



# **Integration of resettled refugees in small cities: another narrative of the “refugee crisis”**

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# The SHARE network: A focus on small and medium sized cities

- Established in March 2012 and led by ICMC Europe, the SHARE Network provides a platform for mutual exchange and learning amongst local and regional actors working on or considering resettlement, and advocates for more and better resettlement and other complementary pathways in Europe.



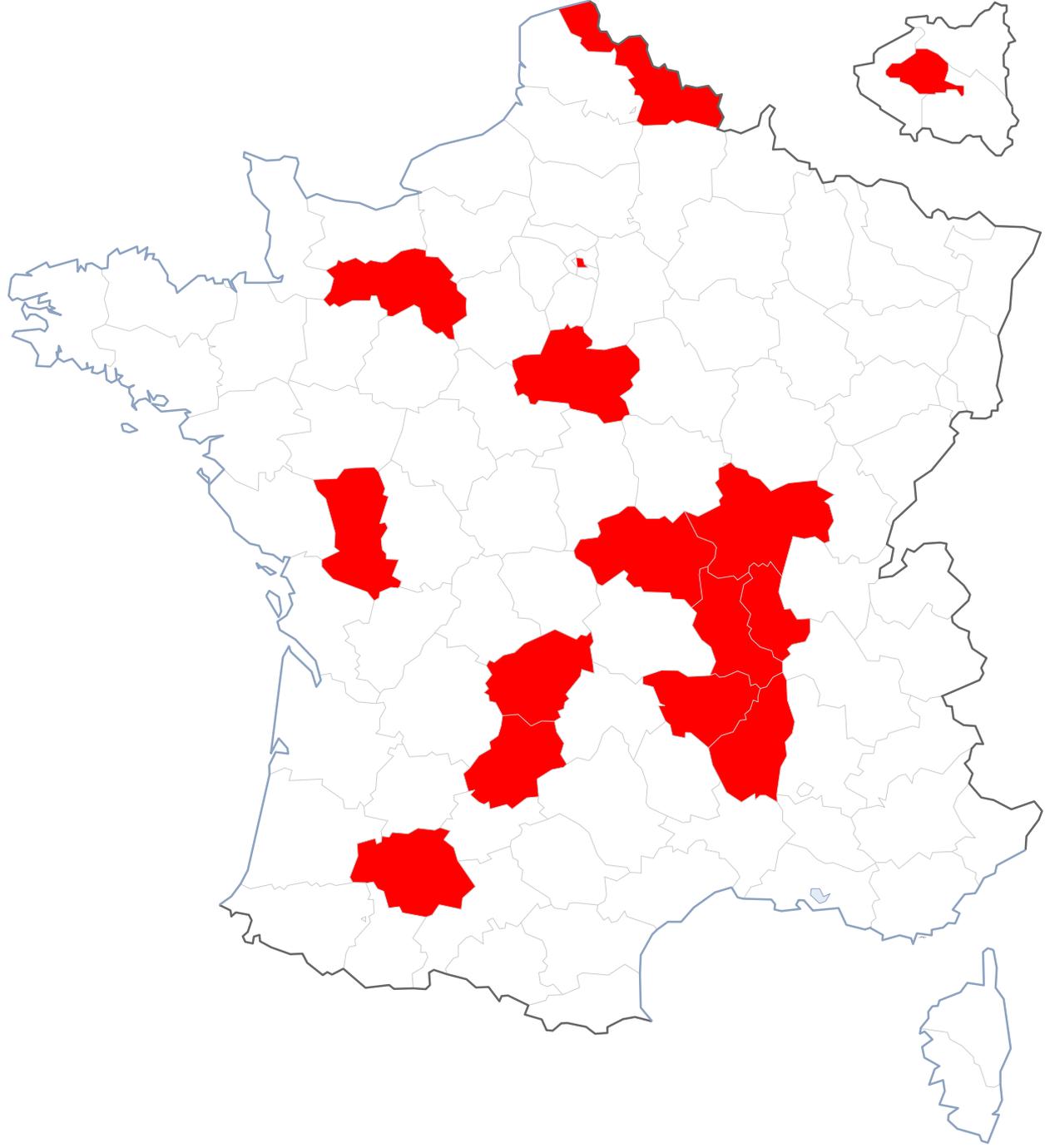
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- Reception and integration of refugees in small and medium sized cities: a growing trend in the EU: lack of tools and resources of local stakeholders.
- France: a case study
  - A new leader of resettlement in the EU
  - Implementation of a new dispersal policy for asylum seekers and refugees in a divided country

## The scope of the study

- Resettlement programmes on the rise since 2015
- Focus on small cities and rural areas
- A qualitative study: more than 40 interviews with national and local authorities, service providers, NGOs, volunteer groups, local representatives and refugees. 14 areas (*départements*) covered including 2 field visits.



# Small cities: lands of opportunities for refugees

- Another perspective on rural areas
  - Local mobility,
  - Health services,
  - Language classes,
  - Access to school,
  - Job opportunities.
  
- Better cooperation among stakeholders and stronger citizen mobilisation
  - State local representatives and local elected representatives
  - Non governmental service providers and volunteer groups

## Long term integration of refugees

- The sustainability of the resettlement programmes in a voluntary system:
  - How many welcoming mayors?
  - Supporting the role of volunteers
  - Secondary movements: too soon to tell but refugees seem to enjoy the quality of life in rural areas
  
- The duration of AMIF funded programmes and the take over by the mainstream social system.
  
- Common challenges for refugees and local communities: mobility, access to services...

# What can we learn from small cities and rural areas?

- For the asylum system and private sponsorship initiatives:
  - Direct placement works better
  - Better matching between the refugee profiles (family composition, qualification, driving licences, languages spoken, health issues...) and opportunities in the territories (housing, health services, jobs, translators...)
  
- For larger cities: towards a new model of integration?
  - The partnership approach among State authorities, local authorities, service providers and charity organisations.
  - The contribution of citizens in the integration pathway
  - Thinking above legal categories of migrants



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