

## **Statement by the Republic of Latvia**

Madam Chair, High Commissioner,

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

We share the High Commissioner's concerns on the unprecedented displacement resulting from conflicts, violence, persecution, and climate emergencies. We face a historical level of refugees and displaced people. They need our unwavering support now more than ever.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, armed conflicts in Sudan and Syria, the humanitarian emergencies in Gaza and Lebanon, the instability in Afghanistan, and other humanitarian crises have resulted in millions fleeing homes. We call on all to comply with international humanitarian law to ensure the safety and dignity of people affected by conflicts.

Given the increasingly complex nature of displacement, we fully support the UNHCR's whole-of-route approach, which is also relevant to the EU Migration and Asylum Pact. Latvia is committed to the timely implementation of the Migration and Asylum Pact. In doing so, we will ensure the respect of human rights and our international commitments.

Latvia, together with other EU Member States, continues to provide temporary protection to the people of Ukraine, who were forced to flee their country due to Russia's war of aggression. Today, around 45 thousand Ukrainian refugees have been registered in Latvia, thousands of them – children. Latvia will continue to support Ukrainians as long as it takes, providing them with housing, education, jobs, health- and social care.

We are grateful for the UNHCR's outstanding efforts in Ukraine to assist internally displaced people nationwide. In light of Russia's continuous attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure, we must put all our efforts into helping people survive the harsh winter. Therefore, we welcome the UNHCR's Winter Response Plan in Ukraine and are proud to contribute. For the sake of Ukraine's people and our global community, Russia's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified war must stop.

While supporting the refugees forced to leave their homes, Latvia also secures the European Union's external border. The ongoing instrumentalization of migrants by creating artificial migration routes and pushing people across borders is yet another attempt of the Belarusian and Russian regimes to threaten the stability, sovereignty, and national security of Latvia and other EU Member States. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the instrumentalization of migrants whose lives have been placed in danger for political purposes by Belarus and Russia and can lead to serious human rights violations.

Finally, as we look ahead, Latvia once again commends the UNHCR's tireless efforts and will continue cooperating with the High Commissioner in addressing the challenges we face.

Thank you!