes a return to the country of origin would be especially harsh in connection with the general (safety) situation (categorical protection).

Only refugees with a status based on the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or who enjoy a form of protection in the sense of Council Directive 2004/83/EC can be considered under the European Refugee Fund. Those with a status acquired based on the trauma policy or the categorical protection policy come under the target group of the European Integration Fund. See also chapter 4.4 "Complementarity regarding the target group of the European Integration Fund".

The description below of the asylum procedure illustrates the current situation. The asylum seeker must report to an IND reception centre in order to claim asylum.

The initial assessment of the asylum application takes place in the reception centre. This assessment should take place within a maximum of 48 processing hours spread over a number (four-to-six) working days. During this procedure, it will be examined whether the asylum application can be refused directly or whether more time is needed to come to a decision on the application or whether it can be granted immediately.

The asylum seeker will first go to a temporary reception facility if he has registered at the reception centre. Staff from Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland (VVN) are also on hand at the temporary reception facility. An asylum seeker who has reported to Schiphol or other external frontier in the Netherlands will normally proceed to the Schiphol reception centre within a few hours of reporting, where the asylum procedure will commence directly on arrival. These asylum seekers therefore do not remain in a temporary reception facility.

The AC (application centre) procedure begins with an interview as to identity, nationality and route travelled by the asylum seeker. A decision will be taken after the first interview as to whether an application warrants further handling in a reception centre or whether more time is necessary for research. In the first case, the asylum seeker is interviewed again in the reception centre as to the grounds for the asylum application. If more time is necessary to come to a decision on the asylum application, the asylum seeker will be referred from the reception centre to a screening office to continue the asylum procedure. He will then remain in a reception facility from the Central Reception Organisation for Asylum Seekers (COA) and an appointment will be made at an IND screening centre where he will be interviewed again. Also following the subsequent interview in the reception centre, the IND may decide that more time is needed to carry out the research and refer the asylum seeker to the procedure in the screening office. An independent interpreter is present at all interviews. The asylum seeker will receive free assistance from a legal aid provider throughout the procedure.

The asylum seeker will receive written notification of refusal of the asylum application both during the AC procedure and during the screening office procedure if he is not eligible to remain in the Netherlands. This will also state the grounds for the refusal. A reaction (opinion) may be given to this intention. The IND receives the report, the additions and corrections to the reports on the interview and the opinion of the intention on the decision.

In the procedure in the screening office, the IND will in principle come to a decision within the statutory period of six months after submitting the application. The period in which a decision is to be made can be extended by up to six months if more time is need for research. The Secretary of State for Justice can also apply a statutory provision of up to one year if:

- it is expected that a short period of uncertainty will exist as to the situation in the country of origin;
- the unsafe situation in the country of origin is expected to be short;
- the number of asylum applications submitted from a certain country or certain region is so large that the IND is not reasonably in a position to decide on this in time.

The asylum seeker will be granted asylum for a limited period if the asylum application is approved. Each asylum seeker whose application is approved will receive the same temporary permit with the same rights and provisions irrespective of the grounds for the approval. These rights and provisions are largely determined by international obligations. Asylum will be granted for five years.

The asylum permit can be withdrawn during this period, for example, because the reason for approval has expired or because the alien poses a danger to public order or national security. After five years, an application can be made to convert this into an unlimited permit. This permit can no longer be withdrawn if the grounds for approval have expired.

The rejection of the asylum application will lead automatically to the asylum seeker being obliged to leave the Netherlands within a certain period, the end of relief measures, the possibility of removal and the authority to deport (the so-called multi-comprising decision). A suspension of removal may be applied if the deportation to the country of origin is not considered safe due to the general security situation. Asylum seekers from the respective country will then not be deported for a maximum of one year and will be entitled to care.

The asylum seeker is entitled to appeal against a decision to refuse asylum. If the decision to refuse the application is taken during the screening office procedure, the appeal must be submitted within four weeks during which the asylum seeker may in principle remain in the Netherlands. He will remain in the centre during this period. This does not apply if the decision to refuse asylum is taken in the AC procedure. The appeal must be submitted in one week in this case. The asylum seeker may not await the result of the appeal in the Netherlands. The asylum seeker may ask the judge for a temporary provision, the result of which can normally be awaited in the Netherlands. The asylum seeker will no longer be entitled to relief during this period. The asylum seeker must leave the Netherlands if the judge refuses the application. The asylum seeker may appeal to the Council of State. The decision on the appeal to the higher court may not automatically be awaited in the Netherlands. A special request for a temporary provision must be submitted for this.

2007 intake

The number of initial asylum applications in the Netherlands in 2007 is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Asylum applications in the Netherlands in 2007

Nationality	Number
Iraq	2 004
Somalia	1 875
China	242
Unknown	218
Iran	187
Nigeria	179
Afghanistan	160
Eritrea	153
Sri Lanka	104
Nepal	38
Other nationalities	1 942
Total	7 102

European context

The asylum procedure and the asylum policy are influenced more and more by European law. In a European context, the following instruments among others, from the first phase of harmonisation, are relevant to the asylum procedure:

- Council Regulation (EC) 343/3000 of 18 February 2003 establishing the criteria and instruments for determining which Member State is responsible for handling an asylum application submitted to a Member State by a third country national (Dublin Regulation)
- Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (Directive on temporary protection).
- Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals and stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted (Qualification Directive)
- Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status.

The implementation of Council Directive 2004/83/EC into Dutch law is still underway.

The second phase should culminate in Community rules that by the end of 2010 should lead to a joint asylum procedure and a uniform status for persons to whom asylum or subsidiary protection are granted. In a policy plan in July 2008, the European Commission will be announcing measures for drafting the joint European Asylum System including a time schedule for accepting these measures. The European Commission will also be announcing the results of a feasibility study to a European Support Office. As well as harmonising legislation, it very important to further harmonise asylum practice by investing in practical cooperation.

B. Reception

The most recent first big influx of asylum seekers to the Netherlands was in 1983 and 1984 when large groups of Tamils fled the violence in Sri Lanka. The reception of asylum seekers has become the State's concern following the fourth memorandum of amendment to the Welfare Act (Lower House, 1986-1987, No. 27). To start with, this concern was still limited to financial provisions for financing the reception. The number of people who applied for asylum in the Netherlands reached its highest point to date in 1994. Around 50,000 people applied for asylum in the Netherlands that year. The influx then dropped considerably until 1998. Following the outbreak of the civil war in Kosovo, the number of asylum seekers rose again sharply after which the asylum influx continued to fluctuate around 43,000 applicants up to the year 2000. A centrally controlled organisation responsible for receiving the asylum seekers was needed for efficient reception and supervision.

The reception of asylum seekers in the Netherlands has therefore been the task of the Central Reception Organisation for Asylum Seekers (COA) since 1994. The COA is an independent administrative body established under law with the task of material and immaterial reception of asylum seekers. The influx of asylum seekers has meanwhile declined and there are currently still ca. 23,000 people¹ in various forms of COA reception facilities.

¹ Reference date: 1 January 2008

The table below shows a summary of the development of the influx and the development of the number of asylum seekers in centres.

Table 2: Summary of asylum applications and numbers in centres per year

Year	Asylum applications²	Numbers in centres³
1995	29 258	30 166
1996	22 857	29 800
1997	34 443	37 720
1998	45 217	54 070
1999	42 733	64 771
2000	43 895	78 246
2001	32 579	83 801
2002	18 667	69 618
2003	13 402	52 714
2004	9 800	40 761
2005	8 518	28 732
2006	14 486	23 460
2007	9 731	21 750

C. Integration

Recognised refugees are included in the Netherlands in the group of non-western migrants.⁴ Exact details on the extent of the group of refugees are not available. On 1 January 2006, the number of immigrants (and their children) from refugee countries as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Vietnam, the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and various African countries was estimated at between 200,000 and 250,000. Although the number of refugees admitted over the years is known, it is not always easy to still identify these refugees as such. They may for example have migrated or been naturalised as Dutch nationals.

Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians and Somalis are the largest refugee groups in the Netherlands. The demographic details below relate to these four groups.

Table 3: Demographic details on admitted refugees >18,000 persons according to origin as at 1 January 2007

<i>Largest group of admitted refugees</i>	<i>Number of persons (x 1,000)</i>
Iraqis	43.8
Afghans	37.2
Iranians	28.7
Somalis	19.9

Source: Statistics Netherlands, Statline 2008

² Source: www.ind.nl; refers to first and subsequent asylum applications

³ Source: www.coa.nl

⁴ There is no adequate comprehensive term for the population groups involved in the integration. This actually involves those migrant groups with integration problems. The usual terms, aliens, non-western aliens, migrants and their children, ethnic minorities, etc., each have their own advantages and disadvantages.

The various migrant groups are growing at very different rates. During the late 1990s, for example, relatively few Iraqis and Afghans came to the country: in both 1996 and 1997, the number of Afghans entering the country was up 50%. The number of Somalis in the Netherlands in the 1990s also saw above average growth⁵.

High unemployment is one of the specific characteristics of the original groups to which many refugees belong. They are on average the shortest in the Netherlands, they are relatively old when they enter the employment market in the Netherlands, they speak poor or insufficient Dutch, do not possess professional qualifications gained in the Netherlands and have no social ties with Dutch society. Iraqis, Somalis and Afghans are among the non-western population groups with the highest percentages of recipients of (supplementary) benefits. Around 40% of people from 15 to 65 years within these communities were dependent mainly on supplementary benefits in 2004. Nearly 60% of Somali and Afghan households have to manage on low incomes. This is the case for slightly more than half of Iraqi and a third of Iranian households (Dagevos en Linden 2005)⁶. Refugees have accumulated few rights to other payments due to their minimal employment past in the Netherlands.

The Dutch integration policy

In the Netherlands, the Minister for Residents, Neighbourhoods and Integration has overall responsibility for the set up and progress of the integration programme. The Programme Minister comes under the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Order and the Environment

Basic points of the Dutch integration programme are promoting corporate emancipation and social integration, which require mutual involvement and effort from non-western migrants and natives. Integration of migrant groups and their children in the Netherlands involve among other things, integration into society, tackling discrimination, dealing with educational backlogs, promoting their participation in the employment market, including their religion into Dutch society, etc. An attempt is made to promote contact between natives and aliens by way of activities, for example, in the areas of sports, welfare and culture.

No policy aimed at specific ethnic groups

The cabinet believes a specific policy for individual groups is generally undesirable. This does not alter the fact that this cabinet has an eye for specific bottlenecks regarding the integration of groups of refugees. This is why specific measures are being taken aimed at (specific groups of) refugees at implementation level.

D. Resettlement

The Netherlands has been participating in the UNHCR resettlement programme since 1977. The aim of this programme is resettling refugees who are in a hopeless situation or acute danger somewhere else in the world outside their countries of origin.

⁵ Source: Statistics Netherlands – Vital statistics

⁶ SCP 2007 Annual report on integration

The Netherlands endeavours to resettle these refugees as a sustainable solution if returning to their countries of origin and local integration into their host countries are impossible. The resettlement policy is also a signal of solidarity with countries receiving large numbers of refugees. Also specially (vulnerable) groups, for example, refugees with serious medical conditions and single women with or without children and people reuniting families can be considered for resettlement. Resettlement can also contribute to a sustainable solution in the region as political impasses can be broken through. Refugees are also resettled each year from regions where negotiations take place in the context of "Regional Protection Programmes".

The Netherlands carries out selection missions with the exception of a few years in which only refugees are invited based on case selection. Refugees who are nominated by the UNHCR are selected during these missions. About one fifth are admitted based on case selection on the strength of the information supplied by the UNCHR. The most important condition for inviting a refugee is that he is recognised as a refugee by the UNHCR and that admission according to the Vw 2000 is possible. The assessment is carried out by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service.

The 2008-2011 policy framework for invited refugees (Lower House 19637, No. 1182) was sent to the Lower House on 28 January 2008. This stipulates adherence to the quota of an average of 500 refugees to be invited each year. A quota of 2,000 refugees to be resettled has been set for the entire 2008-2011 period. The refugees' need for protection remains fundamental. There are 30 cases within the quota available each year as so-called "medical cases".

Reception of invited refugees

Since 1981, invited refugees have always first been received centrally upon arrival. Since 2005, there has been a special asylum centre for invited refugees in Amersfoort.

The advantage of this is that the refugees can quickly come to the Netherlands bearing in mind independent accommodation is not always available. Groups of refugees are placed within local authorities from the asylum centre in Amersfoort after a few months.

Integration and naturalisation of invited refugees

Resettlement missions are carried out in various countries and continents. There were for example, resettlement missions in Syria, Tanzania, Kenya and Thailand in 2007. Invited refugees in 2007 had the following nationalities: Iraqi, Burundian, Congolese, Eritrean, Ethiopian and Burmese. Missions have already been carried out in Jordan and Thailand in 2008. Refugees from Vietnam, Latin America and (former) Yugoslavia have already been invited.

The profiles of invited refugees in many ways resemble those of refugees who arrive in the Netherlands by themselves as regards for example, the reasons for departure. There are also different starting points applying to both groups. In the first case, the journey to the Netherlands and the procedure undertaken by invited refugees are different. They often come to the Netherlands in groups after they have been selected in the refugee camp by Dutch officials on recommendation by the UNHCR. In the second case, they are guaranteed legal residence status whereby asylum seekers have to await (sometimes lengthy) asylum procedures. Asylum seekers who achieve refugee status will already have been in the Netherlands for some time in contrast to invited refugees who receive residence permits almost immediately after arrival.

Thirdly, the demographic characteristics of the invited refugees differ from those of other asylum seekers. In the context of the resettlement programme, vulnerable groups in particular are also invited, such as single women with or without children and people with medical problems. This is why they have special protection needs. Asylum seekers who come to the Netherlands on their own are on the other hand more often single men and self-sufficient to a level enabling them to undertake the journey to the Netherlands. Fourthly, invited refugees are received and supported differently from other asylum seekers in the Netherlands.

Resettlement in the European context

The Netherlands shares experiences within Europe and works closely both with Member States that apply resettlement policies and Member States that do not yet have such policies. It has transpired in the last two years that a number of European Member States and international organisations have been studying with interest the Dutch resettlement programme and the method by which implementation by the various parties such as the COA and the IND is given shape and content. The cooperation between these parties, the NGOs and the local communities is seen as a good example of how the resettlement policy can actually be implemented.

1.2. The measures undertaken by the Member State so far

A. Asylum procedure

Regarding the asylum policy, the international obligations entered into by the Netherlands, in particular, the Geneva Convention on Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) are and remain definitive. Within that international legal framework exists a certain (limited) space for regulating the influx and efflux of asylum seekers to and from the Netherlands.

The Vw 2000 came into effect on 1 April 2001. The Vw 2000 has two central objectives that relate to the asylum procedure: shorter procedures and a better quality of decision in the first instance. Shorter and better procedures should lead to shorter relief periods, shorter periods of uncertainty for asylum seekers as to whether they will be staying or returning, an earlier departure from the Netherlands or earlier participation in Dutch society and more social support from negative decisions.

The Vw 2000 has been evaluated by the Scheltema Commission. The Commission has noted that the AC procedure and the post AC procedure have moved too far apart. The carefulness of the decisions in the AC procedure must be increased and the length of the asylum procedure after the AC must be reduced according to the Scheltema Commission. The following has been laid down by the coalition agreement: “the procedure for admission under the new Aliens Act is being improved (partly in the light of recommendations from the Scheltema Commission) and speeded up and in particular, the rule of the 48-hour procedure is being improved so that this can if necessary be extended in order to avoid delay.” This measure is currently being worked out in the coalition agreement.

