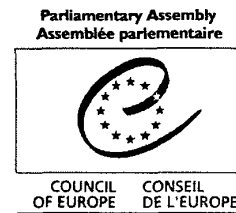


## Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



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### Activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Report  
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population  
Rapporteur: Mr Michael Hancock, United Kingdom, Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group

#### *Summary*

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is one of the world's principle humanitarian agencies, mandated to provide international protection to refugees and to supervise the application of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and other international refugee instruments.

The Council of Europe maintains close co-operation with the UNHCR and actively supports the UNHCR's activities in Europe, in particular in conflict and post-conflict areas such as the Balkans and the North Caucasus.

In this report, the Parliamentary Assembly supports the UNHCR's Convention Plus Initiative aimed at improving refugee protection through special multilateral agreements in a spirit of international co-operation, paying particular attention to the issue of the strategic use of resettlement as an instrument of burden sharing in Europe.

The Assembly encourages further co-operation between the Council of Europe and the UNHCR in the drafting of legal standards related to asylum and to the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers.

## I. Draft resolution

1. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated by the United Nations to lead and co-ordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems. The UNHCR activities are mandated by its Statute and guided by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Therefore, the UNHCR strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state and, once circumstances allow, to return home voluntarily and in safety and dignity.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly maintains close co-operation with the UNHCR through its Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population and gives its full support to the UNHCR's activities and in particular to its assistance in Europe.
3. The Assembly welcomes the UNHCR's work in war-torn areas such as the Balkans and the North and South Caucasus. It calls on all international partners to ensure that the UNHCR is not left alone to cope with refugee crises without a guarantee of security provided by the international community.
4. The efforts of the UNHCR in ensuring that the creation of a European Union common policy on asylum and migration is fully consistent with the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and human rights standards merits the full support of the Assembly.
5. The Assembly considers that co-operation between the Council of Europe and the UNHCR in the drafting of legal standards related to asylum and to the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers should be further developed.
6. The Assembly acknowledges the Agenda for Protection, endorsed by the UNHCR's Executive Committee and welcomed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002, as a central policy framework providing guidance for concrete actions by the UNHCR, governments and NGOs.
7. The Assembly attaches great importance to the UNHCR's "Convention Plus" initiative aimed at improving refugees' protection through special multilateral agreements in a spirit of international co-operation and, in particular, to the issue of the strategic use of resettlement as an instrument of burden sharing in Europe. It encourages Council of Europe member states to take an active part in the elaboration of these agreements.
8. Therefore, the Assembly invites the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe to:
  - i. ensure effective access to a fair asylum procedure in the application of border control measures and the management of illegal migrants in full accordance with the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and other human rights standards;
  - ii. commit themselves to burden-sharing strategies as promoted by the UNHCR by increasing capacities for the resettlement of refugees;
  - iii. clarify the respective responsibilities of Council of Europe member states in the event of irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers;
  - iv. secure the funding of the UNHCR's budget and support the efforts of the organisation to attract additional resources, including complementary funding, also from the private sector;
  - v. organise ministerial and parliamentary debates on migration and asylum policies, with special emphasis on the situation of refugees, the role of the UNHCR and the creation of positive public opinion receptive to refugees' needs and supportive to their efforts to integrate;
  - vi. provide adequate training, together with the assistance of the UNHCR where relevant, for officials dealing with the problems of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons;

- vii. intensify the fight against human trafficking, while ensuring access to international protection for individual victims of trafficking, as guaranteed by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol;
- viii. encourage the strategic use of resettlement as advocated by the UNHCR as a tool of protection, a durable solution and a tangible form of burden sharing in protracted refugee situations;
- ix. promote the inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons into wider regional and national development and recovery programmes in consultation with the UNHCR where appropriate;
- x. stress the need for continued joint efforts at the national and regional level to avoid and reduce statelessness.

