

16th May 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about calls for the Government to relocate unaccompanied children from Europe.

Throughout the migrant crisis, the Government has continuously adopted a twin-track approach to dealing with the migrant crisis: helping the most vulnerable while not encouraging new perilous crossings to Europe. I understand the strength of feeling when the safety of unaccompanied children is at stake, so I am glad that it has been announced that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will be resettled from Greece, Italy and France following discussions between the Government and Save the Children.

This initiative builds on the announcement that up to 3,000 vulnerable children and family members will be resettled direct from the Middle East and North Africa, and adds to the ongoing resettlement of 20,000 people direct from Syrian refugee communities.

Resettlement will be restricted to children registered before the EU migration agreement with Turkey came into force on 20th March. The retrospective nature of the scheme will avoid creating a perverse incentive for families to entrust their children to people traffickers. It will also mean that the UK can focus on the most vulnerable children already in Europe without encouraging more to make the journey. Those at risk of trafficking or exploitation will be prioritised for resettlement, while existing family reunion routes will be accelerated. It is important to note that this will be separate to any EU-administered resettlement schemes.

There is not a fixed number on arrivals, but instead the Government will work with local authorities across the UK to determine how many children will be resettled. First arrivals are expected before the end of the year. No country has done more than Britain when it comes to helping Syrian refugees and I am glad that now this help will continue.

The Government's initiative responds to the revised amendment to the Immigration Bill put forward by Lord Dubs, which proposes that the Government consults with local authorities before setting out a plan for resettling children from Europe to the UK. The Government has accepted the revised amendment from Lord Dubs.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP

Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma_RDG

**Please reply to: Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
e: alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk w: www.aloksharma.co.uk t: 0118 941 3803**