Two projects have been financed from the 2007 portion of the ERF: “Geographical Support for Resettlement Research” by the IND (improving origin analysis by having available a geographical information system during the interview procedure) and the “Centre for Asylum Seekers with Psychiatric Problems” from ASKV/Regional Refugee Centre (centre for early warning of psychiatric problems in asylum seekers).

B. Reception

The influx of large numbers of Tamil asylum seekers in 1983 and 1984 required a specific reception instrument (the incidental contributory scheme for the reception of Tamils (IBOT) and the rules on the reception of Tamils (RvvT)). The Tamils are received based on these rules.

In the Netherlands, the “first” asylum seekers up to 1987 were able to claim benefits under the Social Assistance Act and were often housed with the help of volunteers and the Dutch Refugee Council. The Government’s influence was therefore limited to financial aid.

In 1994, the COA became responsible for the material and immaterial reception of asylum seekers following the introduction of the COA Act. The “Regulation on the provisions for asylum seekers and other categories of aliens” (Rva 2005) that fits in with the Vw 2000 determines who is entitled to reception. The European Directive establishing the minimum norms for the reception of asylum seekers⁷ also applies.

Recent developments

The new reception model was implemented in 2005. This means that the reception and support of asylum seekers are divided into the phase of the asylum procedure in which the asylum seeker is. The asylum seeker will remain in the orientation phase as long as he has not yet received a decision from the IND. Asylum seekers whose asylum applications have been refused by the IND will enter the return phase. Asylum seekers who receive a permit will enter the integration phase. This new reception model also provided for the placement of asylum seekers into orientation/integration centres and pre-return centres. By the entry into force of the rules (see below), the prospect for many asylum seekers in the pre-return centres has however changed from return to the country of origin to residence (and thus integration) in the Netherlands. For a detailed explanation of the new reception model, please refer to the ERF multi-annual programme for 2005-2007⁸.

On 8 December 2005 the then Minister for Immigration and Integration reported to the Lower House⁹ that repeat applicants would be entitled to reception from 1 January 2006. The term “repeat applicants” means: “asylum seekers who submit a second or subsequent asylum application and whose request is not refused in the Application Centre (AC) but is examined further as to eligibility”. The objective is providing for all asylum seekers residing legally in the country who are undergoing the asylum procedures including any appeal procedure.

The Lower House agreed to a revised model for the reception of single underage aliens at the end of 2005. Based on this model, the COA provides reception for all single underage aliens except for the youngest group placed by Nidos in foster homes. Nidos maintains custody over all single underage aliens.

⁷ Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003

⁸ paragraph 3.1.1

⁹ Parliamentary paper “Lower House, meeting year 2005-2006, 19 637 No. 991”

With effect 1 January 2008, a two-year pilot scheme started with the objective of offering additional protection and intensive assistance to single underage aliens whom it is believed could become potential victims of trafficking/smuggling based on individual risk profiles and whom it is believed may subsequently vanish from the centre.

The Rule on Settlement of the old Aliens Act's Estate Scheme ("the Rule") came into effect on 15 June 2007. This means that aliens who applied for asylum before the Vw 2000 came into effect, in this case, before 1 April 2001 may be eligible for residence in the Netherlands subject to conditions. This means that the future prospects of many asylum seekers change from returning to their countries of origin to remaining in the Netherlands. About 14,000 people from this group are currently in COA reception centres. The intention is for these persons to be housed in the municipalities before the end of 2009. This means the occupancy level in COA centres will be reduced to about 10,000 persons.

ERF projects

In recent years, Dutch organisations have carried out various projects in the area of receiving refugees that were financed by the European Refugee Fund. One of the projects related to improving the safety of women and girls in reception centres and has among other things led to physical adjustment in reception facilities but also to the adjustment of procedures and protocols. Projects have also been carried out regarding how asylum seekers (particularly children) spend their time. The National Foundation for the Promotion of Happiness has organised activities to increase the resistance and creativity of asylum seekers' children.

C. Integration

During the last cabinet period, a new naturalisation system was introduced with the aim of increasing knowledge of the Dutch language and culture among migrants.

Local authorities play a key role in this. They can themselves offer naturalisation facilities such as social support. Just like other migrants, refugees must be integrated according to the Civic Integration Act.

The current cabinet introduced the "Integration Master Plan" on taking up office in 2007. This Master Plan provides among other things, personal solutions for candidates for naturalisation, a wide range of naturalisation programmes for local authorities and the medium of participation as an instrument for naturalisation. The intention is for 80% of naturalisation projects to have a dual character by 2011, meaning that they are linked to projects aimed at corporate or employment integration or the progression to professional training. Bearing in mind most naturalised persons are women (80% in some cities), the Integration Master Plan also seeks possibilities for flexible childcare.

The quality of the naturalisation can be further improved by the use of language coaches. These are volunteers who familiarise the candidates for naturalisation with Dutch society during this course. This promotes active participation, practices language skills and mutual understanding and knowledge about each other's culture. The cabinet supports this by providing funds to local authorities that set up language coach projects on a local level.

The Dutch Government has in recent years taken specific measures to facilitate the entry of refugees onto the employment market. Agreements have for example been made with the Centre for Work and Income (CWI) to mediate regarding the evaluation of international diplomas and with the recognition of refugees' previously acquired skills. Furthermore, better trained refugees are offered better opportunities such as being able to take a higher examination than the naturalisation test and following (additional) courses while maintaining supplementary benefits. In the past, several projects aimed at helping refugees find work were subsidised by the ERF. Projects by, for example, the Foundation for Refugee Students have been subsidised with the objective of promoting the advancement of refugee students to highly qualified work in the technical sector and making it easier for refugee physicians to find work in the Dutch health care sector. The Dutch Refugee Council, Stichting Emplooi, the Foundation for Refugee Students and the Centre for Work and Income started the Banenoffensive project in 2006 with a subsidy from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the ERF among others. A total of 1,521 refugees were helped to find employment via this project by the end of 2007.

The consolidation of corporate involvement among non-western women, i.e., also refugee women is one of the priorities of the integration agenda for Local and Central Government. Refugee women are often oriented to living exclusively in their own circles and are socially isolated. For example, only 10 to 15% of women from Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia are employed. A lack of knowledge of Dutch and/or a lack of the necessary work qualification often alienates them from the employment market. Various initiatives and projects have recently been carried out in order to increase the involvement of non-western migrant women in the employment market; and to stimulate their emancipation. As well as the possibility of taking part in the dual courses for their naturalisation, they are stimulated to take part in accessible activities and volunteer work. The organisation SOMVAO (Somali association for Amsterdam and the surrounding areas) actively got a large number of Somali and Ethiopian women involved in literacy courses via ERF subsidies. The organisation Civiq has set up active local networks in four municipalities in the context of ERF II for promoting the more frequent participation by refugees in volunteer organisations.

An agreement was concluded with six municipalities in March 2007 for the project *Duizend en één kracht; vrouwen en vrijwillige inzet* [*the strength of a thousand and one; effort by women and volunteers*]. This project envisages the influx of 50,000 migrant women, including also refugee women in voluntary work, the interculturalisation of volunteer organisations and strengthening of the chain of naturalisation, corporate integration and paid work. The project is currently underway as *pilots* in six municipalities.

This cabinet is implementing a wide programme for prevention and tackling honour-related violence. Too many refugee women (and sometimes men) are involved with cultural-based forms of honour-related and domestic violence. This is not always adequately acted upon by the police and emergency services due to unfamiliarity with the subject matter. The Government has changed this. Within the foreseeable future, victims all over the country will be able to count on their complaints of violence being treated based on their specific needs. Organisations and communities from groups where honour-related violence traditionally occurs including some refugee communities carry out an active and participating role in the programme.

The Minister for Residents, Neighbourhoods and Integration together with four umbrella organisations including a representative of Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland (VON) [an umbrella self help organisation for refugees] has also made agreements on the development and implementation of a multi-annual programme aimed at increasing the resistance of ethnic communities, e.g., by raising awareness and changing mentalities, self-sufficiency and cooperating with authorities.

