

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
11 – 13 JUNE 2013 - International Conference Center Geneva**

REGIONAL SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

Europe Regional Session

Refugee Protection and International Migration in Europe: Challenges and Responses

Wednesday 12 June 2013, Room 4 (16:45 – 18:30)

All countries in Europe are, albeit in different ways, affected by irregular mixed movements of refugees and migrants and all are struggling with the complex challenges arising in this context. Countries in the EU's eastern and southeastern neighborhood located along major migration routes towards the EU and EU Member States at the external border face a particularly challenging task in managing irregular migration in a way that takes into account the protection needs of people within these movements.

Civil society has a vital role in assisting governments to set in place such protection-sensitive responses, including through the direct provision of assistance to those in need. In many countries, civil society and UNHCR are working together with governments following UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration. Rising xenophobia in some countries constitutes another challenge requiring enhanced cooperation among stakeholders.

This session brings together representatives of NGOs from all around Europe to share their experience, exchange relevant good practices and explore areas for enhanced cooperation among each other, with their governments and with UNHCR. The session will be structured around a couple of questions which the moderators will pose to each of the panelists. 20 years after UNCHR established presence in Eastern Europe and 18 years after the ParInAc Conference, the session will also offer an opportunity to take stock of the challenges facing NGOs in Eastern Europe and review in what ways partnership and sustainability could be enhanced.

Moderators:

Mr. Vincent Cochetel, Director, Bureau for Europe

Mr. John K. Bingham, Head of Policy, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)

The moderators will introduce the topic of the session by highlighting some of the most pressing protection challenges of mixed movements in Europe as well as current developments at the global level. Through a set of targeted questions, they will then stimulate a lively debate with invited panelists and facilitate structured dialogue with the audience.

Panelists:

- **Ms. Leila Zhdanova, NGO 10th April, Ukraine: Practical responses to mixed movements in Eastern Europe.** Ms. Zhdanova will share the experience of the NGO 10th April in border monitoring, provision of legal counseling in detention and facilitation of readmission from the EU and Moldova. She will report about lessons learned and achievements, such as the increased access to detention facilities, enhanced cross-border cooperation among NGOs and more transparent and efficient relationship with government authorities.
- **Ms. Sonja Toskovic, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Serbia: Regional cooperation to address mixed movements in the Western Balkans.** Ms. Toskovic will talk about the role of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights in receiving refugees and migrants, their referral to the asylum procedure, the provision of legal assistance and monitoring of conditions in detention. She will share good practices developed in the area of data collection/analysis and public awareness-raising, as well as the ongoing efforts to enhance information exchange and practical cooperation among NGOs in the wider region.
- **Ms. Carlotta Bellini, Save the Children, Italy: Addressing sea arrivals through partnership and multilateral cooperation.** Ms. Bellini will share the experiences of Save the Children, Italy in receiving people arriving by sea. She will particularly talk about the cooperation between national authorities, international agencies and national NGOs within the framework of the Praesidium project designed to support development of a protection-sensitive reception system for refugees and migrants arriving by sea to southern Italy. She will also highlight the importance of transnational cooperation and coordination mechanisms among state and non-state actors in provision of protection and support to children on the move.

Rapporteur: Ms. Martina Smilevska, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.