



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

**Statement by
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**OSCE Review Conference on Human Dimension
Session 11: Humanitarian issues and other commitments I:
Refugees and displaced persons
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Thank you Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I would like to thank for the opportunity to address this session and to brief you on some recent important developments both in my country and at the regional level as well as to share with you some views regarding the OSCE activities in the field of refugees and displaced persons.

With a view of assuring sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons, Croatia actively and decisively implements the Housing Programme for the Returnees-former Tenancy Rights Holders, which is fully realized with the use of financial resources allocated for that purpose in the state budget of Croatia.

On 3 March 2011, the Croatian Government adopted the Decision on the housing care for returnees - former tenancy rights holders outside the Areas of Special State Concern, which re-opens the possibility of submission of respective housing requests within 9 months from its entry into force (9 December 2011). This Decision opens the possibility for the submission of relevant housing requests by persons who have missed the previously envisaged deadlines.

All outstanding benchmarks envisaged in the context of the Housing Programme have been fulfilled and implemented until mid-June 2011. This important achievement has been also confirmed in the context of the closure of EU accession negotiations in Chapter 23- Judiciary and Fundamental Rights.

Croatia remains fully committed to continue with the decisive implementation of the Housing Care Programme, with a view to assure and provide housing solutions to all returnees in need.

Having achieved significant progress in the implementation of the housing care programmes for all categories of refugees and displaced persons, Croatia expects that other

countries in the region will follow this positive practice and develop similar effective projects at their national level.

We welcome that four countries of the region – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia - have agreed upon the Regional Programme on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons, as part of the so-called Sarajevo Process, which focuses on assuring adequate housing solutions for the remaining vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in need.

The Regional Programme is a result of joint efforts of the said four countries and a good example of regional cooperation and an important step towards a durable solution concerning vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in need.

The Programme provides for durable solutions to outstanding issues on the regional aspects of displacement. It confirms the commitment of the countries of the region in pursuing efforts at respective national levels with the view to reach the final resolution of the refugee situations.

It is important to underline that the Programme as well as the preparations for the Donor Conference, envisaged to take place early next year, were facilitated by the UNHCR and supported by international partners, including the OSCE. In this regard, we would like to thank the Organization for its active support and valuable contribution in this framework.

Mr. Chairman,

We consider important to strengthen the OSCE's role in stimulating and facilitating regional cooperation and efforts in the field of assuring durable solutions to refugees and displaced persons.

The cooperation established among the four countries of the region, facilitated by the UNHCR and supported by the international partners, including the OSCE, in the context of the development of the Regional Programme, represents a good example in this respect, confirming the effectiveness of targeted regional cooperation in the context of final resolution of outstanding issues and closure of refugee situations.

In this view, we believe that the OSCE could play important role in promotion and dissemination of established examples of good practices, such as Regional Programme, throughout the OSCE region.

Having in mind that this year we are commemorating 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and 50th anniversary of the Statelessness Convention, we also consider important that the OSCE assumes active role in promoting additional ratification of these instruments and adherence to the respective standards throughout the whole OSCE region.

We firmly support the promotion and mainstreaming of international standards related to refugees and displaced persons in the context of the overall OSCE activities and agenda and we look very much forward to the continued developments in this respect.

Thank you.