



## HIGHLIGHTS

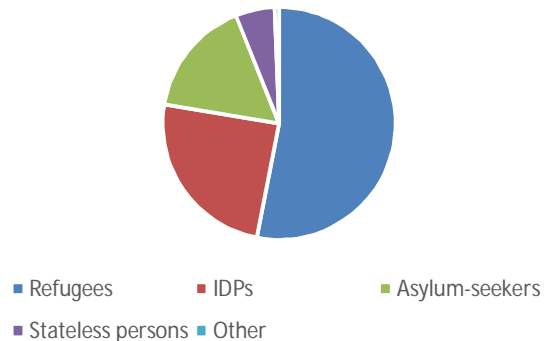
### Population of Concern

By end 2018, there were **12.4 million** persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR within the OSCE area. This number has more than doubled since 2014 (5.2 million).

Population	Total PoC*
Refugees	6,905,519
IDPs	2,715,426
Stateless	634,657
Asylum-seekers	2,045,650
Others	71,914
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,373,166</b>

\* Statistics as of December 2017

### UNHCR Persons of Concern in the OSCE region: 12.4 million (end 2018)

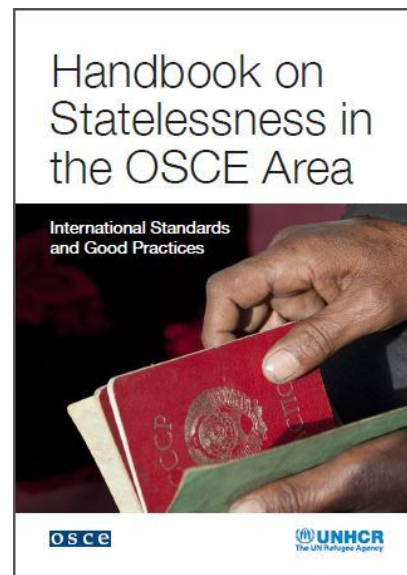


## WHAT IS UNHCR?

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created by the UN General Assembly in 1950 and began work on 1 January 1951.

Since its founding, the Agency has worked not only to strengthen legal instruments such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, but increasingly has assisted related groups such as asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the stateless, working directly in conflict areas and providing international protection and humanitarian assistance.

Today, a staff of 11,500 people in 128 countries continues to help tens of millions of people.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> for more details.

## UNHCR'S COOPERATION WITH THE OSCE

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- In 1998, the OSCE and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding on enhancing co-operation. Operational agreements were signed with OSCE in Kosovo (2011) and Ukraine (2014).
- Since 1998, the two Organizations have co-operated on a wide range of conceptual and operational activities, also in recognition of the link between conflict and displacement. Owing to the increasing complexity of conflicts, as well as post-conflict situations, activities on behalf of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons are relevant to all three OSCE security dimensions.
- Conflict prevention, conflict management and addressing displacement is linked in different ways to the mandates of both Organizations and underlines the need for close co-operation (e.g. Ukraine, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh).

## STRUCTURE OF UNHCR LIAISON OFFICE VIENNA (LOV)

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- Liaison with the OSCE was initiated by the then UNHCR Regional Office Vienna in 1998, which mainly focused on thematic issues relating to the aftermath of the Bosnian and the emerging Kosovo crises.
- Since 2002, the liaison with the OSCE has been further institutionalized in the form of a Liaison Unit, and as a result of the positive co-operation experience, it also encompassed a broader thematic and geographical basis. In 2007, the Unit was gradually transformed into a Liaison Office (LOV), with LOV progressively assuming more responsibilities both, in terms of scope of counterparts as well as of thematic coverage.
- As of March 2014, LOV is comprised of three staff members, supported by interns, and has been more operational since then.

## GENERAL ACTIVITIES OF LOV

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- LOV's general activities include representing UNHCR's concerns to the OSCE, liaising with the 57 OSCE participating States, its 11 Partners for Co-operation, its Executive Structures and Institutions such as the Secretariat, the Conflict Prevention Center, the Transnational Threats Department, the Border Management Staff College, the SR/Coordinator for Combatting THB, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and other OSCE field presences. This collaboration has resulted in joint OSCE-UNHCR multiphase projects such as the [\*"Protection Checklist: Addressing Displacement and Protection of Displaced Populations and Affected Communities along the Conflict Cycle"\*](#) and the [\*"Handbook on Statelessness in the OSCE Area: International Standards and Good Practices"\*](#).
- LOV also collaborates with other Vienna-based Organizations such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

## 2019/2020 PRIORITIES

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- Advocacy activities on international protection of UNHCR persons of concern along the conflict cycle, including in protracted conflict situations, and guidance on mixed migration issues such as Mediterranean Sea crossings and the 'Balkan Route'.
- Implementation of the joint OSCE-UNHCR Handbook on Statelessness, including study visits and seminars to promote good practice examples; joint trainings and workshops on the OSCE-UNHCR Protection Checklist for OSCE field staff.
- Provision of expertise in different OSCE fora on issues of UNHCR's persons of concern, trafficking in human beings, disaster displacement, integration, tolerance and non-discrimination, hate crimes and others.
- Dissemination of up-to-date information and data on UNHCR persons of concern within the OSCE region, including regular updates on the IDP situation in Ukraine.
- Co-moderation of Working Group II on humanitarian issues within the Geneva International Discussions (GID).
- Continued cooperation with OSCE at HQ and field levels in Western Balkans and Central Asia on such issues as statelessness, civil registration, border management, trafficking in human beings, asylum building, mixed migration, durable solutions such as return and integration, and other areas of common interest.

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