



European Union

Global Compact on Refugees - Second thematic session

Second panel: Supporting States receiving large numbers of refugees

EU Statement

Geneva, 17 October 2017

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

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Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

I share these remarks on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We have actively contributed to and stand behind the New York Declaration. We therefore support the process led by UNHCR to prepare the Global Compact on Refugees. We also thank UNHCR for its leadership in rolling out the unanimously agreed Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). We also recognise the significant efforts made by all host countries integrating refugees into their national systems. We further recall that the New York declaration applies to all States and requires more responsibility sharing across the globe.

We wish to express satisfaction for the organisation of the thematic discussions. We emphasise their inclusive format with active participation of all relevant actors, including the civil society. Our discussions should help identify successful practices which provide the basis for developing the Programme of Action complementing the CRRF.

This second panel is dedicated to supporting States receiving large numbers of refugees.

Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

The EU and its member States have recent experiences in this respect. The European Union is indeed, as such, a regional solidarity arrangement, also for refugee situations. The EU Member States have contributed to alleviating the pressure on Greece and Italy, through assistance but also the relocation of persons in need of international protection.

Simultaneously, to support other countries, we have significantly stepped up our assistance in order to address forced displacement situations more comprehensively. We have adopted in 2016 a new approach to forced displacement that is development-oriented, with a focus on reducing aid-dependence and fostering self-reliance. As UNHCR has at times mentioned, it follows closely the line of thought of the Global Compact on refugees. The EU Member States have also considerably stepped up their resettlement efforts fuelled by the EU initiatives taken in this area, notably through the implementation of the European resettlement scheme of July 2015 and the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016. It is in the same spirit that the European Commission has made a recent proposal to resettle at least 50,000 people in need of international protection over the next two year.

The EU and its Member States recognise that responses, in full respect of international human rights law and international refugee law, should be tailored to the specific contexts. Responses should also be guided by the "do no harm" principle and conflict sensitivity in addition to humanitarian principles.

We know that forced displacement is a complex challenge going beyond humanitarian action. Political, human rights, security, developmental and economic dimensions must all be considered in our response; all actors, including local authorities, civil society, the private sector and diasporas, should be involved from the early stages and throughout a crisis. An enabling environment is

essential. It implies building and maintaining adequate protection space that reduces vulnerabilities and empowers refugees and other displaced populations.

The EU and its Member States consider that the measures outlined in the section "reception and admission" of the CRRF should be taken at the onset of a large movement of refugees by receiving countries. The international community should be ready to co-operate with them as appropriate.

Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

We would recommend considering the following additional tools and elements to enhance implementation of the measures included under the "reception and admission" section of the CRRF.

First, in para 5a) of CRRF, we suggest to refer, in line with UNHCR's "Guidelines on International Protection", to prima facie assessment of protection needs in large-scale situations where individual status determination is deemed impractical or impossible. Such assessment should be performed by the national authorities, by the relevant authority in the country of asylum or by UNHCR acting under its mandate. Appropriate support to strengthen capacity building of competent national authorities in conducting individual status examination should also be considered. We also consider that steps should be taken to ensure the credibility of asylum systems, including through cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination to facilitate the return and readmission of those who do not qualify for international protection.

Also in para 5a), in addition to prevention and response to gender-based violence, we consider advisable to include also prevention and response to all kinds of violence, exploitation and abuse;

In relation to para 5c), common needs assessment frameworks and planning tools should be used in order to establish coherent response priorities for a multitude of actors. In particular, joint humanitarian and development frameworks (JHDF) are a useful tool.

In relation to para 5d), we recommend to scale up the use of biometric registration of refugees and use of databases, in full respect of rights to privacy and protection of personal data. This would allow for interoperability with other national and regional databases and across partners. Similarly, this would support as well as comparisons across regions in full compliance with applicable national legislation on data protection and international obligations related to privacy as applicable. We should also promote the use of unified standards in order to allow for better comparison across regions.

Para 5g) of the CRRF refers to security and protection in general. An objective and evidence based assessment should identify threats and suggest measures to minimise risks, arising for instance from social tensions or exploitation and abuse. Response measures [should also include raising awareness of refugee rights and the existence of] judicial review and redress mechanisms, both with refugees and host institutions and society, as well as strengthening security and justice institutions to effectively would guarantee the protection of refugees and their host communities.

The EU and its Member States consider it important to ensure that refugees, including women and children and other vulnerable groups, participate in identification of needs and decision-making.

Support should also be provided to community based protection initiatives. We should strengthen local responses. We should also avoid encampment wherever possible since it prevents integrated and efficient responses to the benefit of both refugees and host communities. Following registration, access of refugees to the labour market should be provided as appropriate, to boost self-reliance.

We should promote employment and employability of of host populations and refugees where applicable.

We acknowledge that solid evidence, reliable data and comprehensive analysis of refugee situations, including impacts on host communities, are crucial to formulate evidence-based and results-oriented policies.

Thank you, Mr./Ms. Chairperson.