

Federal Ministry of the  
Interior, Building and  
Community

Federal Commissioner for  
Migration, Refugees and  
Integration

Federal Agency for  
Migration and Refugees

Berlin, March 27, 2020

## **Information concerning the current situation with respect to humanitarian admissions and NesT**

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Mentor Group,

First of all, we – the program coordinators for the “Neustart im Team – NesT” (A Team for Starting Over) pilot program – would like to thank you very warmly for your interest and your willingness to take part in this state- and civic-supported pilot project that represents a new approach for Germany, and to support especially vulnerable refugees as they take their first steps in their new home.

This program was officially started in May 2019 with enthusiastic commitment in concert with the newly established Civil Society Liaison office (Zivilgesellschaftliche Kontaktstelle or ZKS) and we are very pleased that some 50 mentor groups from all over Germany are already showing interest in NesT. You, the mentor groups, are at very different stages of your engagement. We are pleased that with the support of the appropriate mentor groups, we have already been able to arrange for the arrival of a total of five families from Jordan and Ethiopia in the fall of 2019 and early 2020.

In view of the very dynamic developments surrounding the worldwide efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to use this letter to inform you about the effects on the humanitarian admission procedures of the German Federal Government – and thus also on NesT. Unfortunately these are not insignificant.

Due to the various reciprocal entry restrictions being imposed both on persons entering Germany and on staff of the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and security agencies seeking to enter the countries of first reception, and due to the temporary suspension of resettlement departures by our most important local partners (UNHCR and IOM), operational implementation of the resettlement processes is unfortunately not possible at the present time. In this context, we also refer to the joint press release issued by UNHCR and IOM on March 17:

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/3/5e7103034/iom-unhcr-announce-temporary-suspension-resettlement-travel-refugees.html>

As a result, we are sad to report that no entries within the context of the NesT program are to be expected until further notice. This situation is unprecedented and it is one that we could never have imagined just two weeks ago. It is especially dramatic for the people who are most directly affected, namely the especially vulnerable refugees who are waiting to come to Germany, but also for you who are in the process of preparing to support these refugees when they arrive in Germany.

Unfortunately, at the moment we cannot predict how long the procedures will have to be suspended and when further NesT entries will once again be possible. At this point, however, we can assure you that we are in close and intensive contact with all relevant partners and are doing everything in our power to resume admissions of especially vulnerable persons as soon as possible. It is clear that the Federal Government will stand by its commitments to implement humanitarian admissions and, by extension, to the NesT pilot project. The current interruption in admissions is due solely to circumstances related to the pandemic, which currently make it impossible to continue the procedures in this year's countries of first asylum (Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Kenya and Niger).

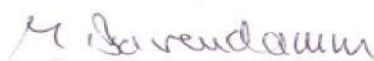
We therefore to ask you not to be discouraged by the resulting delays or existing uncertainties. The ZKS – in close consultation with us – is pleased to continue to support you with any and all of the practical issues you may currently be dealing with in connection with your commitment to NesT. We will try to solve any questions that may arise, in particular in connection with the important topic of housing, in the most pragmatic manner possible.

We are optimistic that together we will master these special challenges facing NesT and that we will ultimately achieve our common goal, namely to enable especially vulnerable refugees to enter Germany and to receive valuable support from you and your group.

We wish you and your families all the very best – and please stay healthy!

Sincerely,

Program Coordinators



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