

**Report by Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt**  
**Acting Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration**

(OSCE PA Remote Session, Plenary, 6 July 2021)

Dear Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to present to you a snapshot of migration trends in our region and the initiatives of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration since my last report during the 2021 Winter Meeting. The mandate and list of members of the Committee, who are appointed by the President of the OSCE PA, are included in Annex I to this report.

**1. Snapshot of migration trends in 2021**

While the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on cross-border migration has yet to be determined, UNHCR data<sup>1</sup> shows that arrivals of new refugees and asylum-seekers were sharply down in most regions – about 1.5 million fewer people, reflecting how many of those seeking international protection in 2020 became stranded. Still, taking into account internally displaced persons, last year a record 1 % of the world population or 1 in 95 people was forcibly displaced. This compares with 1 in 159 in 2010.

As the UN Refugee Agency has underlined in its 2020 Global Report,<sup>2</sup> the pandemic has driven refugees into deeper poverty and despair. The consequences have been grave, especially for women and children. Gender-based violence has increased, as has domestic violence and early child marriage. Refugee children have had less access to remote learning opportunities.

In my previous report I highlighted the phenomenon of pushbacks or collective expulsions throughout South Eastern Europe. These incidents have increased during the pandemic.

In our online discussions on the situation at the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, we heard credible reports of systematic pushbacks, including in some cases pregnant women and children, with no individual assessment of needs and vulnerabilities and no opportunity to apply for asylum.<sup>3</sup>

Pushbacks are a recognized problem in the Mediterranean area. Evidence is also mounting that migrants continue to be pushed back both at land and sea borders. Over a third of pushbacks were accompanied by rights violations, including denial of access to asylum procedure, physical abuse and assault, theft, extortion and destruction of

---

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, Global Trends. Forced Displacement in 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globaltrends/>

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, Global Report 2020, at: <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globalreport/>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., the monthly border monitoring snapshots of the Danish Refugee Council at: <https://drc.ngo/our-work/where-we-work/europe/bosnia-and-herzegovina/>.

property, at the hands of national border police and law enforcement officials.<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Dunja Mijatovic has also received reports indicating that boats carrying migrants, including persons who may need international protection, have been prevented from disembarking.

Despite widespread condemnation, these practices have continued, in clear contravention of human rights obligations. Moreover, pushbacks seem to have become part of a de facto border policy. It is troubling that such incidents are happening in areas where the EU's Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex is present. The purpose of Frontex is to address unregulated migrant flows. Unregulated migrant flows risk resulting in human trafficking and the tragic loss of lives. However, conducted operations must be evaluated to ensure compliance with human rights.

These incidents also highlight the need to strengthen accountability in migration policies. Independent human rights organizations should be recognized for their important work in protecting human rights and promoting transparency.

Many OSCE countries are facing the dilemma of how to deal with rejected asylum seekers who do not wish to return of their own will and cannot be forcibly sent back due to the lack of bilateral agreements. The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum calls for an effective legal return policy. So far progress in this area has been notably slow.

Repatriation policies and practices have to consider the human rights of refugees and international agreements as well as national laws. The externalisation of migration management has to be accompanied by robust safeguards and transparency.

## **2. Focus Areas**

The Committee has continued to monitor developments in a number of areas such as Lesbos (Greece), northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Spain.

- **Lesbos**

Pursuing the focus on the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on refugee and migrant communities, the Committee continued to call for equal access to health services and the inclusion of refugees and migrants in national vaccination programmes, regardless of legal status.

At the beginning of June, following concerns about an outbreak of Covid-19 on Lesbos, the Committee held an online discussion with the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum of Greece on Covid-19 mitigation measures. It was reassuring to hear that they have been largely effective and that Greece has now extended its vaccination programme to asylum-seekers in camps on the Aegean islands.

