



**OSCE / UNHCR / EU / CoE Statement
at The International Refugee Conference, Belgrade
25 March 2010**

The OSCE, the UNHCR, the EU and the CoE commend the political will of the four states involved in the International Conference on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons, encouraging them to use this chance to reach an effective political agreement on durable solutions for the remaining refugees and IDPs in the region. The countries of the region have undoubtedly made significant steps on the path of progress since the end of the armed conflict, so that they should be in a position today to reach finally an agreement on this crucial and multifaceted issue.

The convening of today's Conference in Belgrade, five years after signing the Sarajevo Declaration, after a series of preparatory meetings in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo, is a clear sign that the four participating countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, recognize their responsibility to fulfil their human dimension commitments and to continue their joint engagement in solving this long-standing issue, thus promoting regional security and removing potential for future political grievances.

We acknowledge that progress has already been achieved on a number of issues in all four states in resolving displacement issues during the course of the past decade. In this respect, we fully support efforts of the states to seriously engage in the exchange of relevant data as one of the preconditions to reach common understanding of the scope of the problem and the number of refugees and displaced persons awaiting durable solution. We are convinced that corroborated and verifiable data would accelerate both return and integration process, while the right of refugees remains to opt freely for either of the two options. Indeed, in line with the principles of stabilization, conflict prevention and strengthening of human rights, we underline that the settlement of refugee issues through a depoliticized inter-State dialogue aimed at elimination of all open issues of a post-conflict nature is a necessary precondition for the stability of the region.

Therefore, we are urging the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia to invest additional efforts in resolving all remaining issues that still affect refugees and displaced persons in the region, whereby a satisfactory and final settlement is yet to be found. The four Governments are encouraged to engage in joint actions to achieve durable solutions for the former and remaining refugees and internally displaced persons, and returnees within a foreseeable timeframe. To this end, the OSCE, the UNHCR, the EU and the CoE encourage the four Governments to agree at the conference 25 March to undertake the following actions and to establish a time schedule for these actions:

- Intensify technical cooperation between the main interlocutors in the region in order to establish clear statistics on all aspects of refugee return and local integration which will help to clarify the measures that need to be taken. Agree on the parameters and criteria for a comprehensive needs assessment in all countries;

- Establish mechanisms for future cooperation through bilateral and regional working groups to address the outstanding thematic issues to achieve durable solutions, including all aspects of housing rights, in particular OTRs;

- Design an action plan addressing the specific issues to be resolved, with clearly defined timelines, budgetary commitments, and methodologies. Agree on a joint information campaign to inform remaining refugees on improved conditions for durable solutions and to call upon them to “decide now” whether to return or to opt for local integration.