



## EUROPEAN UNION

# OSCE CiO Warsaw Human Dimension Conference Warsaw, 2-13 October 2023

---

## EU statement – Plenary session 8 Humanitarian Issues

---

1. The European Union remains gravely concerned regarding the ongoing human rights and humanitarian impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. For more than nineteen months, Russia has continued its relentless shelling of civilians and civilian infrastructure on a daily basis in various Ukrainian regions. International monitoring mechanisms, including the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry, as well as the relevant reports under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and those of ODIHR, have concluded that Russian authorities have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine. The violations include indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, a widespread and systematic pattern of summary executions, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, and unlawful confinement, as well as inhumane detention conditions, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as forced transfer and unlawful deportation, including of children. Many of these acts amount to war crimes.
2. Russia's political and military leadership, along with those directly responsible for such acts, must not escape accountability for any war crimes and other international crimes committed, including for the crime of aggression.
3. The EU notes with great concern that the number of forcibly displaced persons increased globally, by 19 million last year alone. While strongly condemning any attempts by third countries to instrumentalize migrants for political purposes, the EU is committed to ensure immediate and appropriate response in compliance with EU and international law, including the protection of their fundamental rights.

4. Refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are profoundly more vulnerable, facing gender-based violence, human trafficking and sexual or labour exploitation. A gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach in assistance, support and protection of displaced persons is crucial as the overwhelming majority are women and children, who are especially at risk of abuse of their human rights.
5. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine further caused a significant refugee flow in Europe, with more than 6 million Ukrainians fleeing their country while 5 million Ukrainians have been displaced internally. The EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive, offering quick assistance and a clear legal status to around 4 million Ukrainians. Beyond the immediate support, the EU and its Member States are taking further steps in ensuring that the beneficiaries can effectively access their right to education, healthcare, accommodation and work.
6. EU efforts to protect forcibly displaced persons were complemented by the implementation of the Common Anti-Trafficking Plan to address the risks faced by those fleeing the war. The EU is also reviewing its Anti-Trafficking Directive to adapt to the digitalization of trafficking practices, strengthen the gender- and child-sensitive approach and improve data collection at national level.
7. EU policies are founded on the principles of non-discrimination, proportionality, solidarity and responsibility, non-refoulement, access to justice and the best interest of persons in vulnerable situations as per our shared international obligations. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights reaffirms that fundamental freedoms and human rights are guaranteed equally to all persons residing in EU countries regardless of their status.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.