



Report of Vice-President Mark Pritchard
Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration
30th OSCE PA Annual Session
(Vancouver, Plenary, 3 July 2023)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madam President,
Dear Colleagues,

1. Field Visit to Moldova (9-10 March 2023)

Since I last reported to you at the Winter Meeting in Vienna, the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration has carried out a second field visit focussing on the situation of Ukrainian refugees. From 9-10 March 2023, a six-member strong delegation travelled to the Republic of Moldova. A written report has already been shared with you. I will therefore touch upon some of our main observations.

Moldovan authorities and citizens have made tremendous efforts to welcome over 100,000 displaced persons from Ukraine and to facilitate the safe transit of a further 700,000 others.

The introduction of a temporary protection scheme starting in March 2023 is a significant milestone which is expected to provide some form of stability to beneficiaries and enhance access to education, health care, employment and other services.

At the same time, as noted by our interlocutors, there is room for progress and areas where the support of the international community is needed.

- **Education**

The field of education was identified as a critical sector in need of further support. The authorities have displayed a great degree of flexibility in the face of the low share of children currently attending local schools, providing them with the necessary support to continue to attend online education provided by Ukrainian institutions. This is also linked to the specific characteristics of most of the refugees who have remained in Moldova: they tend to come from the Odesa region across the border and hope to return to Ukraine as soon as possible.

Authorities are confident that the new Temporary Protection system established in March 2023, which requires beneficiaries to register, will give them a better picture of the number of children in Moldova and their educational needs. At the same time, it is unclear whether attendance of online classes will be considered as meeting the children's right to education and is therefore

not expected to lead to a significant increase in enrolment. Still, authorities agree that they need to strengthen the resilience of the educational sector in Moldova and its capacity to absorb up to 40,000 refugee children as an important step in their socialization, mental health, integration, and also to minimize risks of trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Projects to identify children with special needs, be they refugees from Ukraine or Moldovan, should also be encouraged with a view to further enhancing the inclusiveness of the Moldovan educational system.

- **Employment and social protection**

Employment rates of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova are very low. According to official data from February 2023, only about 1,000 Ukrainian citizens were employed in Moldova. In our discussions, the Minister of Labour and Social Protection pointed to issues with the official data. He also recognized the need to improve the quality of employment services for all residents, not just refugees, as well as to invest more in education.

Support is also needed to tackle rising child poverty rates, which is as high as 35 per cent in rural areas, and in the area of social work to support children in need.

- **Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable categories of refugees**

The need to invest more in the child protection system and to focus on the risks faced by unaccompanied and separated children (estimated to number about 1,000) was also stressed.

Addressing the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly is another area where both refugees from Ukraine and Moldovan citizens stand to benefit from. Our interlocutors noted that some obstacles remain for children and adults with disabilities to access humanitarian assistance and services due to physical barriers as well as lack of inclusive information.

Finally, displaced Roma from Ukraine appear to face particular challenges in accessing accommodation, employment and basic services throughout the region. Due to their marginalization, the risks of trafficking and other forms of exploitation notably in the area of employment, could be even higher for Roma refugees.

- **Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and GBV amongst Ukrainian refugees**

The Committee has noted discrepancies between statistics on the number of identified victims of trafficking amongst the Ukrainian refugee community communicated by authorities and figures shared by UN agencies and non-governmental actors working on the ground. This was the case both in the Czech Republic and also here in Moldova. Moldovan authorities stated that they had not identified any cases, although they suspected there might be some instances of trafficking. UNICEF reported having identified 26 cases— mainly of women and girls, thanks to a local partner organization. UNICEF highlighted concerns of ongoing risks of gender-based violence and sex trafficking cases, in particular for undocumented or stateless persons and Roma women and girls.

These discrepancies point to the need to strengthen referral mechanisms and to further invest in the capacity building of first responders. As the large majority of Ukrainian refugees are hosted privately, the scope for monitoring by authorities is limited. It is therefore essential to also build strong partnerships with non-governmental actors working on the ground.

There were concerns expressed regarding the safety of children in refugee reception centres which had not been officially approved, particularly amongst those with a Roma background.

The need to counter new forms of trafficking – mainly online – was also raised by both governmental and non-governmental interlocutors.

There appears to be a low level of awareness and concern about the risks of labour exploitation, notably in the “hidden economy” such as the agricultural and construction sectors.

