

**Statement by Romania at the 71st reunion of the Executive Committee of High
Commissioner for Refugees Programme
(5 - 9 October 2020)**

*Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,*

Romania fully aligns itself with the EU and Member States statement.

1. Countering the COVID-19 pandemics has occupied the forefront of our activities for the most part of this year, be it from a public health perspective or dealing with the consequences on the socio-economic level. The necessary restrictive measures implemented in order to break the chain of transmission have affected everybody, with even a heavier impact on asylum seekers and refugees.

2. We would like to express our appreciation for the extraordinary efforts the UNHCR has deployed in these months in order to adapt to the pandemic situation and offer all the necessary support for the persons of concern, as well as for the host communities. We would also like to thank the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, for his leadership during these most trying times and his continuous capacity to mobilize and inspire not only UNHCR's staff but also the member states.

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit hard the entire world, with consequences that will have to be dealt with for years to come. Throughout this period, Romania has remained committed to the protection and support of the refugees as an emergent donor, relocation state and promoter of the humanitarian agenda. As member state of the EU, Romania has committed through "Team Europe" to contribute, on the global and multisectoral level, to the efforts of countering the pandemic, with a special attention for the refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless persons.

4. On national level, we have taken very seriously the engagements we assumed through the Global Compact on Refugees, as well as at the Global Refugee Forum and we have continued to offer our support to those that required it. Even though confinement measures and lock downs were put in place, Romania has never completely closed its borders. The necessary measures have been implemented allowing asylum seekers and refugees to continue to apply for and benefit from international protection, while ensuring public health security. The information and communication campaigns on the prevention and safety measures against contagion provided through the refugee's reception centres have been considered by the UNHCR an example of good practices.

5. We are continuing our efforts to implement the pledges we have formulated at the Global Forum, last December, more specifically to increase to 200 the number of refugees that will be relocated to Romania for 2020-2021 from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. We have also continued to do our part in the intra-European relocation system, by accepting in order to be transferred 34 asylum seekers from Malta and Italy this year and initiating the specific administrative agreements with Malta, Cyprus and Greece.

6. Simultaneously, we have continued the expansion of the regional centres for asylum seekers across the country and we will be able to use a total of 1600 places, at this moment being an ongoing project that aims to expand accommodation capacity. In June this year, the Romanian Government, IOM and UNHCR have signed a new Working Agreement for the Emergency Transit Centre for Refugees in the city of Timisoara, document that allows smoother and more efficient approach and response to the refugee's needs. The Centre will have a new home, we hope in the shortest period of time, that will allow us to ensure assistance at even higher standards for those hosted there.

I thank you.