



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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STATEMENT

by

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Chairperson
Director General
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to the Director General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization. At the same time, I wish to thank him for his continuous leadership.

The delegation of the Republic of Macedonia aligned with the statement of the European Union, but I will address a number of issues in our national capacity.

I would like to join other delegations welcoming the admission of Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Republic of Kiribati the State of Eritrea and Saint Lucia in the Organization. We would also like to welcome a number of entities getting observers status which only confirms the relevance of the work of our Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

Indeed this year we faced with different challenges with the issue of migration becoming more dramatic.

The protracted and new conflicts around the world, causing enormous humanitarian emergencies, combined with the development fatigue in the countries are nowadays the main trigger for the migration waves of millions of people. Negative security developments continue to intensify displacement and massive exodus of people thus contributing to the increase flows of illegal migration.

Without any doubt the international community must continue to provide substantial assistance to the countries and different regional stakeholders ensuring secure and stable environment. More importantly, it must urgently to address the root causes of insecurity. This is a huge challenge in front of us, which is tragically reinforced with the recent terrorist attacks.

We have to remind ourselves about the Syrian conflict, which entered its fifth year and continues to cause a horrific loss of lives and appalling displacements, making it one of the largest humanitarian emergencies ever. Unfortunately, this is not the only humanitarian crisis we are witnessing, yet ,given its consequences the Syrian conflict nowadays tops the global and regional agenda.

Despite these negative trends, solidarity and generosity were demonstrated. States undertake their international responsibilities, however there is much more to be done.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now focus on the present state of affairs critical to my country, our Region and wider Europe. As part of the “Western Balkans route”, Macedonia is strongly affected by the European migrant and refugee crisis. Since the beginning of 2015, over 500.000 migrants from Middle East and North Africa have crossed the country seeking to reach Western Europe. Recent daily average flow is between 5.000 and 6.000 up to 10.000 migrants and the trend is estimated to continue.

Macedonia plays constructive role and puts strong efforts in managing the mixed refugee and migrant flow. Our authorities, in cooperation with UNHCR, IOM, Red Cross and other humanitarian non-governmental organizations active on the ground, have been doing their utmost to orderly handle the raising inflows of migrants and provide them treatment in the most humane and appropriate manner, respecting all international legal obligations. However, our resources and capacities are exhausted to deal with the mass influx and address related challenges.

In view of the overall complexity of the present migration situation we deem important to stress the following:

- Full implementation of the commitments undertaken at the High Level Conference and the Leaders Meeting on the Western Balkans route. It is necessary that all countries work collectively, efficiently in a coordinated and comprehensive manner and synergy;
- Continual exchange of relevant information is necessary with the EU institutions, member states and candidate countries, with full access for cooperation with relevant EU agencies and instruments for all non-EU member Balkan states;
- By all means it is necessary to avoid closing borders on the migration route. Conflicts and high tensions in the Balkans are possible if borders along the migrant route to the end destination member states were to be closed;

- We reiterate the urgency for deployment of FRONTEX at the Greek - Macedonian border, in order to ensure more effective management of mixed refugee and migrant flows, and in that regard it is necessary that coordination and communication to be stepped up between our two countries, including through establishment of joint operational and rapid intervention teams, as well as permanent liaison officers both in Skopje and in Athens.
- My country is committed to contribute to the European response to the crisis, by strengthening border management and registration and identification process, which requires daily operational coordination with EU and member states involved in the "hotspot" strategy.
- The principle of proportionality and national absorption capacities have to be respected with regard to the provision of transit relief accommodation and longer term shelter for migrants.

Mr. Chairperson,

By recently adopting Agenda 2030 - Sustainable Development Goals, UN member states rightly included the issue of migration at front of their priorities.

Macedonia supports the development of comprehensive approaches to migration and human mobility, including asylum seekers and refugees at global regional and national levels. We therefore look forward of the IOM work and contribution as leading global migration agency in reaching this goals. We also believe that regional organizations can and should play a constructive role in providing instrumental support to Member States in addressing the challenges and opportunities of migration, each offering its expertise and own regional perspective.

The Republic of Macedonia strives for efficient management of the migration processes. Our policy is based on the principles of respect for and protection of human rights and freedoms, solidarity, long-term macro-economic benefits.

Last but not least, next year in Turkey we are going to have first ever Humanitarian Summit. In view of the timely holding of this meeting we should not lost the opportunity to forge our efforts for success on the critical importance of humanitarian affairs.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, I would like to to recognize the important role of the IOM in providing assistance to migration governance. In this context I would like to underline the excellent cooperation with the IOM Office in Macedonia in these challenging times.

As we are confronting with the new unprecedented migration flows, our political declarations must be transformed into reality.

Thank you.