- **Data-driven policies**

This brings me to a more general issue of data-driven policies. The lack of reliable data on the numbers of refugees and different sub-categories as well as their geographical distribution within Moldova and special needs was a recurrent theme. This is a challenge shared by all countries receiving large numbers of refugees over a short period of time but especially for a small country such as Moldova unaccustomed to such situations. This undermines efforts to develop effective policies and monitoring systems.

It is hoped that the introduction of temporary protection in Moldova and the associated registration requirements will help address some of these gaps. While the participation of the beneficiaries themselves in the design and implementation of policies is critical to success, surveys, too, can provide important insight.

2. Best practices and challenges regarding Canada’s approach to the sponsorship of refugees and the integration and settlement of newcomers

On 30 June, upon invitation by Member Dr. Hedy Fry, the Committee visited the premises of an organization in Vancouver promoting the resettlement of refugees in Canada. We also engaged in a panel discussion on the lessons learned from Canada’s experience with the sponsorship of refugees and the integration and settlement of newcomers. Speakers included representatives of the hosting NGO [S.U.C.C.E.S.S.](#), a representative of the [Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia](#) (AMSSA); as well as representatives of [Rainbow Refugee](#) which provides support to LGBTQI+ refugees and refugee claimants.

We are extremely grateful to Dr. Fry and her staff for providing us with the opportunity to learn more about Canada’s approach and to engage with the settlement organisations vital to the success of these initiatives.

By involving entire communities in the process of refugee resettlement and integration, Canada is ensuring that refugees receive not only financial but also emotional and social support. The displaced person benefits from the resources and networks of the community. Refugees can receive integration advice, language and other practical assistance and help with looking for education or employment opportunities.

While there are still challenges, the benefits for the refugees and for the communities sponsoring them are clear: Sharing responsibility for integration across communities enhances the likelihood of a smoother transition and durable integration.

3. Situation in the Mediterranean

IOM has documented a total of 27,565 migrant deaths in the Mediterranean since 2014 of which over 21,000 in the Central Mediterranean.¹ An estimated 1,807 migrants are missing so far this year. Irregular arrivals from Libya and Tunisia – and deaths – are expected to continue increasing in the coming months.

As underlined by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the real tragedy is that so many of these deaths are preventable.²

As I stated upon hearing about the sinking of a vessel off the coast of Greece on 14 June, which could turn out to be the worst-ever shipwreck for refugees crossing the Mediterranean, we need to urgently step up efforts to crack down on smuggling and trafficking networks and the criminals who lure people with promises of a better life and entice them to enter into heavy debt in order to make the perilous journeys towards Europe.

We must be realistic: migration cannot be stopped but it can certainly be managed better. The challenge of irregular migration governance cannot be addressed by individual countries separately. A breakthrough was achieved in negotiations on the EU Migration and Asylum Pact on 8 June but there are still a number of hurdles to overcome between now and March 2024 as it has to be approved by the European Parliament. We must continue to work together and to devote our undivided political attention towards establishing mechanisms to manage migration so that it benefits countries of destination and origin rather than criminal networks and in order to minimize deaths.

4. Upcoming Activities

The Committee has carried out, as planned, two field visits to countries hosting significant communities of refugees from Ukraine. We had hoped to carry out one more visit focussing on the Eastern Mediterranean route, as a follow up to the Committee's visit to Greece in March 2022. These plans will be re-examined after the Annual Session.

5. Concluding Remarks

The international community should continue to support countries hosting refugees from Ukraine. We should in particular support the transition out of temporary protection schemes and the development of legal frameworks for local integration as a durable solution for those refugees who may not wish to/cannot return in the short to medium term.

There is a particular need to ensure the structural inclusion of marginalised subgroups of refugees in needs assessment and policy debates, notably people with disabilities, the elderly and displaced Roma.

¹ <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

² Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Lethal Disregard": Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean sea (May 2021).

NGOs are critical actors providing sustainable, appropriate and timely responses, as well as in ensuring the accountability of governments. They should therefore be integrated in the humanitarian response structure and supported – both politically and financially.

In conclusion, let us remind ourselves of the need to keep our constituencies on board. We must therefore continue to make the case not only for solidarity towards refugees from Ukraine but also for effective, comprehensive and humane migration policies more generally.

Thank you for your attention.