## II. Draft recommendation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution ... (2005) on the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
2. The Assembly considers that the Council of Europe could provide further support and impetus to intergovernmental discussions on the pressing issues pertaining to refugees' protection within and outside of Europe.
3. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - i. encourage Council of Europe member states to support the "Convention Plus" process aimed at enhancing the refugee protection regime and providing durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers, acknowledging the need for a framework of special agreements in addition to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol to meet today's' challenges in refugee movements and internal displacement;
  - ii. further develop co-operation with the UNHCR on the legal interpretation of the status of refugees and asylum-seekers;
  - iii. encourage further collaboration, based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 14 March 2005 between the Council of Europe Development Bank and the UNHCR, in order to continue to contribute to finding just and durable solutions to the problems of refugees in the Balkans.

### III. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Hancock

#### 1. Introduction

1. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by the U.N. General Assembly in 1950. The new agency received a limited three-year mandate to help resettle 1.2 million European refugees left homeless by the Second World War. But, as refugee crises mushroomed around the globe, its mandate was extended every five years. In February 2004, the temporal limitation on UNHCR's mandate was removed by a UN General Assembly Resolution (A/res/58/153) "until the refugee problem is solved". Today, UNHCR is one of the world's principal humanitarian agencies, mandated to provide international protection to refugees and to supervise the application of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and other international refugee instruments.

2. Its staff of more than 6,100 personnel are helping 17 million people (as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004) in 116 countries. UNHCR's programmes, its protection regime and other policy guidelines, are approved by an Executive Committee of 66 member states which meets annually in Geneva. To maintain a dialogue with UNHCR throughout the year, there are a number of inter-sessional Standing Committee meetings on protection, administration and finance, every three or four months in Geneva. The High Commissioner presents an annual written report to the General Assembly.

3. The Rapporteur expresses his profound gratitude to Mr Oluseyi Bajulaiye, Deputy Director of the Bureau for Europe of the UNHCR, Mr Jean- Francois Durieux, Head of the Convention Plus Unit, Mr Jean-Claude Concolato, former Representative of the UNHCR to the European Institutions in Strasbourg, as well as, Mr Günther Scheske, Representative of the UNHCR to the Council of Europe and his Legal Assistant, Mr Samuel Boutruche for their assistance in developing co-operation with the Council of Europe and their contributions in the preparation of this report.

#### 2. UNHCR's mandate

##### 2.1. International Protection

4. International protection is the cornerstone of the agency's work. In practice this means ensuring respect for a refugee's basic human rights and ensuring that no person will be returned involuntarily to a country where he or she has reason to fear persecution – the principle of *non-refoulement*.

5. UNHCR promotes international refugee agreements and monitors government compliance with international refugee law. The organisation seeks long-term or 'durable' solutions by assisting governments to help refugees to repatriate to their homeland if conditions warrant, to integrate in their countries of asylum or to resettle in third countries.

6. The term refugee is a very specific definition covering only people who have fled their homeland and sought sanctuary in another country for reasons clearly defined in the 1951 Convention. However, there are millions of people in similar desperate circumstances but who do not legally qualify as refugees and are therefore not eligible for normal relief or protection. Globally, there are an estimated 25 million so-called internally displaced persons (IDPs), people who have fled their homes, generally during a civil war, but have stayed in their home countries rather than seeking refuge abroad. Increasingly, UNHCR has provided assistance to some of these groups.

7. The agency also assists and monitors the reintegration of refugees who have returned to their own countries.

8. UNHCR has been designated by the UN General Assembly as a mediating agency under Article 11 of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, a role entailing the provision of assistance to individuals and states in resolving existing and potential cases of statelessness. Conclusions of the Executive Committee of UNHCR have also urged the Office to encourage states to accede to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions, provide technical and advisory services to

states on their nationality legislation and practice, and assist stateless persons directly, through consultations with the states concerned, and by working with the relevant national authorities to find a solution for them.