VON used the funds from ERF II in 2005 to carry out a successful project aimed at preventing and tackling violence by changing mentalities in refugee communities of Iraqi, Kurdish, Afghan, Palestinian and Romany descent¹⁰.

The approach to female gender mutilation (FGM) is coordinated by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. ERF funds among others were used to carry out the project "Network of key figures and regional female circumcision contacts" from Pharos, a Dutch knowledge centre for refugees and health and which was aimed at the Somali community.

Preventing and tackling polarisation and radicalisation has become an important subject in the Netherlands since 2004 and since 2007, the Dutch Government has been working from a renewed policy framework aimed particularly at local governments. Ties with society are strengthened by promoting the corporate and economic emancipation and participation of non-western migrants and tackling school drop-out, discrimination and educational problems.

Organisations, institutions and municipalities can submit proposals from Autumn 2006 if this is conducive to interethnic contact and meeting other people. The Minister for Residents, Neighbourhoods and Integration has set up a subsidy rule entitled *Ruimte voor Contact [room for contact]* for the improved use of school, sports and neighbourhood accommodation for this aim. Various local organisations have received subsidies in the context of these rules in order to promote contact between refugees and natives on a local level. A subsidy can also be requested for one-off activities promoting integration of ethnic groups into Dutch society in the context of the *Stimulation rules on initiatives from third parties regarding the integration of ethnic groups*.

D. Resettlement

In the last thirty years, the situation – with the exception of 1999-2004 was such that specific measures were taken for receiving, supporting and housing invited refugees. The COA offers a language and orientation programme in the asylum centre in Amersfoort. The COA also provides a three-day orientation programme before the refugees come to the Netherlands. Due to the system of municipal terms of reference, invited refugees (and also other status holders) are always housed in various parts of the Netherlands. Invited refugees are placed with the municipalities in groups of 15 to 20 persons where language and orientation programmes are continued within the normal naturalisation processes. The Integration Master Plan came into effect into 2007. It mainly concentrates on improving the quality of naturalisation and simplification of the rules.

The offer of naturalisation fits in better with differences in training levels and learning abilities or others via offering dual courses (learning and working). A local authority is obliged to offer a programme geared to the person concerned to every refugee who is admitted. There are also various projects from the Government or NGOs – some specifically

¹⁰ VON: Project "Preventing and tackling violence against refugee women" 2006

for (invited refugees) that concentrate on improving aliens' education and chances of finding employment.

Resettlement in the European context

The COA has initiated a project whereby the Czech Republic, Belgium and Romania gain experience with the Dutch resettlement model and whereby it will be introduced in this policy area and the chosen work method. The experience gained could possibly be used for the future implementation of the resettlement policy in one of the Member States named. This project has already aroused the interest of other Member States in order to take part in a subsequent project with the Netherlands.

On 25 January 2008, a letter was signed alongside the JHA Council in Ljubljana, Slovenia on initiative from the Secretary of State for Justice by the six European countries (Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland, Finland and the Netherlands) that have resettlement programmes. This includes the intention to cooperate more within Europe and to also involve the other Member States with the UNHCR resettlement programme. The Dutch Secretary of State for Justice travelled in April 2008 together with her Luxembourg colleague and a senior Belgian official on a joint mission to Thailand.

1.3. The total national resources allocated

A. Asylum procedure

The following amounts (in EUR million) were included in the 2008 National Budget for 2007 up to 2012 in policy article 15.1 (aliens' rights of residence):

2007: €205,644 million
2008: €186,957 million
2009: €162,961 million
2010: €146,416 million
2011: €140,893 million
2012: €140,521 million

These are total amounts for a wider group (i.e., both asylum seekers and those submitting an application for normal admission) than the ERF target group.

These monies are spent in the context of the operational objective of issuing a decision to aliens applying for a residence permit or a request for naturalisation within the time limits set for this. Players with a role in this are as well as the IND, among other things, the foreign nationals divisions in the district courts and the Administrative Law Division of the Council of State, municipalities, the Advisory Committee on Aliens' Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international players such as the UNCHR. Within the context of the current laws and rules, the emphasis in 2008 for realizing this operational objective is on the following activities: Revamping the IND, harmonisation, international cooperation and implementation of European Directives, improving the asylum procedure, improving the normal procedure, the Rule on Settlement of the old Aliens Act's Estate Scheme ("the Rule"), invited refugees and the Netherlands Nationality Act.

B. Reception

The following amounts (in EUR million) have been spent on the reception of asylum seekers over the last five years¹¹.

2002:	€1,016 million
2003:	€ 992 million
2004:	€746 million
2005:	€614 million
2006:	€495 million

The figures below were included in the budget for 2007 up to 2010 or the reception of asylum seekers¹².

2007:	€487 million
2008:	€400 million
2009:	€264 million
2010:	€192 million

It can be concluded from the above that the budgets available for the reception of asylum seekers in a period of 10 years has declined enormously. The reason for this is in the reduction of the number of asylum seekers that are to be received (see also table 1).

C. Integration

1. Integration of minorities

x €1,000	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Obligations:	461 159	483 324	478 061	443 990	442 131	442 131
including commitments by way of guarantee						
Expenditure:	461 159	483 324	478 061	443 990	442 131	442 131
including legal obligations		414 406	253 414	57 431	55 432	54 432
Programme:	461 159	483 324	478 061	443 990	442 131	442 131
Naturalisation and ethnic minorities	380 939	397 416	397 273	366 635	366 295	366 295
Facilitating naturalisation	380 939	397 416	397 273	366 635	366.295	366 295
Including irrelevant expenditure loan facility	27 074	27 074	27 074	27 074	27 074	27 074
Reducing the economic, social and cultural gap	80 220	85 908	80 788	77 355	75 836	75 836
Facilitating re-migration	33 343	36 406	36 414	36 431	36 432	36 432
Other instruments	46 877	49 502	44 374	40 924	39 404	39 404
Receipts:	2 349	7 142	11 723	16 320	20 404	24 464
Including irrelevant expenditure loan facility	1 895	6 688	11 269	15 866	19 950	24 010

These funds refer to the specific budget for integration policy in the Netherlands from the Minister for Residents, Neighbourhoods and Integration. Specific amounts for the refugee policy are unknown. The amounts in the budgets for the specialist ministers involved in integration such as the Minister for Social Affairs and Employment and the Minister for Education, Culture and Science are not stated.

¹¹ Source: Central Government annual reports from 2002 to 2006

¹² Source: National budget 2008, policy article 15.2

D. Resettlement

See information under A. Asylum procedures and B. Reception. No specific amounts are known for invited refugees.

2. ANALYSIS OF REQUIREMENTS IN THE MEMBER STATE

2.1. The requirements in the Member State in relation to the baseline situation

A. Asylum procedure

Work is currently being done on the measure in the coalition agreement with reference to the asylum procedure. This will determine the needs of the Netherlands.

The quality of the asylum decision in the first instance, speeding up all aspects of the procedure and avoiding legal action (including repeating moves) have continuous attention.

Furthermore, the needs of the Netherlands are determined by the completion before the end of 2010 of a joint European asylum system whereby the effort is aimed at the completion of a uniform asylum procedure and a uniform asylum status that should apply to all types of asylum protection. As well as harmonisation of rules, further harmonisation is also emphatically important to asylum practice.

B. Reception

A lot has already been regulated in the area of the reception of asylum seekers as shown in the previous chapter. There are no special points of consideration in the context of the general reception of asylum seekers. The group of asylum seekers to be received is very diverse in composition and each person has his specific needs. Measures that take account of the individual are a welcome supplement to the more general measures. The group of asylum seekers to be received also includes persons requiring more special consideration. These vulnerable groups, including (single) children and parents need specific activities and projects increasing this group's quality of life.

There is also a continuous need for increasing the support among local communities regarding asylum seekers staying in asylum centres in their municipalities.

Finally, there is a need for increasing the knowledge and skills of the asylum seekers while staying in the Netherlands taking account of the uncertainty of the outcome of the procedure.