ANNEX I

Ukraine Refugee Situation

Refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe ¹

5,977,800

Last updated 26 June 2023 - Source: UNHCR collation of statistics made available by the authorities

Refugees from Ukraine recorded beyond Europe ²

361,900

Last updated 26 June 2023 - Source: UNHCR collation of statistics made available by the authorities

Refugees from Ukraine recorded globally

6,341,700

Last updated 26 June 2023 - Source: UNHCR collation of statistics made available by the authorities

Countries featured in the Refugee Response Plan

Country	Data Date	Refugees from Ukraine recorded in country as of date ⁽¹⁾	Refugees from Ukraine who applied for Asylum, TP or similar national protection schemes to date ⁽²⁾	Border crossings from Ukraine since 24 February 2022 ⁽⁴⁾	Border crossings to Ukraine since 24 February 2022 ⁽⁵⁾
Bulgaria	6/27/2023	162,935	162,935	Not applicable	Not applicable
Czech Republic	6/18/2023	345,880	528,045	Not applicable	Not applicable
Estonia	6/5/2023	48,590	50,625	Not applicable	Not applicable
Hungary	6/26/2023	52,335	36,315	2,933,815	Data not available
Latvia	12/31/2022	38,145	47,940	Not applicable	Not applicable
Lithuania	6/2/2023	77,545	77,490	Not applicable	Not applicable
Poland	6/26/2023	994,775	1,618,785	12,724,955	10,384,530
Republic of Moldova	6/25/2023	110,855	7,980	854,980	506,125
Romania	6/25/2023	136,075	136,075	2,653,935	2,181,485
Slovakia	6/25/2023	103,490	119,505	1,477,735	1,277,160
Total		2,070,625	2,785,695	20,645,425	14,349,300

Other countries neighbouring Ukraine

Country	Data Date	Refugees from Ukraine recorded in country as of date ⁽¹⁾	Refugees from Ukraine who applied for Asylum, TP or similar national protection schemes to date ⁽²⁾	Border crossings from Ukraine since 24 February 2022 ⁽⁴⁾	Border crossings to Ukraine since 24 February 2022 ⁽⁵⁾
Belarus	5/1/2023	27,675	2,790	16,705	Data not available
Russian Federation*	12/31/2022	1,275,315	100,835	2,852,395	Data not available
Total		1,302,990	103,625	2,869,100	Data not available

* The figure for the Russian Federation includes 65,400 Ukrainians who were granted refugee or temporary asylum status, as well as those recorded in the country in 2022 under other forms of stay.

Source: UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> (accessed 29 June 2023).

Refugees from Ukraine across Europe (as of 19 June 2023)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. *Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 [1999]) Source: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe

Source: UNHCR, Ukraine Situation Flash Update #49 (26 June 2023), <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/101498>.

ANNEX II

OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

1. Mandate

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration was established following the unanimous decision of the OSCE PA Standing Committee on 25 February 2016 in Vienna. Its mandate is defined as follows:

- Serve as a focal point for the OSCE PA's work in the field of migration in all three dimensions of the OSCE: political and security questions; economic issues; and human rights and humanitarian questions; and report back to the President and the Standing Committee;
- Develop policy recommendations aimed at enhancing OSCE work in the field of migration and at improving the treatment of, and prospects for, migrants in OSCE countries;
- Promote discussion within the Assembly on issues related to migration, and promote parliamentary exchanges of best practice in these fields;
- Work closely with the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions as well as with relevant outside actors on issues related to migration to promote the understanding among the members of the Assembly of the importance of the work done in this field.

2. Membership *(as of 22 June 2023)*

1. Vice-President Mark PRITCHARD (United Kingdom), **Chair**
2. Lord Alfred DUBS (United Kingdom), **Vice-Chair**
3. Mr. Kyriakos HADJIYIANNI (Cyprus), **Vice-Chair**
4. Ms. Farah KARIMI (The Netherlands), **Vice-Chair**
5. Ms. Gudrun KUGLER (Austria), **Vice-Chair**
6. Mr. Jan BAUER (Czech Republic)
7. Ms. Valérie BOYER (France)
8. Mr. Johan BÜSER (Sweden)
9. Ms. Daniela DE RIDDER (Germany)
10. Ms. Hedy FRY (Canada)
11. Ms. Sheila JACKSON LEE (United States of America)
12. Mr. Laurynas KASČIŪNAS (Lithuania)
13. Mr. Dimitrios MARKOPOULOS (Greece)
14. Ms. Gwen MOORE (United States of America)
15. Mr. David STÖGMÜLLER (Austria)