## **2.2. Emergency relief**

9. Protection and material help are interrelated. Refugees only enjoy effective legal protection if their basic needs – shelter, food, water, sanitation and medical care – are also met. The 1951 Convention puts the primary responsibility for securing the rights of refugees and for their care and maintenance on host countries. UNHCR engages in assistance measures, where implementation of refugee rights and their basic needs cannot be or are not fully met by the governments concerned. In such situations, the agency coordinates the provision and delivery of such assistance and has designed specific projects for vulnerable women, children and the elderly who comprise 80 percent of a 'normal' refugee population. Major emergencies in the last decade included operations to help millions of people in Iraq, Afghanistan, West Africa, Timor, Kosovo, Africa's Great Lakes region, the Balkans and in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

10. In Central America, and later in other parts of the world, UNHCR developed the concept of quick impact projects or QIPs. These projects, usually small-scale programmes to rebuild schools and clinics, repair roads, bridges and wells, were designed to bridge the gap between emergency assistance provided to refugees and people returning home and longer-term development aid undertaken by other agencies.

11. At the start of 2004, the number of people 'of concern' to UNHCR (including asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, returned refugees and stateless persons) stood at just over 17 million, down from more than 20 million the year before and the lowest total in at least a decade. The significantly lower figures are evidence of increased international efforts to find solutions for millions of uprooted people. They are a reflection of positive developments in some regions of the world, which saw an end to wars and the demise of oppressive regimes. The decline also stemmed from the fact that some of those who had returned to their homes in previous years no longer counted as 'of concern' to UNHCR, which only looks after returnees for a limited period. The great majority of today's refugees would themselves prefer to return home once the situation in their countries of origin stabilizes. In these circumstances, UNHCR encourages voluntary return by providing transportation, financial incentives and practical help such as crop seeds, farming equipment and building materials.

12. When it is sometimes impossible for refugees to go home, UNHCR helps them either to integrate in countries where they first sought asylum or to go to one of some 17 states, which regularly accept refugees for permanent resettlement.

13. While UNHCR has strengthened its ability to handle major emergencies, it also devotes resources to trying to avert these crises by anticipating and preventing huge population movements from global trouble spots. One approach is to put in place a so-called early warning system – establishing an international monitoring presence to confront problems before conflict breaks out.

## **2.3. Partners**

14. As humanitarian crises have become more complex UNHCR has expanded both the number and types of organisations it works with. United Nations sister agencies include the World Food Programme (WFP), which supplies food and basic commodities to refugees, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

15. Other organisations include the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and more than 570 non-governmental organisations.

16. More unorthodox, and at times controversial partners, have included U.N. peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo and Timor, various military missions which provided logistical support in Rwanda and Kosovo and financial institutions such as the World Bank with which UNHCR has signed a Framework of Cooperation.

#### **2.4. Funding**

17. UNHCR is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, principally from governments but also from intergovernmental organisations, corporations and individuals. It receives a limited subsidy of fewer than two percent of its budget from the United Nations regular budget for administrative costs and accepts 'in kind' contributions including tents, medicines, trucks and air transportation.

18. As the number of persons of concern to UNHCR jumped to a high of 27 million in 1994, its budget rose accordingly, from \$564 million in 1990 to more than \$1 billion annually for most of the 1990s. Starting January 1, 2000, programmes were consolidated into a unified budget – the Annual Programme Budget – which provides a more transparent and comprehensive picture of the totality of the organisation's work and financial needs.

### **3. UNHCR's Operations in Europe<sup>1</sup>**

#### **3.1. The Balkans**

19. Though considerable progress has been made to heal the wounds of the 1990s Balkan wars, major problems remain. An estimated 2.2 million civilians went home after the end of the armed conflict. People continue to return to 'minority' areas where they live among their former enemies, some 400,000 of them in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Less than one million people remain displaced, three-quarters of them living in Serbia.

20. One of the main recent achievements in the Balkans was the adoption of asylum laws (in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"), drafted with substantial input from UNHCR.

21. In Kosovo, UNHCR plays a key role in monitoring and analysing the conditions not only of returned IDPs and refugees, but also of minorities at large.

#### **3.2. Western Europe**

22. Immigration and asylum issues remain highly politicised and although the number of asylum applications is actually in sharp decline<sup>2</sup>, some governments continued to introduce tougher national laws to try to reduce the inflow. On the wider European Union level, member states are continuing work to harmonise their various approaches to asylum.

