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Austrian Statement

Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva

Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me express Austria's sincere appreciation for the excellent leadership of the Director General and the Deputy Director General, as well as for the dedicated work of IOM staff in the field and at Headquarters.

Austria aligns herself with the statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Irregular flows of refugees and migrants to Europe have reached an unprecedented extent in recent months. Austria is one of the most affected European countries, as a country of transit as well as of destination. In 2015 we expect 95.000 asylum applications for the entire year, a significant challenge for a country of some 8 million inhabitants.

At the same time we are well aware that many countries outside Europe, in particular those located in the neighbourhood of protracted conflicts and fragile states, host much larger communities of refugees, displaced persons and migrants. In particular this applies to the countries neighbouring Syria. We highly commend their enormous efforts in this regard.

Stepping up support to these countries as well as enhancing reception and protection capacities of other key countries are paramount. In addition to the recent financial resources mobilized by the European Union, Austria has increased her contributions to financial instruments for

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this purpose such as to the EU's Trust Funds in response to the Syrian crisis and to the newly established Fund for Africa.

However, the current irregular, mixed flows of refugees and migrants are hardly sustainable. Neither for Syria's neighbouring countries, which host millions of refugees, nor for those European states mostly affected by first arrivals, transit and actually lodged asylum applications.

We need to step up solidarity and cooperation both at a global but also at a European level and enhance our capacities to cope with the challenges in international migration management.

In this context, IOM's expertise, policy advice and operational networks as *the* global international organisation for migration will be crucial. We are pleased to see, therefore, that IOM is well prepared to assume its tasks by actively participating in relevant international efforts, such as recently in the Valletta Summit.. We are aware, Mr. Director General, that it lies within the responsibilities of IOM's Member States, to maintain and strengthen the organisation's capabilities to meet its tasks. Austria stands ready to do so.

During the past year Austria's excellent bilateral cooperation with IOM has continued. We have successfully continued our cooperation in the implementation of our national program for the humanitarian admission and resettlement of 1.500 Syrian refugees which has reached its final stage now. Together with UNHCR, IOM has proved to be an indispensable and diligent key partner in its implementation. We will be able to build on this experience in coming years, in particular when it comes to the implementation of the Common European Resettlement Scheme agreed by the EU this summer.

As stressed in the European Union's common statement, swift and effective return of migrants who have no right to stay in the EU is key for the credibility and proper functioning of migration and asylum systems.

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Austria has cooperated with IOM in assisted voluntary return programmes for many years. We highly appreciate IOM's expertise in this area which is of utmost importance in the current situation.

Finally, while we recognise the potential benefits of migration, we have to bear in mind that only properly managed migration flows can ensure these benefits. Forced displacement and irregular migration undermine the possibilities for well-managed migration and mobility. Saving lives, ensure protection of those in need, fight organised crime responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking must go hand in hand with tackling the root causes of forced displacements and uncontrolled irregular migration flows. Viable solutions to protracted crisis situations and violent conflicts like the one in Syria are of most urgent, primary importance in this regard. We need a swift nation-wide ceasefire and a solid political process in Syria. We hope that the Vienna talks are bringing us closer to such a perspective, which would alleviate the suffering of millions of refugees and displaced persons and, at the same time, give us a better chance to focus on sustainable approaches to migration management.

Thank you.