

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
MR. VLADIMÍR GALUŠKA
AT THE 100th SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL
Geneva, 5 - 7 December 2011**

Mr. Chairman, Director General, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Czech Republic, it is my pleasure to congratulate the International Organization for Migration on its 60th anniversary which coincides with the 100th Session of the IOM Council.

I want to start by paying tribute to the commitment of Mr. William Lacy Swing, Director General of the IOM, and thanking him for his excellent leadership of the Organisation which, under his stewardship, continues growing. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all fourteen new members of the Organisation.

This year has been an extremely challenging one. 2011 has been marked by a quick succession of emergencies which have tested capacities of the Organisation and of the Member States. The IOM has managed successfully the emergencies of enormous magnitude which made hundreds of thousands people to move. Again, I would like to thank the leadership of the Organisation and its staff, especially in the field, for their excellent work.

The celebration of the IOM's 60th anniversary gives the Administration as well as the Member States an opportunity to reflect together on possibilities for further strengthening the Organisation and maintaining its high effectiveness in responding to the needs of Member States and migrants.

One of the tools for assisting the IOM, we, the Member States, have at our disposal is fulfilling our own homework, which includes ratification of the amendments to the IOM Constitution. These amendments aim at strengthening the structure and streamlining the decision-making process of IOM. We should also work together on further increasing the number of Members of this Organisation. The Member States can contribute to this by spreading the information on the collaboration of the IOM with us and its effective response to our needs.

In this context, I would like to stress that the IOM represents for the Czech Republic a key partner in realisation of the migration policy and migration management projects, both on the national and international level. The IOM is also our strategic partner in fulfilling our national and European priorities in other areas, such as fight against trafficking in human beings or in realisation of returns.

Currently, the most important project carried out with the IOM's cooperation is the project "Support Reintegration of Georgian Returning Migrants and the Implementation of the EU – Georgia Readmission Agreement" launched in December 2010 as a flagship project of the Partnership for Mobility concluded between the European Union and Georgia.

At the national level, our cooperation with the IOM comprises assisted voluntary returns of foreigners and asylum seekers who have not succeeded in asylum process. The IOM provides assistance services and carries out a resettlement programme.

When it comes to the external dimension of the migration policy, the Czech Republic collaborates with the IOM on the implementation of foreign development cooperation and other migration projects. This includes prevention of the external irregular migration and stabilisation projects for refugees. Other projects, aiming at supporting the transformation processes in some countries, are dedicated to the assistance to the migration and asylum management.

Distinguished Director General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to mention also one of the activities initiated by the Czech Republic during its EU Council Presidency in 2009 – the Prague Process, regional inter-governmental dialogue on the topics relating to migration. I am very glad that this initiative keeps developing with the active participation of the IOM – the evidence of its progress was the second ministerial meeting which took place in Poznan in Poland in November this year.

To conclude, I would very much like to appreciate once again the role of the IOM in the context of multiple dramatic events this year when managing the large-scale humanitarian emergencies and to highlight especially its work in North Africa. As for the scale and activities carried out, the operation in North Africa certainly represents one of the most important actions in the history of this Organisation.

I would like to wish the IOM a lot of success in its demanding work which requires a lot of expertise, hard work, not easy fund raising and last, but not least, human and sensitive approach.

I thank you for your attention.

Check against delivery!