C. Integration

Many policies have been developed in the Netherlands regarding the integration of migrant groups and their children including refugees in Dutch society. In order to be able to actually implement the policy, there is a need for concrete applicable methodologies to promote refugees' integration. These methodologies can in practice be performed by organisations that are busy with integration of refugees such as municipalities, refugee self help organisations, NGOs, etc. There is a particular need for methodologies that concentrate on the following points.

1. Increasing employment among refugees
2. Getting more refugees into education
3. Increasing refugees' knowledge of the Dutch language and society
- Reducing the social and cultural gap between admitted refugees and native Dutch nationals
5. Increasing refugees' self sufficiency and resistance

There is also always need to stimulate more social contact between the native population and non-western migrant groups, including refugees. This increases mutual understanding for each other's culture and way of life and refugees can extend their social network.

D. Resettlement

1. Intensifying and improving the Dutch resettlement policy where necessary. As described above, the Netherlands has already given its interpretation to the resettlement policy by the manner in which missions are organised, the cooperation between ministries and other parties, etc. There should however be the possibility within the ERF to carry out projects aimed at all actions described under article 3, paragraph 5 of the Council Decision of 6 June 2007. It cannot be ruled out that regarding the policy as is currently applied and described here that improvements are necessary in practice or due to environmental factors. There must also be room to exist for innovative ideas in this area. This will offer space to the field and also the services formally charged with carrying out the resettlement policy in order to develop improvements or innovative activities.
2. Providing information to invited refugees regarding the Netherlands and the resettlement procedure. It has been shown in practice that invited refugees do not always have realistic expectations of the Netherlands. The experience is that refugees who are selected during missions and have followed the orientation programme prior to their arrival in the Netherlands are better prepared for their arrival and have more realistic expectations of the Netherlands. The possibility is left open for innovative ideas for extending and/or improving this programme although it functions well.
3. Improving the reception facilities for invited refugees where necessary, both in the asylum centre in Amersfoort and in the municipalities following placement. A lot has already been achieved here also for the invited refugees, particularly in Amersfoort. This does not change the fact that improvement must be possible in the context of the European Refugee Fund. This therefore enables more and better cooperation with refugee self help organisations in order to thus use the experience of refugees who themselves also came to the Netherlands under the resettlement policy.
4. Integrating invited refugees. This gives special consideration to vulnerable groups such as people with medical problems and traumatised persons, single women and children.
5. Stimulating more Member States to apply resettlement policies. Allowing Member States to gain knowledge of the resettlement policy applied in the Netherlands
6. Possible intensification of cooperation with Member States that already have resettlement programmes and sharing "best practices"

2.2. The operational objectives of the Member State to meet its requirements

The objectives in the light of the needs stated for this are:

A. Asylum procedure

- Carrying out the measure in the coalition agreement regarding speeding up and improving the asylum procedure. The concrete actions for improving and speeding up the asylum procedure will be announced in time by letter to the Lower House.
- Consolidating practical cooperation between European Union Member States in the context of further reaching harmonisation of asylum practice. Practical cooperation can enable knowledge to be shared and improve the quality of the decision process. Practice can also bring the joint European asylum system closer. This will highlight any differences between Member States and better assessment will be possible as to whether and if so how these differences can be solved. Practical cooperation also contributes to trust among the EU Member States.

B. Reception

- Taking more account of individual needs in caring for refugees
- Realising specific activities and projects that improve the quality of life for vulnerable groups including (single) children and parents
- Specific consideration for protecting and supporting single underage aliens
- Further working out of the Directive on Minimum Norms for granting temporary protection in case of mass influx of displaced persons (see also article 45, paragraph 6 Vw 2000 and Rva, article 3, paragraph i).
- Increasing the knowledge and skills of the asylum seekers while staying in the Netherlands taking account of the uncertainty of the outcome of the procedure
- Increasing local support for the reception of asylum seekers

C. Integration

- Developing methodologies leading to an increase in employment among refugees
- Developing methodologies aimed at getting more refugees on educational courses
- Developing methodologies increasing refugees' knowledge of the Dutch language and society
- Developing activities to reduce the social and cultural gap between refugees and native Dutch by increasing their joint social and cultural participation and also increasing intercultural dialogue
- Developing methodologies aimed at increasing refugees' self sufficiency and resistance, more specifically, stimulating emancipation and empowerment of refugees, women and young people.

D. Resettlement

1. Improving and intensifying the resettlement programme and its implementation

2. Improving information for refugees in the Netherlands and in the refugee camps
3. Providing assistance to traumatised refugees and preferably in cooperation with refugee self help organisations, developing programmes for promoting expertise in professionals in normal help and care institutions
4. Improving the reception of invited refugees in the asylum centre and in the municipalities.
5. Improving the integration and naturalisation of invited refugees and in particular, stimulating and activating vulnerable groups. Activities should preferably concentrate on the Dutch language and getting refugees on educational and employment courses. These projects can be developed in cooperation with refugee self help organisations (particularly those who themselves originally arrived in the Netherlands as invited refugees).
6. Stimulating European Member States to introduce resettlement policies. Improving cooperation in this area, both with Member States with resettlement policies and Member States, which do not (yet) have them

3. STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES

Priority 1. Applying the principles and measures formulated in the Community acquis in the area of asylum, including those referring to integration objectives

The Netherlands is adopting the specific priorities from the Strategic Guidelines for the period 2008-2013. This means that projects aimed at the following specific priorities can be considered for a contribution of up to 75% from the ERF.

- Measures for taking account of the special needs of vulnerable persons, in particular, single underage persons and, more particularly, measures for improving definitions and procedures applied by Member States for identifying vulnerable asylum seekers and for adequately anticipating their needs
- Measures for improving the recognition of persons requiring international protection and/or dealing with their requests at the border, particularly in the form of developing specific training courses

A. Asylum procedures

Actions:

- Measures aimed at facilitating (parts of) the asylum procedure whereby the asylum procedure progresses quickly and carefully; special examples are measures in the context of proposals presented in due course for improving and speeding up the asylum procedure
- Measures in the area of quality and decisions on asylum in the first instance, speeding up all aspects of the procedure and avoiding legal actions
- Measures aimed at uniform explanation and application of the above-mentioned European legislative instruments
- Activities to increase capacity for collecting, analysing and distributing statistics on asylum procedures
- Activities for increasing the capacity for assessing asylum applications including appeal procedures

- Activities for increasing services to asylum seekers

Indicators:

- Number of measures implemented to reduce the average lead time for asylum procedures
- The extent to which the asylum procedure is speeded up
- Number of (justified) complaints to the IND on asylum applications
- Number of developed methodologies aimed at uniform application of laws and regulations on individual asylum issues in continuation of this: number of methods aimed at exchanging information and experience between asylum staff
- The number of methods or projects whereby the capacity for collecting statistics on asylum procedures is increased
- The extent to which the capacity for assessing asylum applications is increased
- Number of activities or methods aimed at improving the service to asylum seekers
- The extent to which services to asylum seekers are improved

Measures in this area must fit in with the context of the (future) proposals for improving and speeding up the asylum procedure.

