



## HIGHLIGHTS

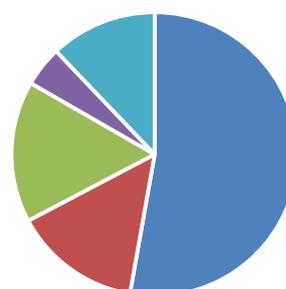
### Population of Concern

By end 2020, there were **13.7 million** persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR within the OSCE area. This number has more than doubled since 2014 (5.2 million).

Population	Total PoC*
Refugees	7,234,995
IDPs	1,985,782
Stateless	626,741
Asylum-seekers	2,209,947
Others	1,657,502
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,714,967</b>

\* Statistics as of December 2020

### UNHCR Persons of Concern in the OSCE region: 13.7 million (end 2020)



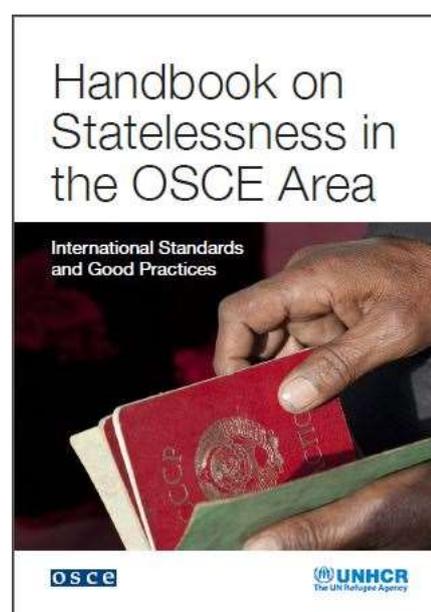
■ Refugees  
■ IDPs  
■ Asylum-seekers  
■ Stateless persons  
■ Other

## WHAT IS UNHCR?

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created by the UN General Assembly in 1950 and began work on 1 January 1951.

Since its founding, the Agency has worked not only to strengthen legal instruments such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, but increasingly has assisted related groups such as asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the stateless, working directly in conflict areas and providing international protection and humanitarian assistance.

Today, a staff of 17,878 people in 132 countries continues to help tens of millions of people.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> for more details.

## UNHCR'S COOPERATION WITH THE OSCE

- In 1998, the OSCE and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on enhancing co-operation. Operational agreements were signed with the OSCE in Kosovo (2011) and Ukraine (2014). In March 2020, an Addendum was signed by the OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi to update the 1998 MoU and to further enhance the longstanding co-operation.
- Since 1998, the two Organizations have co-operated on a wide range of conceptual and operational activities, also in recognition of the link between conflict and displacement. Owing to the increasing complexity of conflicts, as well as post-conflict situations, activities on behalf of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons are relevant to all three OSCE security dimensions.
- Conflict prevention, conflict management and addressing displacement is linked in different ways to the mandates of both Organizations and underlines the need for close co-operation (e.g. Ukraine, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh).

## STRUCTURE OF THE UNHCR LIAISON OFFICE VIENNA (LOV)

- Liaison with the OSCE was initiated by the then UNHCR Regional Office Vienna in 1998, which mainly focused on thematic issues relating to the aftermath of the Bosnian and the emerging Kosovo crises.
- Since 2002, the liaison with the OSCE has been further institutionalized in the form of a Liaison Unit, and as a result of the positive co-operation experience, it also encompassed a broader thematic and geographical basis. In 2007, the Unit was gradually transformed into the Liaison Office Vienna (LOV), with LOV progressively assuming more responsibilities both, in terms of scope of counterparts as well as of thematic coverage.
- Since 2014, LOV is comprised of three staff members, supported by interns, and has become more operational.

## GENERAL ACTIVITIES OF LOV

- LOV's general activities include representing UNHCR's concerns to the OSCE, liaising with the 57 OSCE participating States, its 11 Partners for Co-operation, its Executive Structures such as the Secretariat, the Conflict Prevention Center, the Transnational Threats Department, the SR/Coordinator for Combating THB, ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Border Management Staff College, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and other OSCE field presences. This collaboration has resulted in joint OSCE-UNHCR multiphase projects such as the "[Protection Checklist: Addressing Displacement and Protection of Displaced Populations and Affected Communities along the Conflict Cycle](#)" and the "[Handbook on Statelessness in the OSCE Area: International Standards and Good Practices](#)".
- LOV also collaborates with other Vienna-based Organizations such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

## 2021/2022 PRIORITIES

- Advocacy activities on international protection of UNHCR persons of concern along the conflict cycle, including in protracted conflict situations, and guidance on mixed migration issues such as Mediterranean Sea crossings and the 'Balkan Route'.
- Implementation of the joint OSCE-UNHCR project on statelessness, including practical seminars to promote good practice examples; joint trainings and workshops on the OSCE-UNHCR Protection Checklist for OSCE field staff.
- Dissemination of information and provision of expertise in OSCE fora on issues of UNHCR's persons of concern, incl. trafficking in human beings, climate change and disaster displacement, integration, combating racism, xenophobia, and hate crimes.
- Co-moderation of Working Group II on humanitarian issues within the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and co-operation with the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre on early warning, conflict resolution, and contingency planning.
- Continued cooperation with the OSCE at HQ and field level in Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia on issues such as hate speech, statelessness, civil registration, border management, trafficking in human beings, asylum building, mixed migration, durable solutions such as return and integration, and other areas of common interest.