



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Special Session
EU Statement on “Challenges arising from current
migration trends”**

The world is facing the largest scale of forced displacement since World War II. Globally, more than 60 million people - refugees and internally displaced persons - are forcibly displaced because of conflict, violence, and human rights violations. Climate change, natural and man-made disasters, as well as a lack of development possibilities or human security adds to the causes.

This is an enormous challenge. Just over one million migrants and asylum seekers arrived in Europe in 2015 alone, many of them risking their lives to reach Europe's borders, travelling by dangerous and irregular means, facilitated in many cases by criminal smugglers. Many others lost their lives on the way. A substantial number remain unaccounted for.

While much of the international focus is on the migratory and refugee flows reaching European shores, we should keep in mind that many countries in both Africa and Asia are equally, if not more, affected by migratory flows. 86% of the world's refugees live in developing regions, and least developed countries host 25% of the global total. Hence, managing migration is truly a global long-term challenge that we need to address jointly. It requires countries of origin, transit and destination to work together in the spirit of solidarity in order to forge genuine partnerships, and an equitable and balanced responsibility-sharing across the international community.

Forced displacement is a political, human rights, security, developmental and economic challenge, compounded by smuggling, trafficking and exploitation. This calls for a coherent and holistic global approach. We welcome the upcoming UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants in September 2016 as an opportunity for political, developmental and humanitarian actors to

commit to a common framework to guide the actions of the international community. The EU and its Member States are ready to actively engage towards an equitable and balanced responsibility-sharing within the international community.

While it is important to address the ongoing migratory flows in the immediate and short term, it is necessary to address migration also as a long-term challenge and opportunity. To this end, both globally and thus for OSCE participating States, tackling the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement remains paramount. Both perspectives will remain central to the EU's approach, as we deepen our partnerships with third countries on migration. Matching the needs of our partner countries, and utilising the external dimensions of our policies, the new partnerships will aim at tackling the root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration and improve migration management and the fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings. The new partnerships will also assist our partner countries to strengthen and develop their socio-economic climate to dampen the need for migration, increase the countries' capacities, and contribute to the efforts against root causes.

In the past months, the Swiss Chair of the OSCE Informal Working Group dedicated to issues related to migration and refugees has ably taken us through discussions on a wide range of topics related to migration. The process has brought us clarity on ongoing OSCE activities – of the field operations, institutions and Secretariat – and ideas for potentially enhanced future OSCE engagement. The process has highlighted the role of the OSCE as a useful regional platform for dialogue and cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, including with its Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. And with its comprehensive approach to security, the Organization is well-placed to contribute to the global response to the current complex situation, while complementing the efforts undertaken by other international organisations. We see a particular added value of the OSCE in contributing to countering trafficking in human beings and strengthening border management – two areas, where the Organization has built unique expertise. The EU sees it important that human rights are respected and protected also in the context of migration.

Mr. Chair, the unprecedented number of migrants and refugees globally is not a temporary phenomenon. Migration is here to stay. The international community must step up efforts to find common, sustainable and long-term solutions to this global challenge. In this light, we welcome today's discussion.

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, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, 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.