The HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform gGmbH is a non-profit organization. It promotes transparency and participation to solve societal challenges. To this end, it supports an improved exchange between politics, businesses and civil society and develops governance concepts and projects for sustainable and welfare-oriented solutions with the participation of as many perspectives as possible.

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INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN EUROPE AS A JOINT MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Concept by Gesine Schwan

Reception and Integration of refugees as an opportunity for human enrichment, economic recovery and the mitigation of demographic changes
The need for a new approach

The growing Euroscepticism, the lack of solidarity among member states, and the large number of migrants dying while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea show the urgent need for the EU to pursue a common asylum and refugee policy that is in line with its European values.

The EU could make a positive new start by turning the reception of refugees into an opportunity for human enrichment, economic recovery and mitigation of demographic changes.

The project “Integration of refugees in Europe as a joint municipal development” aims at decentralizing the reception and integration of refugees by providing the municipalities, who already take on the main task of integration, new leeway and resources through additional funding for municipal development. Building on municipalities which are willing to receive and integrate refugees, relocation should be voluntary with both municipalities and refugees’ interests respected in the process.

1. The creation of a European integration and development fund consisting of:
   - Direct EU financing of municipalities and cities for reception and integration of refugees
   - Same amount of funding for investments into municipal development
   - Financing in the form of a grant and a duration of at least five-years
   - Simplified application procedures including an anti-corruption strategy

2. A decentralized voluntary refugee relocation & resettlement including:
   - Voluntary participation of municipalities
   - Providing refugees with a choice where to settle
   - Establishing platforms that match municipalities’ needs and offers with refugees’ needs and preferences
   - Enhanced cooperation of (a group of) member states for quicker common asylum procedures and granting entry to those refugees who have been welcomed by their communities

3. A municipal multi-stakeholder governance of refugee integration including:
   - Systematic participation and multi-stakeholder exchange between politics, the business sector and civil society
   - Advisory decisions to voluntarily receive and integrate refugees based on multi-stakeholder governance
   - Development of joint project ideas that meet the needs of refugees and of the receiving communities through the close collaboration of the stakeholders
   - Dissemination of results and best practices to a European wide audience
   - Establishing a network and exchange of municipalities through which other municipalities and cities can learn from the experiences of others