B. Reception

Actions:

- Activities in the area of minimum norms for the reception of asylum seekers (Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003)
- Setting up projects and plans for the further working out of the Directive on Minimum Norms for granting temporary protection in case of mass influx of displaced persons (see also article 45, paragraph 6 Vw 2000 and Rva, article 3, paragraph i)
- Projects for increasing the knowledge and skills of the asylum seekers while staying in the Netherlands taking account of the uncertainty of the outcome of the procedure
- Projects for introducing software packages in the Open Learning Centres (OLCs) such as those in the asylum centres with the aim of improving and/or re-establishing contact in the country of origin
- Projects aimed at increasing local support for the reception of asylum seekers
- Projects aimed at facilities for vulnerable groups. Also the Directive laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in the Member States (Council Directive 2003/9/EC) stipulates that the Member States must take account of the specific situation of vulnerable people such as: underage persons, unaccompanied underage persons, disabled persons, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with underage children and persons who have undergone torture, have been raped or have been exposed to other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.
 - (Subsequent) projects aimed at security, self-sufficiency and welfare (such as facilities for disabled persons and expression projects for children)
 - Projects aimed at organising sporting activities or other sensible ways of spending time with the aim of increasing children's resistance and independence and tackling hospitalisation

- Projects aimed at limiting the specific risks (such as drowning and traffic accidents)
- Projects aimed at medical and/or psychological care
- Other (informative) care, which without being in conflict with the Dutch reception policy can contribute to the quality of life during the reception period
- Other (informative) care, which without being in conflict with the Dutch reception policy can contribute to the quality of life during the reception period

Indicators:

- Efficient plan for further development of the Directive on temporary protection
- Number of people who have taken part in projects in the areas of knowledge acquisition and learning skills
- Number of people who have successfully completed the “course” (end exam pass rate)
- Better supply of “courses”
- Number of software packages developed
- Number of people using the software packages
- Quantity and diversity of the information
- Number of informative meetings
- The extent to which the local support for the reception of asylum seekers has improved
- The number of projects regarding vulnerable groups
- Number of people who have taken part in the projects
- The extent to which asylum seekers’ safety, self-sufficiency and welfare have improved
- The extent to which asylum seekers’ medical and/or physical wellbeing has improved
- The extent to which the appreciation of how (children of) asylum seekers spend their time has increased

It cannot yet be stated for 2008 where the emphasis will lie regarding projects to be subsidised given the effects of various policy intentions that will be put into effect during 2008. It is expected that the emphasis for 2009 will be aimed at children’s reception facilities. The emphasis for 2010 will be on overall adjustments and improvements in the reception facilities. Furthermore, this indication does not mean that projects that will be submitted on other priority areas as stated above will not be eligible for subsidy.

Integration

The following three sub-objectives will be set in the context of the European Refugee Fund:

- 1a Participation as an instrument for naturalisation
- 1b Intercultural dialogue on a local or neighbourhood level aimed at sustainable contacts
- 1c Stimulating empowerment and promoting emancipation whereby refugees can make better use of the supply in the areas of work, education, housing and care.

These sub-priorities are developed separately. In the Dutch situation, projects that fall under these sub-priorities are given precedence if the plan development and implementation involves cooperation between refugee interest groups refugee self help organisations and normal authorities (among others: Municipalities, CWI, GGZ [mental health care organisation] Jeugdzorg [youth health care organisation, etc.]

Sub-priority 1a: Participation as an instrument for naturalisation

The new Integration Master Plan aims at improving the quality of naturalisation programmes. By developing targeted methodologies for refugees that increase the chances of passing naturalisation tests and that improve the *output* of the naturalisation programmes in terms of actual knowledge of the Dutch language and society, refugees can (soon) actively take part in society. This fits in with the current cabinet's intention.

In particular, in accordance with this sub-priority, actions will be eligible for financing regarding:

- The development of more customised dual character naturalisation programmes for refugees as described in paragraph 1.2 and the carrying out of pilot projects in this area. Women and young people require special consideration here.
- The development of specific *language coach* programmes aimed at refugees and the carrying out of pilot projects in this area. In these programmes, a language coach supports an individual candidate for naturalisation in learning and practicing Dutch by undertaking, for example, sporting or cultural activities together. It is expected that women will benefit from this in particular.

Objectives:

- The development of more and better customised dual character naturalisation programmes for refugees; increasing the chance of passing naturalisation tests and improving the *output* of naturalisation programmes
- Developing more and better *language coach* programmes specifically aimed at refugees, if possible, based on "good practices" and using material already developed in the area of language coaches

Indicators:

- The number of naturalisation programmes customised for refugees and implemented pilot projects in this area and the extent to which the effectiveness of these programmes increases
- The number of language coach programmes developed specifically for refugees and implemented pilot projects in this area and the extent to which the effectiveness of these programmes increases

Sub-priority 1b: Intercultural dialogue on a local or neighbourhood level aimed at sustainable contacts

Integration takes place locally. Special consideration is required for less privileged areas in municipal regions. Further to the current cabinet's *Krachtwijken* ("power neighbourhoods") *action plan* and the existing subsidy rules *Ruimte voor Contact* and *the incentive arrangement for initiatives from third parties regarding integration of ethnic groups*, there are also initiatives on a local or neighbourhood level that promote social cohesion by way of sustainable community activities and are particularly eligible for a contribution from the ERF. These include:

- breaking through generalisations regarding refugees and between various population groups (“we-them-attitude”);
- facilitating the acceptance of Islam as a religion and reducing negative impressions of Muslims within refugee groups in society.

Examples of shared interests and concerns based on which joint activities can take place are children’s school performances and extra-curricular activities, promotion of physical and mental health, neighbourhood safety, recreational facilities in the neighbourhood, a clean environment, *etc.* There is a preference for actions with a coordinating character in several neighbourhoods whereby both local governments and corporate institutions such as businesses, residents’ organisations, refugee self help organisations and housing corporations are involved.

Objectives:

- *Reducing the social and cultural gap between refugees and natives*
- Stimulating intercultural dialogue and interaction at local/neighbourhood level with refugees ((self help) organisations)
- Providing methodologies and/or pilot projects aimed at sustainable joint activities from refugees and natives

Indicators:

- Number of developed methodologies and projects aimed at promoting contacts between refugees and Dutch society; the extent to which these contacts increase and improve and the extent to which sustainability of these contacts increase
- Number of meetings at local/neighbourhood level between natives and refugees ((self help) organisations)

Sub-priority 1c: Stimulating empowerment and promoting emancipation

The aim of actions under this sub-priority are:

- (1) creating improved affinity with the needs/wishes of (higher trained) refugees in the field of work, education, housing, care, art and culture and a number of normal authorities and institutions in these areas;
- (2) preventing phenomena such as honour-related violence, polarisation and radicalisation from getting a chance to take root in Dutch society.

Objectives:

- More women and young people taking part in self help organisations
- More refugees taking part in administration and organisations in the corporate and cultural centrefield
- Increasing willingness among refugees to report domestic, honour-related and sexual violence
- More refugees knowing the way to authorities for care and emergency services
- More (higher educated and older) refugees taking part in education and employment
- Increased knowledge and expertise from professionals at normal authorities for treating trauma and/or psychosomatic complaints in the case of refugees and thus also improving accessibility of these institutions for refugee groups
- Emancipating refugee men and boys
- Opening up homosexuality for discussion among refugees

Indicators:

- Number of methodologies developed aimed at management training among refugee women and boys
- Number of methodologies and pilot projects developed with the aim of getting refugees involved in the administration of organisations
- Number of methodologies and pilot projects developed aimed at consolidating the resistance and personal development of potential victims of domestic, honour-related and sexual violence
- Number of programmes and pilot projects developed for guiding particularly women and young people among refugees more efficiently towards the respective authorities in case of care and emergency issues
- Number of programmes aimed at further development of talents of (higher trained and older) refugees and at progression to educational and work opportunity courses
- Number of programmes and pilot projects developed aimed at promoting expertise at professional authorities for care and assistance services
- Number of methodologies and pilot projects aimed at emancipating refugee men and boys
- Number of methodologies and pilot projects aimed at opening up homosexuality for discussion among refugees

Priority 2. Development of reference instruments and evaluation methods to test and improve the quality of the procedures for handling requests for international protection and consolidate the administrative structures and thus absorb the consequences of the more intensive practical cooperation with other Member States

Examples of this are:

- measures aimed at joint information gathering and sharing information with other Member States, for example, regarding countries of origin;
- measures aimed at developing instruments for improving the quality of the procedure for handling asylum requests;
- measures for facilitating the (more intensive) practical cooperation with other Member States;
- measures aimed at qualitative research into asylum systems in the Member States of the European Union.

