

**IOM Council**  
**109<sup>th</sup> session**  
**27 – 30 November 2018**  
**General debate**  
**Statement by Latvia**

Thank you Mr Chairman,

Director-General, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to offer you, Mr Vitorino, my delegations most sincere congratulations upon your assumption of your new responsibilities as the Director-General. We wish you all the success in leading the Organization and looking forward to working with you.

My delegation would also like to extend congratulations to you, Ambassador Garcia, and the Council Bureau on your election. I would also like to welcome Republic of Uzbekistan as a new member to the Organization.

Mr Chairman,

Latvia aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and would like to make few additional remarks in national capacity.

Mr Director-General,

Latvia would like to thank you for the report that reflected on areas of the Organization's actions, your vision for the next decade, as well as issues to be addressed by the Administration in the near future.

We are witnessing increase in migration crises and their growing complexity. While ensuring protection to those in need of international protection remains a paramount task, we would like to stress the IOM's crucial role and the importance of further promotion of return, as well as of strengthening of the fight against smuggling and trafficking of human beings.

Latvia always has valued the Organization's operational work. I would like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Government of Latvia, my countries' appreciation and gratitude for the Organization's support for the voluntary return and reintegration assistance provided to irregular migrants residing or arriving in Latvia.

As you have stressed, the year ahead of us will be one of great change.

Entering the third year since the IOM became a part of the UN family, the Organization will assume its new role in the UN system and in the implementation of the Global Compact.

We are confident, the IOM is prepared for this new task as it aligns with the work that the Organization is already doing daily. Moreover, since *the Agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the IOM* entered into force, the Organization enjoys strengthened coordination and collaboration with other parts of the UN system and adds value to multilateral frameworks and processes through the provision of its expertise in migration-related matters.

Director General,

Yesterday, during the presentation of the report you mentioned the need to strengthen the IOM, including by developing policy capacity. Latvia acknowledges growing need for the systematic accumulation of information, analytics and, ultimately, knowledge that IOM gains from its operational activities in the field. My delegation would be interested to learn more about your vision on decentralized approach of building of the Organization's migration policy capacity. We would see it to be developed within the Organization's core structure, thus ensuring its' coherence and sustainability throughout the Organization.

Latvia fully expects that the new tasks and potential internal reforms of the Organization will preserve and strengthen the IOM's essential characteristics as a responsive, efficient, cost-effective and independent Agency as defined by the IOM Council Resolution No. 1309. We expect, quoting you, Mr Director-General, that ... *we will stick to our very nature, to our DNA...*

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Latvia's appreciation and support for the work of the IOM.

I thank you.