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Statement by Michael O'Flaherty
Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Chişinău, Republic of Moldova
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President, Ministers,

I join in condemning, without equivocation, the atrocities that continue to be perpetrated by the Russian Federation against the people of Ukraine. I join in insisting that all those who are responsible face criminal accountability. I also insist that the human well-being, human rights, and dignity of the people of Ukraine will be embedded at the heart of pathways to peace. Right now, this means among other things, continuing to welcome those who have fled the conflict.

Standing up for the human rights of the people of Ukraine, and for everyone else in our member states, of course means standing up for the European Convention on Human Rights.

In this regard, we have experienced a difficult few months during which many of our member states could have done more in defence of the Convention and the Convention system. I'm left wondering after these months, if some of our governments realise quite what is at stake.

The extraordinary achievement of the modern-day human rights legal system is, nevertheless, a fragile one, which requires great care and attention. We have now arrived at a moment at which we must express a firm determination.

A determination to insist on the universality of human rights, as well as on the independence of the European Court of Human Rights, and of all other courts.

This is no less a moment for us to resolve never to instrumentalise human rights standards or institutions in the pursuit of policy goals, including policy goals in the context of migration management.

Thank you.