Indicators:

- Number of measures aimed at joint information gathering and sharing information, for example on countries of origin and the extent to which international information gathering on countries of origin increases
- Number of measures taken aimed at developing instruments for improving the quality of the asylum procedure and the effectiveness of these instruments
- Number of measures aimed at facilitating the practical cooperation with other Member States and the extent to which international practical cooperation increases
- Amount of qualitative research into the asylum systems in the EU Member States and the number of “best practices” formulated

The Netherlands is adopting the specific priorities from the Strategic Guidelines for 2008-2013. This means that projects aimed at the following specific priorities can be considered for a contribution of up to 75% from the ERF.

- Measures enabling the carrying out of an independent evaluation of the operation of the asylum system and establishing how efficient it can be made
- Developing instruments that should lead to more consistent national decision making on applying the *acquis* such as a legal database that is available for all parties concerned
- Measures for increasing the capacity of national asylum services to cooperate with asylum services of other Member States, in particular when this involves collecting, analysing and assessing information on countries or regions of origin with a view to exchanging this with other Member States

In determining the priorities of the Netherlands, it is important that the Vw 2000 has already been evaluated by the Aliens Act 2000 Evaluation Commission (Scheltema Commission) and that a legal database is already available for all parties concerned.

The measures for improving and speeding up the asylum procedure as stated in the coalition agreement will in particular be put into effect in the period 2008-2010. Improving and speeding up the asylum procedure and the asylum decision are also under constant consideration and the harmonisation of asylum practice in an EU context is a constant activity so that it cannot be stated in which years specific measures are planned.

Priority 3. Measures leading to a more shared responsibility between the Member States and third countries

1. (Innovative) projects for improving the resettlement programme and their implementation fitting in with the policy framework and the policy as applied
2. Projects for improving or intensifying the information issued to invited refugees both in the Netherlands and in the refugee camps
3. Projects aimed at assistance to traumatised refugees and developing programmes for promoting expertise in professionals at normal help and care institutions
4. (Innovative) projects for improving the reception of invited refugees
5. Projects for social integration and corporate participation of invited refugees, particularly aimed at acquiring language skills, getting refugees on educational courses, into employment and health and assistance courses and meeting with Dutch nationals and creating networks
6. Projects for stimulating cooperation between European countries and sharing best practices for example, by organising congresses

Indicators:

1. Number of innovative projects for improving the resettlement programme
2. Number of invited refugees taking part in courses in which they are prepared for their arrival in the Netherlands or that inform themselves individually; the extent to which invited refugees are prepared for their arrival in the Netherlands
3. Number of invited refugees who take part in projects aimed at assistance to traumatised refugees and the extent to which their well-being increases and also the number of programmes for promoting the expertise of professionals at help and care institutions and the extent to which the expertise of professionals increases
4. Number of invited refugees taking part in programmes for improving reception and the extent to which the reception better fits in with the needs of the invited refugees

5. Number of invited refugees taking part in projects for social integration and corporate participation and the extent to which the social integration and corporate participation improve

6. Number of congresses that are organised and aimed at better cooperation within Europe and sharing knowledge, experience and best practices, number of countries with which joint ventures have been started and the extent to which existing cooperation is intensified

Activities not carried out by the services formally responsible for this must be carried out in cooperation with or on agreement with these services. This excludes integration activities that take place after refugees have been placed with the municipalities from the asylum centre in Amersfoort.

4. COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS

An indication of how this strategy is compatible with other regional, national and Community instruments

General

The strategy as explained under the three above-mentioned priorities agrees with and complements the relevant policy, laws and regulations on a national and Community level. The Responsible Authority and the strategic partners (chapter 5) continually guarantee this agreement and complementarity and together have the necessary knowledge to fulfil this task. The target group of this fund is accurately described in this strategy and screened off from that of the European Integration Fund (EIF) (chapter 4.5) The responsible authorities for the ERF and other departments with a view of other Community funds of importance at national, Community or regional level sit in the annual additional Steering Committee (chapter 5) to guarantee the division and complementarity between the ERF and other Community funds. Representatives from the Ministry of Justice involved in implementing the ERF also participate in the policy committee and in the National Thematic Network of Equal.

The Responsible Authority is also primarily responsible for developing and implementing the policy regarding asylum procedures, reception and resettlement in the Netherlands and guarantees the testing of this strategy in accordance with this. Structural consultation and consultation with strategic partners in the field ensures further guarantee of the agreement with the policy and regulations on an executive level.

The available funds will particularly be used for innovative and/or additional activities of the competent authorities from the field. In all cases, the activities for which ERF funds are used must fit in with the Multi-annual Programme and the Annual Programme. The activities and measures that are noted as eligible for subsidy must of course not be in conflict with the State Policy.

Below are, per priority and if applicable, further details stated in the area of complementarity.

4.1. Priority 1. Application of the principles and measures that are formulated in the Community acquis in the area of asylum

Asylum procedures

- The projects must fit in with the planned changes in the asylum procedure in the context of the coalition agreement.

- It is important that the activities and measures are undertaken in cooperation with the asylum authorities.
- Activities and measures must have added value for the asylum procedure. In the special measures for promoting a fast and careful asylum procedure, progressive harmonisation in the area of asylum and the practical cooperation with other Member States fit in with the ERF.

Integration

- Project proposals must fit in with the integration policy applied. Projects that receive subsidies from the ERF can request residual financing from for example, the existing subsidy rules Ruimte voor Contact and the Stimulation Rules Initiatives from third parties regarding integration of ethnic groups. The costs subsidised by the Directorate of Naturalisation and Integration cannot be submitted to the ERF for subsidy.

4.2. Priority 2. Development of reference instruments and evaluation methods to test and improve the quality of the procedures for handling requests for international protection and consolidate the administrative structures and thus absorb the consequences of the more intensive practical cooperation with other Member States

- It must be borne in mind that the Vw 2000 has already been evaluated by the Alien Act 2000 Evaluation Commission (Scheltema Commission) and that a legal database is already available for all parties involved.

4.3. Priority 3. Measures leading to a more shared responsibility between the Member States and third countries

- All activities with the exception of integration activities must, as far as this concerns activities that are not carried out by the services designated to do so, be carried out in cooperation with or on consultation with these services.

4.4 Complementarity regarding the target group of the European Integration Fund

There is a strict division between the target group for the European Refugee Fund and the target group for the European Integration Fund.

The following categories form the ERF target group:

- a) Third country nationals or stateless persons with the status described in the Geneva Convention and who are permitted to remain in one of the Member States as refugees (in the Netherlands, persons with refugee status based on article 29(1)(a) of the Vw);
- b) Third country nationals or stateless persons enjoying a form of subsidiary protection in the sense of Council Directive 2004/83/EC (in the Netherlands, persons with refugee status based on article 29(1)(b) of the Vw);
- c) Third country nationals or stateless persons who have submitted a request for one of the types of protection stated under a) and b);
- d) Third country nationals or stateless persons falling under the rule regarding temporary protection in the sense of Council Directive 2001/55/EC;
- e) Third country nationals or stateless persons who are being or who were resettled in a Member State.

The EIF is aimed at third country nationals without citizenship of the Netherlands or another EU Member State in the sense of article 17, paragraph 1 of the EU Treaty and who have or are eligible for a valid residence permit in the Netherlands, including third country nationals on third country territory and that come under the Civic Integration Abroad Act, in accordance with article 1, paragraph 2 of the Council Decision of the European Integration Fund (2007/435/EC). The categories from a to e are excluded from the EIF as they are covered by the ERF.

The division between the EIF and the ERF is also guaranteed by the fact that a representative from the Directorate of Naturalisation and Integration is part of the ERF Steering Committee (See also chapter 5.2).

This and other information on the demarcation between the EIF and the ERF is available for project organisations on the Dutch website of the European Migration Fund, www.justitie.nl/europesemigratiefondsen (see chapter 5).