23. UNHCR provides comments on the European Union directives to be adopted under the EU harmonisation agenda. The Office continues to suggest amendments and concrete proposals for ensuring that national asylum systems remain fair, effective and efficient.

24. UNHCR in Western Europe concentrates on protection, i.e. the supervisory role of the Office under its Statute and Article 35 of the 1951 Refugee Convention. These activities include reviewing national asylum systems and decision making in procedures to determine international protection needs as well as providing information and counselling to support voluntary repatriation, in particular of Afghans. UNHCR continues to participate in the asylum procedures in such countries as France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Malta, and, to a lesser extent, at airports in Austria and Switzerland.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Global Report 2003

<sup>2</sup> In 1992, asylum-seekers in the 25 states that now make up the EU numbered around 680,000. 2003, they were fewer than 350,000. In the first half of 2004, the numbers have fallen by a further 18-20 percent as compared to the same period in 2003. The total number stands now at the level of 1990.

### **3.3. North Caucasus**

25. UNHCR in co-operation with the Russian Government is implementing the integration plan for Ossetian refugees from Georgia in North Ossetia.

26. In Chechnya, through international implementing partners, UNHCR provides shelter material to returning IDPs and initiated a pilot project providing box-tents to returnees to Chechnya.

27. With no sign of a major political breakthrough to resolve the war in Chechnya, more than 50,000 IDPs from Chechnya continue to be assisted by UNHCR in neighbouring Ingushetia. UNHCR focuses on ensuring that the return to Chechnya is voluntary, that IDPs unwilling to return are provided with alternative solutions, and that the camps are closed in a civilised manner.

### **3.4. South Caucasus**

28. In Georgia, UNHCR was closely involved in the conflict-resolution process in the Pankisi valley. A profiling of Chechen refugees in this area considerably reduced tensions and contributed to defining a range of durable solutions. UNHCR continues to implement its school rehabilitation project in Abkhazia. The Office also provides assistance to IDPs in Georgia.

29. In Armenia, UNHCR is concentrated on the search for durable solutions for those people who were displaced from Azerbaijan as a result of the still unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This assistance includes health care, social support, vocational training. With the support of UNHCR, the Government has established an effective and simplified mechanism for the naturalisation of refugees from Azerbaijan.

30. In Azerbaijan, UNHCR helped to establish a governmental refugee status determination unit. In the absence of a functioning national asylum system, the UNHCR remains the only reliable source of protection and assistance for thousands of asylum-seekers and refugees.

## **4. Co-operation between UNHCR and the Council of Europe**

### **4.1. Co-operation framework**

31. Since 1996, when the UNHCR established a Liaison Office to the European Institutions in Strasbourg, cooperation with the Council of Europe has developed into a comprehensive partnership, focusing on the development of legal standards, the raising of awareness of human rights and the strengthening of civil societies as these relate to persons of concern to UNHCR.

32. Relations between the two organisations have evolved significantly over the last eight years as the Council's unique and nearly complete pan-European membership coincides with the continued operational involvement of UNHCR in the refugee and displaced population problems of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

33. Through the promotion of democratic stability, the protection of human rights and the monitoring of its member states' commitments, the Council of Europe also contributes to the mandate of UNHCR by fostering an environment conducive to improving the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers and, in the longer term, to enhancing the stability of Europe and preventing further population displacements. The co-operation between the Council of Europe and the UNHCR was given new impetus in 1999 when the two organisations signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation. This cooperation framework seeks to maximise the benefits of each organisation by encouraging a mutually reinforcing partnership in areas of common interest, notably through reciprocal representation at relevant working meetings and the implementation of joint activities where appropriate. The active search for synergies has become a crucial element for UNHCR's Office in Strasbourg in shaping its cooperation strategy with the Council of Europe.



#### **4.2. Intergovernmental activities of the Council of Europe**

34. For UNHCR, one of the most significant aspects of this co-operation is the drafting of legal standards related to asylum and to the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the development of national citizenship legislation and of civil society (non-governmental organisations).

35. UNHCR enjoys observer status with, and actively participates in, all meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the Legal Aspects of Territorial Asylum, Refugees and Stateless Persons (CAHAR), the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) and the Committee of Experts on Nationality (CJ-NA). In addition, UNHCR was recently granted observer status with the Ad Hoc Committee on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CAHTEH), currently drafting a Convention of the Council of Europe on this issue.

