

Proposal for the Resettlement in Belgium of Displaced Persons (23 January 1947)

Caption: On 23 January 1947, the Belgian Government, the US military authorities and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees establish a framework for the resettlement in Belgium of displaced persons currently in the American zone in Germany and guarantee them employment in the Belgian coalmines.

Source: Archives Nationales du Luxembourg, Luxembourg. Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Relations internationales. UNRRA, AE 8089.

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Proposal for the Resettlement in Belgium of Displaced Persons now in the American Zone in Germany

I.

This document explains the status and protection guaranteed by the Belgian Government to the individuals concerned and specifies their rights and duties.

The attached contract with the Federation of Coal-Mines is guaranteed by the Belgian Government and insures regular and permanent employment. It specifies the conditions of employment and wages.

II.

Individuals who have never collaborated in any way with the Nazi regime and who are acceptable to representatives of the Belgian Government and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees are offered an immediate opportunity to begin a normal and free life in Belgium.

III.

They will be admitted to Belgium, and may after 90 days be joined by members of their family (wife and minor children). Other dependents may be admitted after individual arrangements with the Belgian Government through the agency of I.G.C.R. All persons so admitted will be encouraged to remain in Belgium and will be given an opportunity to receive Belgian citizenship according to Belgian law.

IV.

Volunteers signing the contract will be transported to the Belgian frontier by the American authorities. They will be permitted to bring with them all their legal belongings.

V.

The Federation of Coal-Mines with the aid of the Belgian Government is responsible for their transportation within Belgium, also their accommodation, feeding and employment.

VI.

The foreign workers will enjoy exactly the same working and living conditions and wages as Belgian workers performing the same job, and will be treated in exactly the same manner. They are free to join the trade-unions of their choice.

VII.

The Belgian Government guarantees to these persons all rights and liberties granted by its law to foreigners permanently established in Belgium.

VIII.

The legal and political protection of individuals accepting the contract will be assumed by I.G.C.R. acting under its mandate in such matters.

IX.

When requested by the worker the Belgian Government guarantees successive renewals of the contract. No amendment to this contract can be made without Governmental approval.

X.

The following conditions govern the return of unsuitable individuals to Germany:

a. Workers who break their contract for reasons other than those specified therein, or who are found unsuitable for underground employment or for employment in any other occupations in Belgium, or who endanger, by their actions or propaganda, the public order or safety in Belgium may be returned to the U.S. Zone of Germany as long as the U.S. Forces are responsible for displaced persons in Germany. U.S. Military authorities will outline their responsibilities for displaced persons under this agreement to whatever authority becomes responsible for displaced persons in Germany and will do all in their power to effectuate the continuation of this agreement.

b. In each case calling for the return of unsuitable individuals to the U.S. Zone, the Belgian Government will notify I.G.C.R. of the circumstances and will give due consideration to any objections presented by I.G.C.R. within a period of 15 days. The Belgian Government will arrange transportation of the individuals from the place of employment or residence in Belgium to an agreed Belgian frontier point, where U.S. authorities will arrange their return to the U.S. Zone of Germany.

c. For each worker so returned, the Belgian Government agrees to accept a substitute.

XI.

After a satisfactory probationary period of ninety days married workers will be permitted to bring their wife and minor children to Belgium. U.S. authorities will arrange transportation to the Belgian frontier of these persons, and of other dependents who may be admitted by the Belgian Government. The Belgian Government will be responsible for insuring that the Federation of Coal-Mines furnishes transportation within Belgium, and provides adequate living quarters for the workers and their families.

XII.

Workers are permitted to cancel the contract as prescribed therein. They may then obtain from the Belgian Government the documents necessary to leave Belgium.

For the I.G.C.R. /s/ John S. Wood
Dep Director, Germany & Austria

For the U.S.F.E.T. /s/ R.E. Neiman
Major, G.S.C.

For the Belgian Government /s/ Franz Vinck



Chef de Cabinet