

**Statement of Slovakia at the IOM 100th Council, December 2011**

Mr. Director General, Mr. Chairman, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to use this opportunity to highly appreciate all the activities of the International Organization for Migration for the benefit of migrants worldwide.

Migration is a historical and social phenomenon that significantly influences politics, economy, social aspects, and safety of countries and modifies the composition of the population. On the one hand, it may be a source of conflicts; on the other hand it may contribute to development. Still, it is a phenomenon that influences the future of individual countries and thus also the development of humankind.

Therefore migration requires a systemic approach and qualified control. If we admit, that migration would objectively affect our future, we must manage migration for the benefit of all.

On August 31, 2011 the Government of Slovakia approved a new key document which will create the basis for development of a modern and comprehensive policy in the area of migration. The document is called "Migration policy of the Slovak Republic with a perspective until the year 2020".

The objective of the Migration policy is, in compliance with national interests of the Slovak Republic,

- 1. to create** adequate conditions especially within the area of legal migration, while taking into account the priorities, needs, and abilities with regard to receiving migrants, including their integration within the society,
- 2. to strengthen** the effectiveness of border control with regard to the movement of persons and the fight against illegal migration,
- 3. to contribute** to the adoption of the unified European asylum system, and
- 4. to participate** in the development of global partnerships with countries of origin and transit in order to strengthen the interface between migration and development and thus to contribute to increased quality of the life for inhabitants of Slovakia.

Implementation of the Migration policy is based on a coordinated procedure of state authorities, local state administration bodies, and municipalities and it assumes a wide involvement of non-governmental and other organizations, which are active in this area.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Due to several factors, above all the membership of Slovakia in the European Union, membership in the Schengen area and due to rapid economic development of the country, the number of regular migrants increased threefold. Bearing in mind the open character of my country and emigration of Slovaks, we presume that the increase of regular migration will continue in the future.

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Contribution of the Slovak Republic*

We also acknowledge the importance of active and balanced participation in the activities of the International Organization for Migration, which aims to coordinate the migration flows and harmonize immigration, asylum and integration policies, as well as actively contributes to the development of cooperation with countries of origin.

Allow me to use this opportunity and to mention the involvement of Slovakia in the transit of refugees through the Emergency Transit Centre in the town of Humenne, in cooperation with the IOM and the UNHCR. Today, on December 6, 2011, another group of 40 refugees from Eritrea should arrive into the centre.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Migration is objectively a part of our everyday life. Even without our efforts its importance would continuously increase and if we work on it in a constructive manner, it may bring benefits for the society. If we underestimate or ignore it, it may cause problems in the political, economic, and social life of any country. The phenomenon of migration must be accepted by all political entities on a state level and it must become an integral part of activities performed by individual departments or offices. This is the way Slovakia has chosen for the future.

Currently in 2011 we are not only celebrating the 60th anniversary of IOM, but also the 15th anniversary of membership of Slovakia in the Organisation.

Together, we have assisted in hundreds of cases of voluntary returns of failed asylum seekers and irregular migrants, together we introduced a program focused on the victims of human trafficking, we helped thousands of foreigners to integrate into the Slovak society and together we have built the Emergency Transit Centre in Slovakia. There are plenty of other activities and achievements during those 15 years of mutual cooperation between Slovakia and the IOM. Allow me at this special event to highly appreciate once again the work of IOM in global but also at the local level in my country, the work of the Organization which is non-political, credible and responsible.

I am convinced that our cooperation will continue in the future using the slogan:

*Management of migration for the common benefit!*

Mr. Director General, Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Thank you for your attention.