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**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1184  
Vienna, 3 May 2018**

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**EU Statement in response to the Addresses by the UNHCR  
Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Mr. Volker  
Türk and IOM Senior Regional Adviser for Europe and  
Central Asia, Mr. Manfred Profazi**

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The European Union is pleased to welcome the two distinguished speakers to the OSCE Permanent Council and thanks them for their statements.

The situation you have just outlined demonstrates that the challenge of human mobility in our century is huge. It is clear that no country can manage this alone. The EU is working closely with a number of affected countries to help deal with refugee flows and support the needs of the significant refugee communities they host. We underline the importance of a comprehensive approach to these issues, as outlined in the New York Declaration, approved two years ago.

The EU is closely cooperating with IOM and UNHCR and we value the partnership with both. Together we have already achieved remarkable results, for example in the framework of the Joint European Union - African Union - United Nations - Task Force. In this context, for example, 15.000 migrants from detention centres in Libya could be brought back to their countries of origin in a safe manner with Assisted Voluntary Returns – made with our assistance, through the IOM. At the same time, a lot remains to be done.

We appreciate the long-standing cooperation between IOM, UNHCR and the OSCE, including on the field level. We believe that the OSCE can in a meaningful way complement the work of your organisations, and OSCE participating States have confirmed this view in the 2016 Hamburg Ministerial Council Decision on the OSCE's role in the governance of large movements of refugees and migrants. We believe that OSCE activities in this field should always be based on value added, non-duplication and should fall in the field of co-operative and multi-dimensional security. The

OSCE's convening power and its nature as a platform for exchange including with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Cooperation can constitute such added value.

The joint OSCE-UNHCR protection check list, the regular OSCE-IOM event in Vienna on the occasion of International Migrants' Day, and the collaboration in the organisation of the Summer School on Migration Studies in Prague are only a few examples of our cooperation. Issues regarding flows of refugees and migrants, better addressing internal displacement, and combatting trafficking in human beings constitute some of the shared interests for our organisations.

There can be little doubt that internally displaced persons are some of the most vulnerable populations who are often deprived of their most basic human rights and fundamental freedoms or become victims of human trafficking. As you mentioned, 2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement'. The EU strongly supports them, and systematically promotes their inclusion into international and national law.

You also mentioned the joint OSCE-UNHCR Protection Checklist, which is a good example of the effective cooperation between OSCE and UNHCR. It has been successfully used by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and has become a practical reference tool for all OSCE field staff who work on displacement issues on a daily basis. In this context, we commend the UNHCR's already long-established collaboration with the SMM also in sharing information and conducting capacity-building activities. We also commend the UNHCR for its advocacy towards the Ukrainian authorities concerning legislation for IDPs. These are only a few examples of your efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to those in need and to respond to protection concerns. We use this opportunity to highlight how much we value UNHCR's constant engagement in eastern Ukraine. We also appreciate UNHCR's efforts to strengthen protection capacity across the South Caucasus, including through its interaction with the established formats – Geneva International Discussions and the OSCE Minsk Group.

The EU and its Member States continue to support the UNHCR 10-year campaign to end statelessness by 2024. We acknowledge the importance of identifying stateless

persons globally and strengthening their protection thus allowing them to enjoy core fundamental rights and reducing the risk of discrimination or unequal treatment.

Besides immediate responses to pressing challenges we also take a broader view on the phenomenon of migration and its root causes. In this context we reiterate our strong commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which unites our global efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, stabilize countries and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind so that people do not feel compelled or are not forced to leave their homes.

In conclusion, we look forward to a continued close cooperation with UNHCR and IOM on tackling issues related to migrants, refugees, statelessness and IDPs.

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

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.