

**Check against delivery**

**UNHCR Executive Committee**

**October 2025**

**Agenda item: General Debate**

**Statement by the Group of Likeminded European Member States**

**5 minutes (823 words)**

Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following likeminded European States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Albania, North Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Monaco, Moldova and Ukraine

**High Commissioner, thank you** for your statement. We are grateful for your steady leadership over the past decade, through some of the most challenging times of UNHCR. Your commitment and dedication is truly inspiring. We express our sincere appreciation for the work of UNHCR staff and it's implementing partners on the ground.

We reaffirm **our trust and strong support** for UNHCR's core protection mandate and its critical role in advancing durable solutions. In prioritization efforts, UNHCR must uphold, as a priority, the delivery of life-saving protection and assistance to the persons of concern, including protection from sexual and gender-based violence.



The **1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol** are binding treaties under international law that enshrine principles and norms even more relevant and valid today, aiming to support countries in managing the arrival of persons in need of international protection while respecting the States' sovereignty and security. The focus should be on strengthening existing asylum systems to ensure they remain accessible to those in need, while addressing and alleviating the pressures these systems currently face. The new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, along with its external dimensions, is geared towards achieving these aims.

We express our **unwavering support to providing international protection** and reiterate our commitment to the right to seek and enjoy asylum under international refugee law, including the principle of non-refoulement. We commend the generosity of host countries and communities, who continue to support refugees. Furthermore, we welcome UNHCR's efforts to address legitimate concerns of refugee-receiving countries related to mixed flows of refugees and migrants through implementation of innovative approaches in line with international law.

It is with great concern that we look at UNHCR's **projected high numbers of forcibly displaced and stateless persons**. **Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine**, the deplorable dire and catastrophic humanitarian situation in **Gaza**, the **dismal crises in Sudan**, and other conflicts and ongoing crises in **Myanmar, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, the Sahel, Haiti and Venezuela**, have resulted in millions of persons being forced to flee.

When parties to conflicts blatantly **violate International Humanitarian Law**, it often triggers additional forced displacement. Compliance with International



Humanitarian Law, accountability for violations, ensuring the protection of civilians and facilitating humanitarian access are at the heart of our collective action.

**UNHCR's funding situation is alarming**, and we welcome High Commissioner Grandi's efforts to reshape the organization accordingly, in consultation with Member States. We know this continues to require difficult decisions.

We appreciate UNHCR's active role in the **UN80 and Humanitarian Reset** processes. We welcome the recent report of the UN Secretary General on the UN 80 Initiative's including a-New Humanitarian Compact, and we encourage UNHCR to continue alignment with system wide reform efforts.

We welcome UNHCR's commitment to a **comprehensive, protection-oriented approach**. UNHCR must work closely with states and organisations, notably **IOM**, and report regularly on these collaborations, including on the Routes-Based Approach. We appreciate the cooperation between UNHCR, IOM and ILO on improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities, as well as facilitating voluntary return programmes for **Syrian refugees**.

While celebrating the first anniversary of the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, we reiterate our commitment to continue efforts towards ending **statelessness**.

The upcoming **Global Refugee Forum Progress Review** will allow Member States to accelerate delivery on pledges and renew their support to refugees and host communities.



We acknowledge UNHCR's efforts to further develop the **sustainable responses approach**, notably with the World Bank and host governments. We commend efforts to include refugees in national systems, recognising the additional strain this often places on host-communities. Promoting self-reliance, economic and financial inclusion, and access to essential services require collective efforts by UNHCR, host-governments and donors. We support UNHCR's catalytic role of bridging forcibly displaced people, humanitarian and development actors, and host communities.

European countries endeavour to offer **safe and legal pathways** to protection in line with national competencies and priorities. The Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation will provide for a permanent framework and harmonised procedure to promote resettlement and humanitarian admission. We also call upon countries to provide resettlement opportunities.

We condemn any attempts to instrumentalise migrants and asylum seekers for political motives by orchestrating their flow across borders. Such attempts can lead to serious human rights violations.

We appreciate UNHCR's efforts to foster an inclusive response for all persons under UNHCR's mandate, in particular those in the most vulnerable situations. In times of change, we stress the importance of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategic framework prepared and implemented by UNHCR, including to promote an inclusive workplace for its staff.

Thank you.