

# Das Ende des Wohnprojekts Model Hostel Welcommon

## Aufkündigung der Finanzierung durch UNHCR und Proteste von Geflüchteten gegen den erzwungenen Auszug

Aus einer Mail von Nikos Chrysogelos vom 26. Februar 2018.

Betreff: Re: welcommon- the day after. An Herbert Nebel, Hilde Schramm u.a.

Dear friends:

Today UNHCR and ADDMA (Municipality of Athens) representatives visited Welcommon to inform our guests about the closure of the hostel and their transfer to rented appartments. As we have already informed you the **two organisations** have decided "*to discontinue the collective accommodation in WELCOMMON starting 01 March 2018, in order to focus on accommodation in apartments, which facilitates independent living. As such, the UNHCR funding to Wind of Renewal through the Project Partnership Agreement between UNHCR and ADDMA, for the implementation of the WELCOMMON project, will be discontinued starting 01 March 2018*". // H. Schr.: aus einer Mail von UNHCR vom 18. Januar 2018//

Of course our guests already knew about the closure. On their own initiative they went on Monday and Wednesday to UNHCR office to protest against it. UNHCR and ADDMA representatives informed Welcommon's guests that the decision of closure is definitive and that their only option is to accept the move to rented appartments, otherwise they will not longer be under the protection of UNHCR, meaning that they will lose the right to accomodation and monthly allowance. There was no clear information about the dates of each transportation or further information about their new accomodation (e.g. address, number of flatmate, social/ medical support etc) but this must the transportation has to be finished until the 15th - 20th of February.

A number of adults (appr. 45 out of 89) declared that they do not want to leave Welcommon and be "thrown to an appartment" according to their words. They insisted that in Welcommon they had the opportunity to restart their life in a community, to come in contact and interact with a lot of people not only from Greece but from all over the world, they were truly supported in their medical and psychosocial issues and that after a long period they finally started to feel safe and empowered.

This is what makes us happy, this is what must make you and all the volunteers happy, too: with your support and help, the community of WELCOMMON is a real participatory hosting and social empowerment project, not only a shelter or an acoomodation project

After the meeting with the UNHCR the guests came to us asking what **they** can do to help the continuation of Welcommon, what we can do together for the continuation of WELCOMMON. They seem unwilling to leave Welcommon easily even if they lose the protection rights. They even said that they do not care if they will be offered food. Their only demand is to continue their life in the small community of WELCOMMON and in close contact, cooperation and interaction with us and the volunteers.

We are trying to explain them that their only option is to move to rented appartments and that it's better no to risk, but their answer is that they are free adults and they will decide for themselves.

We have started and closed a big number of projects in our lives, but the closure of this one will be the most difficult. Maybe because it has to do with persons.

In any case we are looking for alternatives, such as the transformation of Welcommon to a model youth hostel with the participation of a group of refugees and focus more on social and job integration. We will be able to send you more infos on this at the beginning of next week.

Best regards  
Nikos Chrysogelos, Polina Ghioka