5. FIXED AMOUNT FOR RESETTLEMENT

In the 2008-2011 policy framework for invited refugees is mentioned a quota of 2000 refugees, i.e. an average of 500 refugees to be invited every year during this period. In the resettlement policy, there is special attention for specific vulnerable groups, for example people with serious medical problems or single women with or without children. It is the experience that about 25-35% of the resettled refugees belong to the four specific vulnerable groups. For each of the specific groups, it will be as follows:

About 1-5% of the resettled persons will be from a country or region designated for the implementation of Regional Protection Programme

About 1-10% will be an unaccompanied minor

About 10-25% will be children or women at risk

About 5-15% will be persons with serious medical needs

Part of the selection takes place by missions (about 4 or 5 every year) and the other refugees are selected on the basis of dossiers provided by UNHCR. Also, there is resettlement of urgent cases.

In 2008, the Netherlands receive a fixed amount of € 580.000,- for 145 refugees of the specific vulnerable groups. Most important for the invited refugees is to fulfil the need of protection. The vulnerable groups have specific needs for protection, which are provided for them in the Netherlands. There is a special policy for unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands. Refugees with medical problems will be invited if the medical treatment they need, cannot be provided in the country of residence and if treatment leads to a better health situation.

For 2009 - 2011, the expectation is also to resettle yearly 145 persons of the specific groups. Of course there is a possibility that the fixed amount requested in the future will differ from this figure. The policy in the Netherlands regarding resettlement could change, so that more or less refugees would be resettled. It is also possible that more or less refugees that will be resettled turn out to belong to one of the categories that count for the fixed amount. This could also be caused by a possible change in the future of the selection criteria

6. FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Projects will mainly be selected according to an open call for submitting subsidy requests (*call for proposals*). If there is a *de jure* monopoly position by a Government authority, the

choice can be made for the Responsible Authority to act as the executing body. In practice, this can only be the case with certain tasks by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service and the Central Reception Organisation for Asylum Seekers.

Projects that come under the specific intrinsic priorities as described in chapter 3 can be eligible for a contribution of up to 75% from the ERF. The Responsible Authority is empowered per case to determine whether such a project can be considered for a higher percentage contribution from the ERF. In weighing up whether a project can be considered for a bigger contribution, the responsible authority takes account of the following factors:

- a) Innovative content and added value of the project regarding existing national policy
- b) Applicability of the project or its outcome as a model of *best practice* in other countries, particularly within the EU

A generally determining factor in the Responsible Authority's determination to allocate more co-financing from the Fund of more than 50% that is partly separate from the individual qualities of a subsidy application is the relationship between the number and the quality of the total annual subsidy applications. Indeed any increase in the contribution of the EC means a slight distribution of the available funds for that year.

If the person submitting an application that falls under one of the stated specific priorities wishes to be considered for higher percentage contribution from the ERF, this should be expressly stated in the application and it must be explained whether the project fulfils one or more of these factors. The project organisation must also state what the consequences will be for carrying out the results of the project if the Responsible Authority decides to allocate no more than 50% subsidy from the ERF. Further guidelines for project organisations will, on preparing the appeal be published on the Dutch website of the European Migration Funds.

6.1. The publication of the programme

- The multi-annual programme is published on the website www.justitie.nl/europesemigratiefondsen. This website also contains general information on the ERF and all relevant documents such as application forms, the strategic guidelines and suchlike can be downloaded.
- Calls issued for the submission of subsidy applications will be published in the Government Gazette. In the announcement of the call for the submission of subsidy applications, reference is made to the ERF website.
- A mailshot will be sent to those concerned with a reference to the website as soon as the opening date of the call for the submission of subsidy applications is clear.

6.2. The approach chosen to implement the principle of partnership

In the Netherlands, there is a steering committee for the European Refugee Fund consisting of representatives from:

- the Directorate of Aliens Policy and the Ministry of Justice Directorate of International and European Affairs;
- the Directorate of Naturalisation and Integration from the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Order and the Environment;
- the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment;
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and
- the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport.

The most important task of the ERF Steering Committee is advising the Responsible Authority in selecting subsidy applications. In the context of the open appeal for the submission of subsidy applications, the Steering Committee in principle meets once a year in

order to formulate advice for the selection. If projects are to be included in a certain annual programme, the Steering Committee will be asked to provide written advice on this.

The strategic partnership is formed in the Netherlands by the ERF Steering Committee plus the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and the Central Reception Organisation for Asylum Seekers (COA). These two organisations form important ERF subsidisers and also play an important role in implementing the asylum policy.

In the context of the strategic partnership, the following among others will be coordinated:

The (draft) multi-annual programme

The (draft) annual programmes

The (draft) strategic guidelines

The (draft) evaluations, etc.

The introduction to this chapter already states that certain IND and COA tasks involve a *de jure* monopoly position of a government authority. In particular, the IND and the COA will be requested to define possible actions when preparing the annual programme in the context of the “call for interest”. The Responsible Authority will decide whether to include these actions in the annual programme following advice from the ERF Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee members can if they wish also consult the organisations in the area in which they if they have contact in the context of their policy areas.

This multi-annual programme has been coordinated with all members of the strategic partnership.

The Responsible Authority heads up the strategic partnership.

7. INDICATIVE FINANCING PLAN

7.1 Community contribution

7.1.1. Table

Multi-annual programme — Draft financial plan							
Table 1: Community contribution							
Member State: the Netherlands							
Fund: European Refugee Fund							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Priority 1: [...]	1 643 656,89	2 111 565,45	2 111 565,45	2 533 072,08	2 533 072,08	3 132 634,32	14 065 566,27
Priority 2: [...]	169 973,46	218 228,85	218 228,85	261 444,24	261 444,24	322 914,96	1 452 234,60
Priority 3: [...]	627 906,68	806 855,70	806 855,70	968 443,68	968 443,68	1 198 290,72	5 376 796,16
Subtotal	2 441 537,03	3 136 650,00	3 136 650,00	3 762 960,00	3 762 960,00	4 653 840,00	20 894 597,03
Technical assistance	216 029,67	268 350,00	268 350,00	188 040,00	188 040,00	225 160,00	1 353 969,67
Subtotal	2 657 566,70	3 405 000,00	3 405 000,00	3 951 000,00	3 951 000,00	4 879 000,00	22 248 566,70
Other activities	580 000,00	580 000,00	580 000,00	580 000,00	580 000,00	580 000,00	3 480 000,00
TOTAL	€3 237 566,70	€3 985 000,00	€3 985 000,00	€4 531 000,00	€4 531 000,00	€5 459 000,00	€25 728 566,70

7.1.2. Comments on the figures/trends

Foreseen is that the fixed amount for resettlement will be € 580.000,- for each year, so € 3.480.000,- for the whole programming period. Of course there is a possibility that the fixed amount requested in the future will differ from this figure. The policy in the Netherlands regarding resettlement could change, so that more or less refugees would be resettled. It is also possible that more or less refugees that will be resettled turn out to belong to one of the categories that count for the fixed amount. This could also be caused by a possible change in the future of the selection criteria.

7.2 Overall financing plan

7.2.1. Table

Multi-annual programme — Draft financial plan							
Table 2: Overall financing plan							
Member State: the Netherlands							
Fund: European Refugee Fund							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Community contribution*	2 441 537,03	3 136 650,00	3 136 650,00	3 762 960,00	3 762 960,00	4 653 840,00	20 894 597,03
Public co-financing	1 600 000,00	1 800 000,00	2 000 000,00	2 700 000,00	2 300 000,00	2 600 000,00	13 000 000,00
Private co-financing	500 000,00	500 000,00	500 000,00	500 000,00	500 000,00	500 000,00	3 000 000,00
TOTAL	4 541 537,03	5 436 650,00	5 636 650,00	6 962 960,00	6 562 960,00	7 753 840,00	36 894 597,03
% Community contribution	0.54	0.58	0.56	0.54	0.57	0.60	0.57

* excluding technical assistance and the fixed amount for resettlement

7.2.2. Comments on the figures/trends

The Community contribution is higher than 50% because it is expected that projects are also financed that come under specific priorities.

[Signature of person responsible]

