

# BELCO, BELGIAN CULTURAL ORIENTATION





## DYNAMIC PDF



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Each year, Belgium commits to receiving a quota of refugees with specific reception needs. Fedasil, in collaboration with national and international partners, manages the preparation, travel and reception of refugees who meet the conditions for resettlement in Belgium. These people have fled their country of origin and are being transferred from a country where they have applied for international protection to a third country such as Belgium.

## THE BELCO PROGRAMME

BELCO is the cultural orientation programme developed by Fedasil for refugees who meet the conditions for resettlement in Belgium.

Over four days, groups of 20 to 25 participants receive BELCO training from Fedasil employees during missions to the first country of asylum. This programme takes place after identification by the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) in the first country of asylum and a few weeks before the transfer to Belgium. Participants then have time to assimilate the information and make an informed decision.

The BELCO sessions address ten specific themes and two cross-cutting themes, namely:

### THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

#### BELGIUM IN GENERAL

#### HOUSING

#### EDUCATION

#### EMPLOYMENT

#### FAMILY

#### HEALTH

#### THE COST OF LIVING

#### CULTURE

#### THE JOURNEY TO BELGIUM

#### STANDARDS AND VALUES

#### THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

## A PARTICIPANT-CENTRED APPROACH

The trainer facilitates the learning process and takes care to adapt the training (content, speed, expectations regarding the learning path, etc.) to the participants and their specific needs. Responsibility for learning is given to the participants and the trainer starts from their point of view and their interests. Attention is also drawn to the great heterogeneous nature of the participants (nationality, origin, beliefs, level of education, level of literacy, interests, hopes for the future, various concerns, etc.).

Through group reflection and psycho-education, the BELCO training provides information about the mental processes that resettled refugees may go through when settling in a new country, the culture shock and the adjustments needed to acclimatise to their new environment.

The training focuses on managing people's expectations of their future life in Belgium. In doing so, they are empowered to make an informed and considered decision about their (and their family's) resettlement.

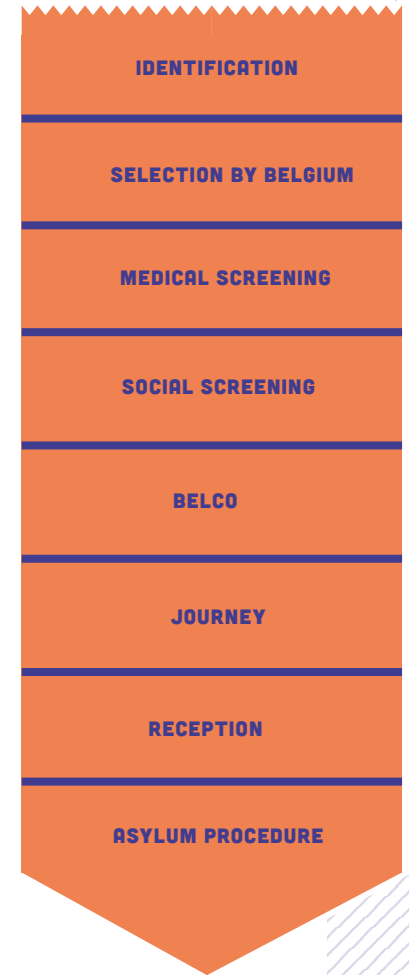
## SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

More than «orienting», BELCO aims to start the adaptation and integration process through the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to ensure the appropriate reception for resettled refugees.

To achieve a successful learning process, the trainers spend time connecting with the participants. They offer short exercises to re-energise and interest the group, as this is also essential to promote cohesion.

The trainer manages to find the right balance between reassuring the participants about the future and preparing them for the «worst case scenario» (e.g. receiving a house they might find too small or too old, waiting lists for medical appointments or courses, a limited budget, a long adaptation or a long language learning process).

After each activity, the trainer takes a moment with the participants to reflect on what was said during the activity and why it was done.



TRAINING STARTS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW AND INTERESTS OF THE RESETTLED PERSONS



THE BELCO TRAINING COURSE LASTS FOUR DAYS



## BELCO TOOLS



BELCO has a range of specific communication tools developed to ensure that resettled people are given the appropriate reception.

A manual



Audio guide



Educational kit



Video





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Resettlement is a programme run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to another State that accepts them as refugees.

Each year, the Belgian government establishes a quota of refugees to be resettled and defines priorities (nationalities, countries of first asylum, specific groups, etc.) on the basis of a joint proposal by Fedasil and the CGRS, which takes into account European priorities.

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