While it is encouraging to hear that Lesbos and the other Aegean islands have been partially decongested, we continue to be concerned by the living conditions of asylum

---

<sup>4</sup> Protecting Rights at Borders, "Pushing Back Responsibility. Rights Violations as a 'Welcome Treatment' at Europe's Borders" (April 2021), <https://drc.ngo/about-us/for-the-media/press-releases/2021/5/prab-2-en/>. Based on testimonies collected by civil society organizations in 6 different countries between January and April 2021, this report alleges that during this period 2,162 cases of pushbacks took place, including chain pushbacks over multiple countries. The rights violations were recorded at different borders in Italy, Greece, Serbia, Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Hungary.

seekers, especially children and other vulnerable persons, living in the Mavrovouni tent camp established by authorities following the destruction of the Moria camp.

Furthermore, in April 2021, the last remaining facility for vulnerable asylum seekers on Lesbos was closed. The Kara Tepe camp, which the Migration Committee had visited in 2017, was managed by the municipality of Mytilene, and had become home to thousands of vulnerable asylum-seekers offering dignified accommodation and a vast range of activities and services. In the last 2.5 years alone, over 4,700 people found shelter in Kara Tepe of whom 83% were women or families. The facility was closed following the request of the municipality who wished to recover the land for other purposes. Last October, local authorities closed the PIKPA camp for vulnerable refugees and transferred its 74 residents, including 32 children, to the Mavrovouni camp.

Construction of new, permanent reception centres on Lesbos and three other islands (Samos, Kos and Leros), with funding from the EU is moving ahead. These new “closed controlled structures” are intended to ensure reception conditions in line with EU law, taking into account international standards and best practices. The Committee plans to carry out a fact-finding visit to Lesbos in the near future to assess the situation and compliance with the promised gender-based and child-rights approach.

I would like to commend our new member from Greece Mr. Dimitrios Markopoulos for being so active and for facilitating the committee’s discussions on the situation in his country.

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Committee has continued to monitor developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 14 April, the Migration Committee invited IOM Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Western Balkans and Chief of Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina Laura Lungarotti to provide an update on the situation in the country. She highlighted the need for better coordination between authorities at different levels as well as a more equitable distribution of migrants throughout the country. Ms. Lungarotti also emphasized the importance of improved data collection in order to develop evidence-based migration policies.

The Committee has pursued its focus on combatting human trafficking along migration routes in cooperation with the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Mr. Valiant Richey.

From 22-25 March, a series of online meetings was conducted with Mr. Richey and key stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss the particular challenges related to combating human trafficking in mixed migration flows. This was supposed to have been a joint in-person visit. However, our meetings had to be moved online due to the deteriorating Covid-19 situation in the country.

The joint recommendations issued after our meetings and which seek to contribute to enhanced identification and protection of victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows are annexed to this report (Annex III).

The Committee is pleased that the in-person visit has been rescheduled for later this month and Committee Vice-Chair Gudrun Kugler (Austria) will participate. I wish her a successful mission together with the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Committee plans to carry out a field visit of its own in the coming months.

- **Spain**

Spain's Canary Islands have been experiencing an influx in irregular arrivals since November 2020. Migrants have been moved to five new tent camps funded by the EU with a total capacity of 6,300 and spread over the three islands of Fuerte Ventura, Tenerife and Gran Canaria. However, many migrants fear being deported and therefore prefer to sleep on the street. Reports of sub-standard living conditions at the largest camp of Las Raices on Tenerife, have further compounded this problem. The majority of migrants are not allowed to travel on to the mainland as their chances of obtaining refugee status are deemed to be low. This has led to comparisons with the situation in Lesbos and protests against their confinement on the islands as they argue that this violates their freedom of movement.

Roughly 2,000 unaccompanied children arrived on the Canary Islands last year. The minors' protection system of a small territory like the Canary Islands is struggling to cope with such a rapid increase in arrivals.

The Spanish government has called on EU Member States to show solidarity and take in some migrants. However, few have stepped forth. As underlined by the Spanish government's delegate to the Canary Islands Anselmo Pestana, Europe has to do its part: "Their [destination] is not the Canary Islands, it is Europe as a concept, as a place of opportunities. Well, then Europe has to respond to this challenge as a whole and not leave it to the Canary Islands or only the Spanish territory. It's just not fair."

