



73nd SESSION OF THE UNHCR EXCOM

Item 3: GENERAL DEBATE

Statement by MONTENEGRO

Mr. Chair,
Mr. High Commissioner,
Your Excellences,

Montenegro aligns itself with the EU statement.

Regrettably, we are holding this session in the shadow of unprecedented and numerous humanitarian crises. The number of forcibly displaced persons exceeded 100 million. The world is facing great difficulties, instability and fear, a severe food and energy crisis, deterioration of the economic situation and ongoing threat of COVID-19. Such a context requires that all states act towards preventing and ending conflicts and crises, which is also a key step against forced displacement.

We commend UNHCR and its staff for their continued commitment to not leaving persons of concern behind. We welcome the extension of the mandate of the High Commissioner Mr. Filippo Grandi and express our deep appreciation for his work.

Mr. Chair, solidarity, responsibility and burden sharing remain key to providing protection and solutions. Also, due to interconnection of climate changes and armed conflicts with displacement we welcome UNHCR's increased efforts on climate action.

We express our full support for this year's conclusion on mental health and psychosocial support and thank the Rapporteur for his work.

Mr. Chair,

We are facing massive displacement in Europe as a result of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. This aggression against a sovereign state and attempts to annex a part of its territory deserve the strongest and united condemnation as they grossly violate the UN Charter, international law and undermine the rules-based global order. The UN bodies' credible reports document the most serious violations of IHL and human rights that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the latest brutal attacks on civilians and critical civilian infrastructure. As a result, more than 11 million people fled the country, and over 6.2 million became internally displaced persons.

Mr. Chair,

Since the beginning of the war, Montenegro has kept its borders open to refugees from Ukraine. Around 72,000 person from Ukraine, 27,000 of them currently reside in the country, of which about 6,600 have requested international protection. At the beginning of March, the Government adopted the Decision on temporary protection of persons from Ukraine for a period of one year, and established a Coordinating Body for its implementation, which includes a UNHCR representative.

Mr. Chair,

Montenegro remains committed to further improving its capacity to provide protection and sustainable solutions. In achieving these goals, UNHCR, IOM and the EU remain our reliable partners.

Montenegro continued to strengthen its asylum system. In December 2021, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Montenegro and the Director of the EU Asylum Agency signed the Roadmap for cooperation for the period 2022-2023, which is designed to contribute to efficient asylum procedures and an effective reception system.

In addition to efforts to provide durable solutions for refugees, we continued to work on facilitating the regulation of status and the voluntary return or reintegration of IDPs from the ex-Yugoslav countries.

The implementation of the GCR is our shared responsibility. Montenegro is looking forward to continuing its engagement towards its successful implementation, through the realization of its pledges.

When it comes to the elimination of statelessness, Montenegro is proud of the results achieved.

We are grateful to the High Commissioner and UNHCR country office in Podgorica for their continuous support in relation to protection and asylum, regulating the status of IDPs from the ex-Yugoslav countries and achieving our goal of ending statelessness. The Office's support was also instrumental in ensuring comprehensive protection and solutions for Ukrainian refugees. Also, the of UNHCR assistance was greatly appreciated with regard to the national strategic documents and the implementation of GRF and HLS pledges.

Mr. Chair,

Montenegro welcomes the progress made within the UNHCR transformation agenda and underlines that sustainable and stable financial contributions remain key to enabling the fulfillment of its mandate.

Finally, I would like to assure you that Montenegro will do its utmost to continue to be a reliable partner of the UNHCR and to support international efforts towards protection and solutions for persons of concern.

I thank you.