36. Over the last year, UNHCR has actively participated within the CAHAR in the drafting of a recommendation on exclusion clauses which should be adopted in 2005. UNHCR also took an active role in the preliminary stage of the drafting of a code of conduct on expulsion procedures. Within the Committee of Experts on Nationality, UNHCR is closely involved in the negotiating of an additional protocol to the European Convention on Nationality on State Succession and Prevention of Statelessness.

37. The Specialist Group on Roma is a technical body of the European Committee on Migration to which UNHCR devotes particular attention, since a large number of asylum-seekers and displaced persons in and from South-Eastern Europe are of Roma origin. Aside from actively participating in Committee meetings which focus on the development of institutions and national strategies, a number of joint concrete activities are also undertaken at the field level.

38. UNHCR and the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Human Rights have jointly conducted national workshops on the European Convention on Human Rights and its relevance for the protection of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers in selected countries.

39. There are regular high-level visits between UNHCR and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. Consultation and co-ordination on the development of integrated strategies and action plans are increasingly taking place, together with other relevant partners. Field-based offices of both organisations regularly consult and share information.

40. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe is a member of the Nansen Refugee Award Committee and has a right to submit the nominations to this award of individuals or groups of individuals whose dedication to, support for and personal interest in refugees has been demonstrated by an innovative approach to refugee protection or assistance.

#### **4.3. Technical assistance programmes**

41. UNHCR and the Council of Europe continue to elaborate and implement annually a joint programme of technical assistance in selected member states on a variety of thematic issues. Themes addressed in these workshops or seminars include the development and implementation of citizenship laws and the avoidance of statelessness (Azerbaijan in 2004, Serbia and Montenegro, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Russian Federation in 2003); the border management and the treatment of asylum-seekers (Turkey in 2003); the development of protection through the European Convention on Human Rights ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Russian Federation in 2003); the strengthening of refugee protection (Moldova, Slovakia and Ukraine in 2003); the development of Media skills (Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2003) and the development and implementation of integration and social rights (Serbia and Montenegro in 2003). In 2003, UNHCR and the Council of Europe Development Bank strengthened their cooperation in the view to supporting the implementation of projects of mutual interest.

42. Further to the 1996 Geneva "Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, other Forms of Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the CIS and Relevant Neighbouring states", UNHCR, IOM, OSCE and the Council of Europe agreed to continue

consultations on migration, refugee related issues and the prevention of statelessness in the region of the CIS states. In accordance with this follow up process, these agencies held a High-Level Review Meeting on "Refugees, Migration and Protection" in Minsk on 26-28 May 2004.

#### **4.4. *Parliamentary Assembly***

43. UNHCR collaborates with a number of the committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and especially with the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population. UNHCR field offices assist the visits of the Committee's rapporteurs, as needed. UNHCR participates as an observer in Committee meetings and shares information and observations with regard to draft reports and recommendations, as was the case for the report and recommendation on UNHCR and the fiftieth anniversary of the Geneva Convention which was adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 27 June 2001. UNHCR has also played a role of co-organiser of different events, hearings or conferences. A typical example was a hearing on the situation of young refugees which took place in Budapest in December 2002.

#### **4.5. *European Court of Human Rights***

44. As the broader regional human rights instrument, the European Convention on Human Rights constitutes a useful complement to the international instruments specifically related to the protection of refugees. It also establishes an enforcement mechanism for its implementation — the European Court of Human Rights — whose jurisprudence can complement international refugee law. UNHCR cooperates with the Court through the sharing of information, particularly concerning UNHCR public protection guidelines related to specific refugee or displacement situations. This contribution of UNHCR through technical assistance is highly appreciated.

#### **4.6. *The Council of Europe Development Bank***

45. The Council of Europe Development Bank and the UNHCR have had regular contacts during several years. This co-operation can be seen in concrete terms by the projects financed by the Development Bank and carried out by the UNHCR for the benefit of the integration or the return of refugees or displaced persons in the five countries of the western Balkans.