On 17-18 May, the enclave of Ceuta experienced a mass surge of 8,000 persons who either swam around border fences or walked from Morocco at low tide. The majority were young Moroccan men, including about 1,500 minors, some as young as seven. As in the Canary Islands, Ceuta was not equipped to deal with such a large number of minors and Spain's government appealed to its mainland regions to relocate some of them.

The Committee held an online meeting on 26 May with the Head of the Delegation of Spain to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Pedro Joan Pons, to discuss migration challenges faced by Spain and how the OSCE PA and its participating States could assist. The Committee members were informed on how Spain was doing its best to deal with an exceptional situation. The Committee also underlined the need to ensure nevertheless that appropriate screening is carried out to identify vulnerable migrants.

The Committee stressed the need for forward-looking migration policies and protocols to respond to emergency surges in the future. In the absence of a mechanism for the redistribution of irregular sea arrivals and until a system for solidarity at the EU level is put into place, the Committee recommends implementing an internal redistribution

mechanism for sharing resources and people in the case of unaccompanied minors so as to ensure dignified reception conditions and access to education and other basic services.

The migration surge in Ceuta last May appears to be a case of so-called instrumentalization of migrants for political purposes. The Committee strongly condemns using vulnerable people to exert political pressure.

- **Other areas**

At our virtual meeting on 14 April, member Gwen Moore briefed the Committee about the authorities' response to the surge of migrants at the US-Mexico border. She reaffirmed her government's commitment to international law, OSCE principles and domestic safeguards in the management of this situation and emphasized the need to adequately process and shelter children and save families from a likely futile journey to the US, by reinstating protocols allowing them to apply for asylum in their home country.

Ms. Moore acknowledged that current facilities for unaccompanied minors are suboptimal. The Committee expresses concern about conditions in the new emergency shelters erected in an effort to fulfill the legal requirement to transfer children from the custody of Border Patrol to the Department of Health and Human Services within three days.

Cyprus continues to hold the record for the highest number of first-time asylum-seekers per capita in the EU: 4 per cent of its population compared to an EU-wide average of 1 per cent. On 20 May, it declared that it had entered a state of emergency and issued an appeal for help from the EU following an inflow of Syrian refugees as it no longer had the capacity to host additional migrants. Cyprus has asked for help in particular to repatriate those denied asylum and who cannot be returned due to the lack of bilateral agreements with third countries.

The Turkish delegation of OSCE PA has invited the Committee to a field visit which has been postponed due the pandemic. The Committee recognizes this invitation and the constructive engagement by Mr. Mehmet Sait Kirazoglu.

### **3. Partnerships**

The Committee values the excellent cooperation with the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings as well as the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration contributed to two more web-conferences of the UK House of Lords on protecting vulnerable refugees. These were co-chaired by Committee Vice-Chair Lord Alf Dubs, and Lord Dundee, member of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The latest event on 18 June featured interventions by high-level speakers from UNHCR, the European Commission and Amnesty International, amongst others. I encourage you all to read the Call for Action on World Refugee Day 2021 of the Co-Chairs (Annex IV), and to urge your governments to implement its recommendations.

The Committee will also continue to engage in discussions with key policy makers at EU level on salient migration issues on a regular basis, with a special focus on implementation of the various components of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

#### **4. Next Steps**

The topic of migration is a difficult and divisive one yet at the same time an area where we need to lay aside our differences and seek to reach common ground. The Committee will continue to advocate effective, humane and sustainable migration management. We will urge gender-sensitive migration policies and focus on migrants in vulnerable categories, especially unaccompanied minors.

We will also promote mainstreaming of policies in the area of combating trafficking in human beings along migration routes as well as the dismantling of smuggling networks.

Since its establishment, the Committee has sought to share examples of best practices, for example in the area of policies concerning unaccompanied minors as well as integration in the labour market. We will continue to build on the rich expertise of our members to fulfil this aspect of our mandate as well.

