



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

109th Session of the Council of IOM
Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cyprus
Delivered by H.E. Ambassador George Kasoulides

Mr. Chair,

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement made by the EU earlier this week and wishes to add the following in its national capacity.

Firstly, allow me to join others in congratulating Antonio Vitorino for his recent assumption of the office of the Director General of IOM and the new bureau for their election and to assure them of Cyprus' full support. Let me also welcome Uzbekistan in the IOM family.

The 109th Session of the Council marks a successful year for the development of a global and comprehensive approach regarding the management of migration, with the soon-to-be adopted Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The successful conclusion of the negotiations of this very first document within the UN context that covers all aspects of migration is evidence of the fact that multilateralism and international cooperation is still and should be the response to global issues such as migration. It is our wish and our aim that the Compact will have an important impact on the goal of efficient and effective global management of migration. Addressing the rights of migrants, the benefits of migration for the countries concerned as well as the migrants themselves, will bring us closer to achieving our SDGs and to uphold, respect and safeguard human rights. For the implementation of the Compact, States should work in cooperation with the UN. In this framework, we welcome IOM's coordinating role in the review of and follow-up

of the Compact. Its expertise is a valuable contribution towards global migration governance.

Mr. Chair,

Cyprus in its recent history has experienced forced internal displacement and migration and today we are a transit and destination country for a large number of mixed migratory and refugee flows. We therefore support- as stated also in the Global Compact for Migration- a comprehensive approach to migration that will address the urgent need to save lives while at the same time dealing from the very beginning with the driving factors that force people to move and during the move. Cyprus has been responding to emerging migratory flows at sea with timely and effective rescues within its geographical limitations and by receiving all in need in a dignified manner.

The challenges that a small country like Cyprus is facing with regards to the management of mixed flows across the Mediterranean demonstrate the importance of the principle of solidarity to be realised in the global and regional contexts. Cooperation between neighbouring countries and regions is imperative. Readmission agreements and other regional arrangements in place, such as the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, should be respected and fully implemented and not ala cart. It is our position that short-term political expediencies should not undermine international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility sharing.

Let me conclude by assuring you that the Cyprus Government will continue working closely with the IOM and supporting its in-country Office in Cyprus, via voluntary financial contributions and substantial assistance and cooperation in almost all areas of competence. We are particularly pleased with the constructive work, undertaken by the Office of the IOM in Cyprus on migration and health, family reunification and assistance, in implementing the Assisted Voluntary Return program and also in providing specialized counseling support with priority given to migrants in vulnerable situations. We further welcome its plans on expanding on the reintegration

component of the voluntary return program among other objectives such as integration, technical support and exchange of best practices in migration issues, reception capacities and raising awareness whilst fighting xenophobia and intolerance. We stand ready to enhance this collaboration.

Thank you.