



Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic
to the United Nations Office and other International
Organizations at Geneva

Statement by Czechia at the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Seventy-third session, 10 – 14 October 2022

Delivered by Jitka Brodská, Chargé d'affaires

Mister Chair, Mister High Commissioner, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Czechia aligns itself with the statement by the European Union.

At the outset, allow me to thank you, Mister High Commissioner, for your outstanding cooperation and support in conjunction with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the high-level consultations held in Prague in June.

The year of 2022 has seen a huge increase in the number of forcibly displaced people around the world, largely a result of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. The war has caused a global economic shock, disrupted supplies of food and fuel. Food insecurity has worsened significantly, exacerbated by increasingly intense and frequent climate-related events, putting millions on the brink of famine.

We condemn the unacceptable behaviour of the Russian Federation which sets the European continent back to times believed to be a part of its dark side of history. From the humanitarian perspective, Russia has triggered a humanitarian crisis with many civilian casualties and millions of internally displaced persons and refugees. Furthermore, Russian soldiers are forcibly deporting Ukrainian children to Russia for re-education. Russia must immediately start respecting international humanitarian law and stop causing further human suffering. Russia must allow for safe and unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to all persons in need.

We support Ukraine comprehensively. Czechia hosts the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita in the world – over 440 thousand which is about 4% of our overall population.

We welcome the help we have already received from UNHCR to create additional accommodation capacities. We appreciate that UNHCR updated its methodology for financial support in relation to the Schengen area and has also acknowledged refugees registered in countries which have no direct border with Ukraine. Furthermore, it is a pleasure to work with UNHCR within the Refugee Coordination Forum and on the Refugee Response Plan 2023.

Since the beginning of the Russian war in Ukraine, we have allocated humanitarian and stabilisation aid worth 40 million euro. And more is to come. We have amended our legislation, allocated national resources and together with the regional authorities we have established coordination mechanisms. Simply put, we are trying to do our best.

The Czech Government is in the process of preparing a special Reconstruction program for Ukraine, which will be developed in a dialogue with Ukrainian partners and will be based on long lasting Czech-Ukrainian partnership. To name a few, we backed these efforts through UNHCR already in Moldova and Ukraine by 1 million euro each.

We will continue to support Ukrainians in their desire to decide their own destiny independently and to strive for a democratic future and Euro-Atlantic orientation for their country.

Despite all of this, we remain aware of even greater refugee crises around the globe. We did not forget. And since the Ukraine-related funds are additional resources, we can continue to help also in other parts of the world.

Over the last 12 years, Czechia´s long-lasting assistance to forcibly displaced people in cooperation with UNHCR amounted to 22,8 million euro, among others allocated to Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mali, Niger, Pakistan, Serbia, or Syria. Furthermore, we were able to contribute to the efforts of the High Commissioner

through the Junior Professional Officer and newly also the UN Volunteers Programmes.

Humanitarian crises highlight the need for coherent humanitarian – development – peace action. We continue to promote this triple nexus to strengthen resilience in countries and regions vulnerable due to impacts of climate change, security risks, and ongoing or potential conflicts. We welcome the UNHCR's involvement and support in this regard.