

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
22 September to 3 October 2014
Warsaw, Poland

Rapporteur's report
Thursday, 2 October 2014

**Working session 17 (specifically selected topic): Rights of migrants
(continued)**

Rapporteur: Ms. Nevena Jovanovic, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE

No. of statements:

Delegations: 11

Civil Society: 9

OSCE Inst./Int'l Org: 1

Rights of Reply: 6

Working session 17 highlighted the issue of refugees and IDPs in the OSCE region. *Mrs. Beatriz Balbin, First Deputy Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights* opened Working Session by stressing that the OSCE region is strongly affected by increasing number of refugees and IDPs. Mrs. Balbin emphasized that during last year OSCE hosted about 2.2 million refugees and approximately 1.18 million IDPs which remains security as well as human rights challenge for OSCE region. She also remained on existing OSCE Commitments related to assistance to refugees and IDPs and called on Participating States to show their cooperation and solidarity with this regard. In concluding, Mrs. Balbin stressed the importance of sharing experiences and examples of good practices among OSCE Participating States on this very important issue.

Moderator, *Mr. Frank Remus, Head of the UNHCR Liaison Office to the OSCE and Vienna-based UN agencies* stressed that every OSCE Participating State is facing to problem of refugees and IDPs. In that context, he underlined the importance of strengthening national capacities and improvement of national legislation with this regard. He also emphasized that HDIM presents a great opportunity to put "at the same table" OSCE Participating States, NGOs as well as representatives of International Organizations in order to open discussion and raise awareness about this very important issue.

First introducer, *Mr. Alfredo Zamudio, Director of International Displacement Monitoring Centre* explained the terms "refugees" and "IDPs" and talked about some new statistics in the OSCE region. He underlined that Participating States today are still facing to this problem which

shows that there is still exist “room for the improvement” in implementation of OSCE Commitments. He stressed that some progress has been achieved in recent years, but there is still much to be done. Mr. Zamudio also recalled on some important OSCE Commitments and other international documents on refugees and IDPs. He also emphasized some examples of good practice in this regard. In concluding, Mr. Zamudio stressed that special attention should be devoted to improvement of full participation of refugees and IDPs and their further integration. He also underlined the importance of OSCE Chairmanship for addressing all these issues.

The second introducer, *Mr. Ignacio Diaz de Agilar, former Board Member of the European Council of Refugees and Exiles* highlighted some major challenges in Mediterranean Countries that have been facing with refugees and asylum seekers from North Africa and Middle East. Mr. Aguilar stressed the importance of establishing effective measures of border control. Also, he underlined that there is a need for better cooperation between transit countries. Mr. Aguilar encouraged Participating States to have more economic support for those countries in order to ensure effective mechanisms for protections of refugees, IDPs and Asylum seekers in OSCE region.

21 interventions were delivered after the introducers, including 11 by delegations, nine by NGOs and one by international organizations. Also, six Participating States used their right of reply in response to prior interventions.

All delegations expressed their concerns regarding increased number of refugees and IDPs in the OSCE region. Some of the delegations paid special attention to large number of refugees and IDPs in light of Ukrainian crisis and stressed the importance of improving mechanisms to reduce the flow of IDPs and make it possible for them to return back to their homes. It was stated that there are over 42 million people currently of concern to UNHCR worldwide which includes approximately 12 million refugees, 10 million stateless persons and 24 million IDPs worldwide. Also it was stressed that, looking at the statistics in the OSCE region, at the end of 2013, the region hosted more than 2.2 million refugees, 1.2 million IDPs, 700,000 stateless persons and 580,000 asylum-seekers. In this regard, all delegations and NGOs agreed that refugee protection and internal displacement remain one of the most serious humanitarian and human rights challenges in the OSCE region.

A number of delegations discussed about development and implementation of national strategies and programs on refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers. Also, the importance of providing adequate types of assistance e.g. for women and children, psychological and medical care for those people was underlined.

It was stressed that increased attention should be paid to international protection, in a spirit of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility among OSCE Participating States. Many of delegations and NGOs stressed the need for fostering Regional Protection Programs and increasing contributions to global resettlement. Some of delegations underlined the importance

of close cooperation between OSCE Participating States with UN High Commissioner on refugees as well as with UNHCR in order to support third Countries most exposed to massive inflows of displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers. It was stated that the OSCE- UNHCR “Protection Checklist – Addressing Displacement and Protection of Displaced Communities and Affected Communities along the Conflict Cycle: a Collaborative Approach” is very valuable in this regard.

A number of delegations and NGOs expressed their concern regarding the tragedy off the coasts of Lampedusa in October 2013, and underlined that relevant efforts should be put to avoid the loss of human lives in the Mediterranean and to improve its capacity to assist asylum-seekers and refugees. A few delegations and NGOs warned that the situation will get worse as the Central Mediterranean migration route becomes larger. Many delegations and NGOs raised question of violence against refugees, IDPs and migrants and emphasized that special attention should be devoted to vulnerable groups.

Recommendations:

- OSCE should implement the OSCE- UNHCR “Protection Checklist – Addressing Displacement and Protection of Displaced Communities and Affected Communities along the Conflict Cycle: a Collaborative Approach” by means of OSCE Field Operations the co-operation with UNHCR should be increased;
- OSCE participating States must apply OSCE toolbox to the whole question of refoulement and IDPs.
- OSCE Participating States should strengthen the cooperation with transit countries
- OSCE Participating States should strengthen cooperation between OSCE Participating States with International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations
- OSCE, in particular the Field Operations shall facilitate the access of UNHCR and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in all areas of the OSCE region;
- OSCE Field Presences should submit project proposals focused on the improvement of livelihood opportunities and better protection of IDPs to the relevant agencies of Azerbaijan for consideration.
- To ensure that specialized agencies, in particular UNHCR have free access to all refugees and displaced people irrespective of their places of residence and the status of the country they took refuge in.