



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

High Level Officials meeting

14-15 December 2021

Statement by Portugal

Thank you Chair

We welcome this meeting and reiterate our strong commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees and its principles. We continue working to a full implementation of the pledges presented at the Global Refugee Forum and look forward to the next GRF.

Portugal remains strongly committed to the protection, assistance, reception and integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, based on the principles of responsibility sharing and solidarity and respect for the dignity of the human person.

Following our commitment to resettlement, a single system for the reception and integration of refugees and asylum seekers was established, with an oversight that ensures cooperation and coordination between all stakeholders, including central government, local authorities, public and private entities and civil society.

We continue taking part in resettlement programmes and have resumed activities after a slowdown due to the pandemic; we have consistently participated in the ad hoc relocation of people rescued in the Central Mediterranean; and have relocated 100 refugees from Greece, in the framework of a bilateral agreement.

In order to fulfil our commitment to host 500 non-accompanied minors from the Greek Islands (152 are already in Portugal), we have put in place a specific programme, ensuring that they can better integrate in school and society, through the assistance of a multidisciplinary team.

Furthermore, since August, 764 Afghans arrived in Portugal, including students and athletes, including one female football team and members of a music school and their families. The response to this emergency led us to consider alternative ways to provide quality reception. The spontaneous mobilisation of civil society and private sector has proved crucial by providing accommodation, language and vocational training and employment, and may well be the first steps towards a Community Sponsorship Programme.



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
GENEVA

Integration is hard without knowing the language. Therefore, Portuguese Language courses have been redesigned, to make them more accessible, flexible, adapted to the needs, and available also to those still in the process of regularization.

Because refugees' voices have to be heard, a *Support and Liaison Office* for refugees led Associations was created. This office provides capacity building and developing mechanisms to encourage the participation of these associations in decision-making processes. Refugees are now represented at the Migration Council.

We are also fully committed to the **collective effort to create legal and complementary pathways** for persons in need of international protection:

- We have contributed financially to the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP);
- promoted complementary education pathways through support to the Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies, designed and developed as an emergency scholarship program to enable students from countries in conflict to continue their studies. Up to now, around 750 annual scholarships were awarded.
- Finally, we are committed to the Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways.

I Thank you