

Lecture Series
Development Policy
XXVII
Focal Area: Refugees

Katharina Stamm

Referentin Migrationsrecht

Diakonie Deutschland , Berlin

im Evangelischen Werk für Diakonie und
Entwicklung e.V.

**The role of civil society,
welfare organizations and
churches in the
German Refugee
Reception System**

Overview

- I. What is the current situation in Germany? In the EU? In the main transit countries?
- II. The role of civil society, welfare organizations and churches
- III. What is Diakonie doing?
- IV. Examples of actions

I. What is the current situation in Germany? In the EU? In the main transit countries?

Current situation in Germany in 2015

- Numbers of asylum seekers/Applications in 2015

 - 476.000 asylum application have been lodged in Germany in 2015

 - 1.1 million asylum seekers have registered in Germany in the same period

- It is unclear how many of the registered asylum seekers are double registered or left the country, meaning that the number of 1.1 million could be too high.

- P: there is a huge backlog of asylum seekers who did not have the possibility to lodge an application yet (approx. 700.000) and also a backlog of approx. 350.000 asylum seekers who applied for a asylum and are waiting for their first interview or first instance decision.

I. What is the current situation in Germany? In the EU? In the main transit countries?

Situation in the EU

- European governments continue not to offer enough safe and legal ways for protection-seekers to reach EU territory. As a consequence, in 2015 more than a million refugees had to make the life-threatening passage over sea, resulting in ca. 3.700 men, women and children dying in the Central Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea.
- E.g. Hungary, Poland and Slovakia are even reluctant to join the European Quota for relocation of 120.000 refugees from Italy and Greece, are only accepting christian refugees
- Difficult situation: It is up to Germany and Austria to keep the Balkan route open, fences are built alongside the route, this endangers EU free movement area
- The coalition of the willing is crumbling (new EU members like Croatia and Slovenia are not capable to host refugees transiting their country)

I. What is the current situation in Germany? In the EU? In the main transit countries?

Situation in the main transit countries

- Turkey has still some 2.5-3 million refugees, Lebanon 1.1, Jordan 600.000, food shortage, P: access to labour market, education
- Visa requirements for Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan – copies of EU's strict Visa-Regime, there are even push-backs from Turkey border reported
- UNHCR is expected to be underfunded by 2.7 billion Dollar in 2016
- Still 80% of the world refugee population are located in developing countries

II. The role of civil society, welfare organizations and churches

- **Amazing volunteering in supporting refugees 2014/2015, best integration tool: personal contact to the host community via volunteers**
- **Civil society organizations provide free legal aid, accomodation, language courses**
- **More staff is employed for coordinating voluntary work for refugees**
- **Churches and church related welfare organizations play a vital role in nearly every local „Willkommensinitiative“**
- **Approx. 1.2 million volunteers within church structures, at least 10 % are involved in refugee support, i.e. 150.000**

III. What is Diakonie doing?

In brief:

- Diakonie has nationwide more than 500 offers for asylum seekers and persons who are only tolerated. It is about in particular advice to the asylum procedures, psychosocial Counseling and psychotherapy as well as the refugee social work in the municipalities. Diakonie runs on a local level shelters for unaccompanied minors and different accomodation services. Diakonie runs more than half of the psychosocial centers for refugees of all organizations nationwide. Diakonie has more than 600 migration advise services for persons with permanent residence status.
- In its political work Diakonie advocates for greater protection as well as improving the living conditions of refugees, a particular with regard to their housing, health care and conditions of social participation.
- The political lobbying takes places at local, federal and at European level, even though 80 % state funding.

III. What is Diakonie doing?

With its organizations and facilities, Diaconia Germany has decades of experience in refugee welfare work. Its **refugee services primarily consist of advice centers**: Diaconia has over 500 programs across the country for asylum-seekers and people who allowed to remain in the country only on a temporary basis (*Duldung*). These centers concentrate mainly on giving impartial advice on the asylum procedure and social questions, psychosocial counseling and psychotherapy as well as social work with refugees in the local communities. With a total of 14 locations, **Diaconia is in charge of more than half the psychosocial centers for refugees** of all German welfare associations. Other areas include the clearing procedure for unaccompanied refugee minors, accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers and accommodation referral offices, not to speak of the community and project activities of specialist migration services. In addition, Diaconia staff coordinates the large number of volunteers. According to the latest estimates, **3000–5000 staff members are concerned with refugee work in church-related and diaconal services** and about 150.000 volunteers. In the last few months, millions of euros in church funds have been allocated to create additional positions in the field of refugee welfare. Good coordination by staff is needed to make the most of the assistance offered by volunteers.

IV. Examples of policy actions of Diakonie in th EU

- Fact finding visit of Diakonie Präsident Lilie, Prelate Dutzmann and Bishop of Berlin and Brandenburg Dröge in Greece, Serbia, Macedonia and Italy in September 2015, Parliamentary Evening February 2016

<http://www.diakonie.de/fluechtlinge-nicht-abschrecken-sondern-versorgen-registrieren-16524.html>

http://www.diakonie.de/media/PM_72-15_Refugees_Should_Be_Aided_english.PDF

- Memorandum of German civil society organizations for one free choice under the Dublin regulation („health check“ by EU Comission this year) <http://www.diakonie.de/systemwechsel-dringend-erforderlich-fuer-fluechtlinge-16334.html>
- Vienna Declaration of 15th January 2016 of Central European ECRE Members - <http://ecre.org/component/content/article/70-weekly-bulletin-articles/1346-central-european-refugee-assisting-organizations-criticize-european-response-to-the-refugee-crisis.html>

The work of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development EWDE

- **An assignment for three: working with refugees.**

Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Diakonie Deutschland work for refugees and migrants under the umbrella of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development.

- [Download \(PDF, 3.8 MB\)](#)

- **A joint call to Europe in the reception crisis: Protect people, not borders**

Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Diakonie Deutschland have compiled the following joint standards and guidelines that the EU member states and the EU itself should observe when taking immediate, medium and long-term action.

- [Download \(PDF, 287 kB\)](#)

Thank you!

Katharina Stamm

Migrationsspezifische Rechtsfragen und Internationale Migration

Zentrum Migration und Soziales

Diakonie Deutschland – Evangelischer Bundesverband

Caroline-Michaelis-Straße 11

10115 Berlin

Telefon: 030 – 65211 - 1639

E-Mail: katharina.stamm@diakonie.de