I hope that the Committee can soon resume fact-finding visits in order to witness the situation on the ground and talk to key stakeholders including migrants and refugees themselves. At the same time, while we agree that online events cannot replace in-person activities, we acknowledge that modern technology has enabled us to remain extremely active and to engage on key topics with high-level actors. I trust that online activities will continue to be part of our toolbox.

The Committee will also continue to promote the enhancement of legal pathways for migration as well as encourage addressing the root causes of displacement which will increasingly be related to climate change and environmental degradation.

As we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Refugee Convention, let us recall the spirit of this key document and ensure that protection is accorded to those with the greatest needs, not those with the greatest mobility.

Thank you for your attention.

## ANNEX I

### Mandate and Membership of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

#### 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 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.

#### Membership

1. Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), **Acting Chair**
2. Lord Alfred Dubs (United Kingdom), **Vice-Chair**
3. Ms. Farah Karimi (The Netherlands), **Vice-Chair**
4. Mr. Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania), **Vice-Chair**
5. Dr. Gudrun Kugler (Austria), **Vice-Chair**
6. Mr. Jan Bauer (Czech Republic)
7. Ms. Valérie Boyer (France)
8. Dr. Daniela De Ridder (Germany)
9. Mr. Gianluca Ferrara (Italy)
10. Dr. Hedy Fry (Canada)
11. Ms. Elona Hoxha Gjebrea (Albania)
12. Ms. Sheila Jackson Lee (United States of America)
13. Mr. Mehmet Sait Kirazoglu (Turkey)
14. Mr. Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjjiyianni (Cyprus)
15. Mr. Massimo Mallegni (Italy)
16. Mr. Dimitrios Markopoulos (Greece)
17. Ms. Gwen Moore (United States)
18. Mr. Georgios Varemenos (Greece)

**ANNEX II**  
**Implemented Activities (February - July 2021)**

<b>DATES</b>	<b>VENUE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
19 February	Online	<b>Third virtual Meeting</b> of the Committee with a special focus on <b>Combating Human Trafficking in Human Beings along Migration Routes.</b> - Presentation by OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SR/CTHB) Valiant Richey
24 February	Online	<b>Report</b> by Vice-President Cederfelt to the Standing Committee, 20 <sup>th</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting
5 March	Online	Contribution to the <b>UK House of Lords web-conference “Humanitarian emergencies, voluntary resettlement of refugees and assisted voluntary returns of migrants” (OSCE PA / PACE)</b> co-chaired by Lord Alf Dubs, including remarks by Dr. Hedy Fry and Vice-President Cederfelt.
22-25 March	Online	<b>Joint Online Visit</b> of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SR/CTHB) Valiant Richey, and Vice-President Cederfelt focusing on CT HB along migration routes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
14 April	Online	<b>Fourth Virtual Meeting of the Committee</b> - Update on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ms. Laura Lungarotti, Sub-Regional Co-ordinator for the Western Balkans and IOM Chief of Mission in BiH. - Report of the Chair on the joint online visit to BiH with the OSCE SR/CTHB. - Discussion on the situation in Greece, US-Mexico border, Canary Islands, Cyprus.
19 April	Online	<b>Report</b> by Vice-President Cederfelt to the OSCE PA Bureau.
26 May	Online	Meeting with the Head of the Delegation of Spain to the OSCE PA, Mr. Pere Joan Pons, on recent <b>migration developments in Spain</b> with a focus on Ceuta and the Canary Islands.
7 June	Online	Update on the situation in <b>Lesbos</b> , with the participation of Ms. Sofia Voultepsi, Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum in charge of Integration, and Mr. Dimitrios Markopoulos, Member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. Topics included: - Covid-19 mitigation measures and vaccination programmes for the asylum-seekers on the Aegean Islands; - Status of current Reception and Identification Centres (RICs), specialized services for migrants in vulnerable categories; - Status of the planned new RICs
18 June	Online	Web-Conference of the UK House of Lords, organized in cooperation with the OSCE PA and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), on the occasion of <b>World Refugee Day</b> , including the <b>Call for Action on World Refugee Day 2021</b> , by the Co-Chairs on behalf of the conference.



