



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Warsaw Human Dimension Conference
“Session 4: Humanitarian Issues II”**

Warsaw, 2 October 2024

Distinguished Chairperson,
Dear Participants,

UNHCR is grateful for the possibility to contribute to today’s session on humanitarian issues and to share with you some observations from the perspective of our specific mandate. The commemoration of World Humanitarian Day on 19 August showed that last year was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers, including UNHCR staff. Tragically, 2024 is on track to be even worse.

As we continue to deliver life-saving assistance and protection, the numbers of forcibly displaced persons are rising: As of May 2024, more than 120 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order.¹ The number of refugees has tripled in the last decade. The rise in overall forced displacement was the twelfth consecutive annual increase and reflects both new and mutating conflicts and a failure to resolve long-standing crises.

The same trend is also visible in the OSCE area: at the end of 2023, more than 24 million persons were forcibly displaced or stateless, an almost five times increase in comparison to 2014. This is a stark reminder of our joint responsibility to protect them.

Despite these negative trends, there are also positive developments: over the past months, UNHCR has again strengthened its collaboration with the OSCE and its autonomous institutions, in particular the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). We would like to highlight two initiatives that merit particular praise:

Firstly, the Academy of Integration, launched in March 2023 by ODIHR, UNHCR, Council of Europe (CoE), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Union of Polish Metropolises, to support Polish municipalities in their remarkable integration efforts of migrants and refugees.²

¹ UNHCR Global Trends 2023, published in June 2024: <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>

The Global Trends report, released annually in June, analyses changes and trends in forcibly displaced populations in the previous calendar year (from 1 January to 31 December). It provides key statistics on the global numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people and stateless people, as well as their main host countries and countries of origin. The figures on this page are based on the Global Trends report.

² See [Support programme for cities to respond to challenges of integrating refugees and migrants launched in Poland | OSCE](#)

Secondly, UNHCR, ODIHR and HCNM have once more bundled efforts to address the phenomenon of statelessness in the OSCE area. A high-level conference on ending statelessness in South-Eastern Europe³ last October showed the remarkable progress that has taken place in the region already. At the Conference, the six participating States pledged to take 14 key actions to end statelessness.

UNHCR also welcomes ODIHR and HCNM as members of the new Global Alliance to End Statelessness, which will officially be launched in Geneva on 14 October 2024. In this context, we would like to invite you the distinguished participants to a joint side event on ending statelessness in the OSCE area in these premises on 8 October.

Thank you.

*UNHCR Liaison Office to the OSCE
and Vienna-based UN Agencies
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³ OSCE-UNHCR Regional Conference on Statelessness in South-Eastern Europe, Skopje, 17 October 2023. More information and outcome document available [here](#).