46. The Memorandum of Understanding, signed on 14 March 2005 between the two organisations, is a result of this co-operation: the projects funded since 2004 fall within a framework allowing the grant, by the Development Bank, in the form of a donation, of an amount of US\$ 3 million for a period of 5 years (2004-2008). The projects concerned by these donations each require the prior approval of the Administrative Council of the Development Bank. To date, an amount of US \$ 2 million has been approved for four projects – of which two are already being implemented – in two eligible countries, namely in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia and Montenegro. The four projects concern the integration and the return of refugees through the provision of accommodation (construction, reconstruction, the making available of materials for construction) for persons most vulnerable, accommodated in collective centres.

### **5. *Convention Plus initiative***

47. The 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which defined the responsibilities of states toward refugees, are not sufficient to address all the pressing issues pertaining to refugees' protection in today's world. To respond to questions on how durable solutions for refugees can be pursued more effectively and how the responsibility for admitting and protecting refugees can best be shared, the UNHCR has launched the "Convention Plus" process.

48. The Convention Plus builds on the Agenda for Protection, supplementing the Convention with new tools and agreements to enhance the refugee protection regime and broaden it. In this framework, the Convention is the central document, and the "Plus" is about adding tools to take the Convention forward using different methodologies. Convention Plus is not about changing the Convention, but rather about supplementing it with agreements between nations to improve refugee protection.

49. UNHCR has identified three main priority areas for new multilateral agreements:

- agreements designed to ensure more effective and predictable responses to mass influxes of refugees;
- development assistance designed to achieve more equitable burden sharing and to promote refugee self sufficiency in host countries, local integration in areas hosting refugees, and reintegration in countries of origin;
- multilateral commitments to offer third-country resettlements to vulnerable refugees.

50. The work on generic agreements is currently led by five "facilitating" states: Canada on resettlement, Denmark and Japan on the targeting of development assistance, and South Africa and Switzerland on secondary movements. Their role, in collaboration with UNHCR, is to lead the process of crafting special agreements. Each facilitating State coordinates discussions and deliberations with a group of other interested states, and ensures that NGOs have ample opportunity to provide their views. A number of European states have supported a series of projects, proposed in the framework of this initiative.

51. For the European region, the issue of the strategic use of resettlement is of special importance. The Convention Plus approach to this problem suggests the use of resettlement as a protection tool, a durable solution as well as an instrument of burden sharing. It means that the quality of resettlement should be improved and countries with a more developed economy should significantly increase their capacities for resettlement. A committed effort to resettle a sizeable number of refugees from states hosting large numbers of refugees for protracted periods may lead to greater ability and willingness to continue to protect and find other durable solutions for those refugees who remain.

52. The Convention Plus is giving positive momentum to the efforts of UNHCR. The goals of this initiative are closely connected to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The eighth goal of the MDGs, which calls for a global partnership for development, is in line with the Convention Plus process since it promotes the contributions of refugees to development and the targeting of a fair share of development assistance to refugees and refugee-hosting communities.

## **6. Preliminary conclusions and recommendations**

53. The Parliamentary Assembly will continue to support UNHCR's activities in Europe and other regions of the world and in particular in conflict and post-conflict areas such as the Balkans and the north Caucasus.

54. The Assembly also welcomes the efforts of UNHCR to ensure that the creation of a European Union common policy on asylum and migration is fully consistent with the 1951 Refugee Convention and human rights standards. The Council of Europe should fully support UNHCR's asylum strategy in this respect.

55. The Assembly fully supports the Convention Plus Initiative aimed at improving refugees protection through special multilateral agreements in a spirit of international co-operation and calls on the member states of the Council of Europe to take an active part in the elaboration of these agreements. The Assembly acknowledges the Agenda for Protection as the central policy framework providing guidance for concrete action by UNHCR, governments, NGOs and other partners.

56. The Council of Europe could provide a forum for ministerial and parliamentary debates on immigration and asylum policies, with a special emphasis on the situation of refugees and the creation of positive public opinion receptive to refugees' needs.

