

**Sixty-Ninth Session of the Executive Committee of the High
Commissioner's Programme
UNHCR, Geneva, October 1-5
OSCE Statement for the General Debate**

High Commissioner Grandi,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address the Executive Committee this year on behalf of OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, and testify to the OSCE's strong commitment to intensifying our long-standing co-operation with UNHCR. Our decades-long track record shows that we can leverage complementarities and synergies when we join forces.

This is particularly the case as we look forward to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees. We welcome the Compact as a very significant step towards enhancing refugee protection world-wide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE is the largest regional security arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Our goal is to foster co-operation and peace by promoting a comprehensive approach to security. In this context, the Organization has

stepped up its engagement on migration and refugee issues in recent years, including by adopting a Ministerial Council Decision on the OSCE's Role in the Governance of Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees – the first to explicitly address large-scale flows. The OSCE also plays a role in supporting the protection of refugees and migrants. This is highlighted, inter alia, in our commitments related to the conflict cycle. Our niche lies in what we call the “migration-security nexus”.

We are aware that this linkage raises sensitivities. But we are also convinced that we should address this nexus honestly as well as comprehensively if we are serious about countering the dangerous trend towards approaching the complex phenomenon of human mobility exclusively from the perspective of security.

Security certainly encompasses the safety of people on the move. Indeed, this is where the migration-security nexus starts. Humanitarian and legal principles underpinning refugee protection should be upheld at all times. In addition, areas of OSCE focus include: supporting human-rights compliant and co-operative border management; engaging our eleven Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation; countering cross-border crime, starting with combatting human trafficking; fostering effective and sustainable integration; and supporting the exchange of best practices in the area of governing regular migration.

Dear colleagues,

We are not facing a migration crisis, but a *migration-governance crisis*. We need to tackle it by addressing the root causes of mass movements and large-scale displacements, starting with human rights violations and armed conflicts, as well as by leveraging international solidarity towards a more effective response. That is why we look forward to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees as a powerful new governance tool to enhance and improve burden- and responsibility-sharing while reaffirming the legal foundations of refugee protection, as laid out by the 1951 Convention and subsequent international commitments.

We appreciate that the current draft of the Compact recognizes that “refugee movements often have a significant regional or sub-regional dimension” and that regional groupings, such as the OSCE, can “play an important role in comprehensive responses”. We positively note references to areas in which the OSCE has direct responsibility at the regional level, including conflict prevention. The OSCE also welcomes the call for durable solutions, including by focusing on early warning rather than resorting to emergency-driven responses. We appreciate the reference to the question of statelessness. This is an issue of great importance to the OSCE and its Institutions. We have cooperated fruitfully with UNHCR on this issue, including through a joint

Handbook on Statelessness in the OSCE Area, published in 2017, which compiles international standards and good practices.

We believe that the OSCE, as an inclusive intergovernmental platform, with its unique network of field operations stretching across Central Asia, Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe, will continue to be instrumental in addressing conflict-related displacement.

That is why we are fully committed to co-operation with UNHCR on signature initiatives such as the Protection Checklist, which provides guidelines on how to provide for the protection of displaced populations and communities along the conflict cycle. Launched in 2014, the Protection Checklist has rapidly become a must-have capacity-building tool for OSCE field operations and other stakeholders for addressing displacement-related issues on the ground.

Excellencies,

To conclude, we are hopeful that the so-called crisis is finally becoming an opportunity for mobilizing international co-operation and support. As High Commissioner Grandi commented in his opening statement, when adopted, the Compact will be a “powerful expression of multilateralism”. The OSCE is ready to join the momentum and explore ways to strengthen our co-ordination with

UNHCR, including in the new formats of the Global Refugee Forum and the Support Platforms.

Thank you for your attention.