## ANNEX III



### **Recommendations following the visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 22 -25 March 2021**

Between 22 and 25 March 2021, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey and the OSCE PA Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt conducted a series of online meetings with key anti-trafficking interlocutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meetings aimed to enquire about the situation of asylum seekers and migrants transiting through the country and discuss how to address the challenges related to trafficking in human beings in these mixed-migration flows.

The meetings were organized in close co-ordination with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and included conversations with the State Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Human Rights, the Chief Prosecutor, as well as representatives of International Organizations and local NGOs.

Following the meetings, the SR/CTHB and the OSCE PA VP prepared the following observations and recommendations for the attention of relevant stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. The need to **identify and assist** victims of trafficking among migrants and asylum seekers, irrespective of the country of exploitation, should be regarded as a priority for the anti-trafficking action in all locations that provide transit reception facilities.
2. The above need should be reflected in **local action plans** for combating trafficking in human beings, upheld by the adequate allocation of **human and financial resources**.
3. **Screening of new arrivals** should not solely focus on their eligibility to enter the asylum system. Applying for **asylum** and seeking **assistance as a victim of trafficking** are **not self-exclusive procedures**; whenever relevant, they can and should be administered in parallel.
4. **Screening interviews** at the transit centres should be conducted in a **multi-agency setting** and include social workers/NGO personnel experienced in working with trafficking victims.
5. To increase the capacity of first line responders to screen and address vulnerabilities of the migrant population, consideration should be given to a more **even and balanced spread of reception locations** across the country, thus ensuring a more manageable workload and upholding victims' rights.
6. Newly established **local co-ordination teams** should **work closely with the transit reception centres** both in the area of identification and assistance, and in training and awareness raising. For this, the mandate of the local co-ordination teams should be extended to working with foreign victims of trafficking in human beings.

7. **Uniform** identification, referral and assistance **protocols** regulating the co-operation between the transit reception centres and local co-ordination teams should be developed and available in all respective locations.
8. **Information on assistance** to victims of trafficking should be available in the languages understood by the migrants. This information should also be **proactively delivered** through briefings and other awareness raising events at the transit reception centres.
9. Specialized safe gender-specific **accommodation** should be available for presumed victims of trafficking identified at the transit reception centres.
10. Improved procedures should be introduced for **unaccompanied minors**, including an obligatory appointment of **legal guardians** and developing **alternative care** options. Legal guardians should be trained, appointed without delay and have a caseload that would enable them to perform their duties in the best interests of the child. Unaccompanied minors should be accommodated separately from other groups.
11. All children in mixed-migration flows should be granted unconditional **access to education** across the country.

The OSR/CTHB has long worked on these issues and is ready to provide further support to local authorities, both with regards to policy improvement and capacity building, towards building a stronger and more sustainable identification and protection framework.

## ANNEX IV

### Call for Action on World Refugee Day 2021



#### **“World Refugee Day on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention: European Solidarity and Protection”**

#### **Web Conference of the UK Parliament, House of Lords, London (18 June 2021)**

##### Background

- i. The web-conference “**World Refugee Day on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention: European solidarity and protection**” took place on 18 June 2021 in virtual format to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter, ‘Convention’) and World Refugee Day (20 June 2021).
- ii. It was hosted by the UK Parliament House of Lords and co-chaired by The Earl of Dundee, Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and The Lord Dubs, Vice-Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA). It brought together representatives of governments, national parliaments, UN agencies and humanitarian organisations.
- iii. This web-conference was the fourth in a series of events hosted by the UK Parliament House of Lords since June 2020 with the aim of discussing effective ways for protecting refugees, in particular unaccompanied children and other vulnerable categories, and promoting greater solidarity and responsibility-sharing for humanitarian emergencies, such as through voluntary relocations, resettlement, and combating human trafficking. More concretely, these initiatives sought to promote the sharing of experiences as well as proposals for action by governments and national parliaments of Council of Europe and OSCE member states with a view to implementing their humanitarian commitments.