57. The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, in its turn, could pay more attention to the problem of resettlement of refugees as a tool of protection, a durable solution and a tangible form of burden-sharing. A hearing could be organised in co-operation with UNHCR on this problem and the best examples of its solution in Europe.

58. The Assembly will call on its member states to secure the funding of UNHCR's budget and to support the efforts of the organisation to attract additional resources, including complementary funding, also from the private sector.

*Reporting Committee* : Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

*Reference to committee*: Doc. 10133, Ref. 2955, 26.4.2004

*Draft resolution and draft recommendation* unanimously adopted by the Committee on 25 April 2005

Mr John **Wilkinson** (Chairperson), Mrs Tana de Zulueta (1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson), Mr Doros **Christodoulides** 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairperson), Mr Jean-Guy **Branger** (3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-Chairperson), Mrs Manuela Aguiar, Mr Pedro **Agramunt**, Mrs Lale Akgün, Mr Gulamhuseyn Alibeyli, (alternate: Mr Bakhtiyar **Aliyev**), Mr Jozef **Banáš**, Mr Akhmed Bilalov, Ms Oksana Bilozir, Mrs Mimount **Bousakla**, Mr Paul Bradford, Mr Ivan Brajović, Mr Márton **Braun**, Mr Christian Brunhart, Mr Mevlüt **Çavuşoğlu**, Mr Boriss Cilevičs, Mrs Minodora Cliveti, Mrs Elvira Cortajarena, Mr Franco Danieli, Mr Joseph Debono Grech, (alternate: Mrs Helen **D'Amato**), Mr Taulant Dedja, Mr Nikolaos **Dendias**, Mr Karl Donabauer, (alternate: Mr Harald **Himmer**), Mrs Lydie **Err**, Mr Mats **Einarsson**, Mr Valeriy Fedorov, Mrs Daniela Filipiová, Mr Karl Theodor Freiherr von und zu Guttenberg, Mr Andrzej **Grzesik**, Mr Andrzej Grzyb, Mr Ali Riza **Gülçiçek**, Mr Michael **Hagberg**, Mr Michael **Hancock**, Mrs Jelena Hoffmann, Mr Ilie **Ilaşcu**, Mr Tadeusz **Iwiński**, Mrs Corien W.A. **Jonker**, Lord **Judd**, Mr Oleksandr Karpov, Mrs Eleonora **Katseli**, Mr Evgeni Kirilov, Mr Dimitrij **Kovačič**, Mr André Kvakkestad, Mr Petr Lachnit, Mr Geert Lambert, Mr Jean-Marie Le Guen, Mr Younal Loutfi, Mr Tito Masi, Mr Jean-Pierre Masseret, Mr Morten Messerschmidt, Ms Nóra Nagy, Mr Giuseppe Naro, Mr Pasquale Nessa, Mr Xhevdet Nasufi, Mr Kalevi **Olin**, Mr İbrahim Özal, Mr Gheorghe Popa, Mr Cezar Florin Preda, Mr Gabino Puche, (alternate: Mr Adolfo **Fernández Aguilar**), Mr Milorad Pupovac, Mr Martin Raguž, Mr Anatoliy Rakhansky, Mr Marc **Reymann**, Mr Branko Ružić, Ms Katrin Saks, Mrs Naira **Shakhtakhtinskaya**, Mr Össur Skarphéðinsson, Mr Luzi Stamm, (alternate: Mrs Rosemarie **Zapfl-Helbling**), Mrs Terezija Stoisits, Mr Michael Stübgen, Mrs Elene Tevdoradze, (alternate: Mrs Irine **Kurdadzé**), Mr Tigran Torosyan, Mr José Vera Jardim, Mrs Ruth-Gaby **Vermot-Mangold**, Mr Arno Visser, (alternate: Mr Ed **van Thijn**), Mr James Wray, (alternate: Mr George **Foulkes**), Mr Akhmar Zavgayev, Mr Emanuelis Zingeris, Mr Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

*N.B. The names of those members present at the meeting are printed in **bold***

*Secretariat of the Committee*: Mr Halvor Lervik, Mr Mark Neville, Mr David Čupina