

News

## European platform 'Refugees Welcome' lands in Catalonia to build a welcoming culture



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Members of the Refugees Welcome platform. Photo: Refugees Welcome International (Facebook).

# Refugees Welcome

Refugees Welcome platform. Image: Refugees Welcome International (Facebook).



Demonstration supporting refugees. Photo: Ilias Bartolini, Flickr.

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 27 representatives from 14 countries gathered to address the challenges faced by countries in the refugees networks.

[Refugees Welcome](#), the international platform sheltering refugees, arrived some weekends ago to **Barcelona** to keep building their welcoming culture. On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 27 representatives from up to 14 countries gathered in the cultural centre [Casal Ca l'Isidret](#) to address the challenges that the countries of the network face regarding refugees hosting in Europe, and to talk about the asylum situation of those countries. The countries and territories belonging to the platform are: Germany, Portugal, the Netherlands, Canada, Northern Ireland, Austria, Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, Australia, Greece, Sweden, Italy and Romania.

People offer their own houses to shelter asylum seekers through this network. This activity is coordinated through **non-profit organisations** that work with the group where shelter is offered. This is the first meeting of the platform members since [the refugee relocation scheme failed on the European Union's part](#): of 160,000 refugees, they only sheltered 28,242.

The platform was launched in Spain for the first time in 2015 in Madrid and Córdoba (Andalusia). Afterwards, in May 2017, it was settled in Barcelona, with the support of the local government and the sheltering initiative [Barcelona Ciutat Refugi](#). Anyone can sign up a vacant room on the webpage and with the platform's help, they can find a suitable way to collect funds for the rent, so as to finance it.

Refugees Welcome focuses on the second stage of the hosting plan: the moment when they have to rebuild their lives and start from scratch in a social environment completely different from their own. In this sense, the platform shouts out to the citizens to offer their houses through a form on the webpage, to shelter refugees and live with them for at least six months. So far, according to Catalan newspaper El Periódico de Catalunya, **1,288 people** have offered their homes in Spain through this platform.

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