\*\*\*

1. On the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter, ‘Convention’) and World Refugee Day, we, the Co-Chairs of the Conference, reiterate the relevance of the Convention in addressing current day humanitarian challenges and urge the member states of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) to abide by their obligations under the Convention as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act, among others, and to lead by example by **displaying greater solidarity** towards persons fleeing armed conflicts, violence or persecution.
2. We cannot continue to let thousands of children, women and men perish each year trying to reach safety or in search of a better life. We urge all member states of the Council of Europe and the OSCE to do their utmost to **save lives at sea** through **enhanced search and rescue operations** as well as greater solidarity and responsibility-sharing leading to **concrete support for transit countries and countries at the frontline of irregular arrivals**.
3. We also ask ourselves whether the **principle of first safe country of arrival**, on which our asylum systems are based, and which has resulted in the overburdening of a handful of frontline countries, is appropriate within the context of current migration patterns and whether it is not in fact against the spirit of the 1951 Convention.
4. We agree that there is a need to better protect people seeking asylum in Europe and the wider OSCE area through **improved asylum procedures** so that applicants receive prompt decisions, enabling

them to rebuild their lives either in their new host country or back home, having returned in a safe and dignified manner, in full respect of the principle of *non-refoulement*.

5. When applicants cannot be returned to their home country, we ask whether alternative measures could be taken so that persons found not to be in need of international protection do not languish for years in return centres, and can nevertheless contribute to society and lead a dignified life while their return is pending.
6. We are deeply concerned by the substantiated reports of violent pushbacks of migrants and asylum seekers and other serious human rights violations occurring at our borders. Recalling the 1951 Convention which stipulates that, subject to specific exceptions, refugees should not be penalized for illegal entry or stay, we urge all member states of the Council of Europe and the OSCE to **respect the right to seek asylum, refrain from collective returns; to assess each case individually with special attention to the identification of vulnerable categories of migrants** such as unaccompanied children or potential victims of human trafficking or torture; and to implement **effective human rights border monitoring procedures** to strengthen accountability.
7. At the same time, we call upon Council of Europe and OSCE member states to sustain efforts to **dismantle criminal networks** which profit from smuggling and trafficking in human beings and to offer **expanded safe and legal pathways** for persons in need of international protection through, *inter alia*, relocation programmes for child refugees and other vulnerable migrants, resettlement and family reunification programmes, so that it is those with the greatest needs rather than those with the greatest mobility who are granted refugee status.
8. Recognizing the additional challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we nevertheless underline the need to ensure that mitigation measures do not stigmatise migrant and refugee communities and do not have a disproportionately negative impact on them. We furthermore urge the provision of **equal access to basic health care** for all refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and their inclusion in national vaccination programmes, regardless of legal status.
9. In order to meet these challenges, we call upon the Council of Europe and the OSCE to **reinforce their institutional capacity and preparedness**. We ask the Council of Europe to consider the possible expansion of the mandate of the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees of the Council of Europe Secretary General, bearing in mind the new Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025), adopted on 5 May 2021. We also call upon the OSCE to adopt a new decision regarding the OSCE's Role in the governance of large movements of migrants and refugees, broadening the mandate and activities of its recently appointed Senior Migration Security Expert.
10. Finally, we strongly encourage the relevant PACE and OSCE PA migration committees to work towards the implementation of the above recommendations and call upon Council of Europe and OSCE member states to **co-operate in sharing responsibility** for the protection of, and assistance to, refugees and asylum seekers, to move towards agreed standards and practices and engage in concerted action, in close partnership with other relevant international and regional actors including UNHCR and IOM as well as civil society and refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

London, 18 June 2021

The Co-Chairs, on behalf of the conference:

- **The Earl of Dundee**, Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), London
- **The Lord Dubs**, Vice-Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), London