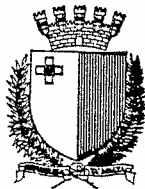


MISSJONI PERMANENTI TA'MALTA



PERMANENT MISSION OF MALTA

Meeting _____
Date 1.12.05
Time _____
Tape No. _____

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Saviour F. Borg
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Malta

to the

Ninetieth Session of the
IOM Council

1 December 2005

Mr. Chairman,

May I first of all congratulate you and the other Members of the new Bureau on your election. I would also like to welcome the new Members of the Organization which in our view is a vivid demonstration of the high esteem, confidence and trust which Member States are placing in our Organization.

Mr. Chairman.

IOM's Director General, Brunson McKinley, has described migration management as one of the major policy challenges of the 21st century. In the Director General's words, "The challenge is to promote the beneficial impact of an international market for workers and professionals while reducing or eliminating the abuses that characterize unregulated flows." IOM has also recognised that in recent years, economic migration has continued to grow and has come to be recognized as a crucially important policy issue. We also note that IOM has been concentrating its attention on facilitating labour mobility, enhancing the developmental impact of migration and working to minimize clandestine flows and abusive practices like trafficking in persons.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome document, when referring to migration and development, acknowledges "the important nexus between international migration and development and the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit".

Likewise, Malta takes careful note of the interesting report of the Global Commission on International Migration which in our view contributes to promoting a wider and better understanding of an important and growing global phenomenon and to advancing the search for workable responses to migration challenges. In this context, the Global Commission also emphasizes the need to build governmental capacity to manage migration, coupled with the call for greater policy coherence at the national and international levels.

The Report of the Global Commission on International Migration referred to the desirability to expand and enhance the important work being carried out by the six-agency Geneva Migration Group (GMG). During the 56th Session of UNHCR's Executive Committee, Malta itself called for a stronger role to be given to the GMG as we feel that this Group is an appropriate vehicle for advancing better co-ordination in the important field of migration and development. the GMG. We consider that such a recommendation would, as the Report states, continue and deepen dialogue among the main international institutions dealing with population mobility. We are also pleased to note that IOM shares this view and supports the Commission's idea to put in place a mechanism for better interagency information-sharing and co-ordination. We encourage IOM to follow-up on this idea.

Mr. Chairman,

Another important aspect which the Report of the Global Commission deals with at some length is that contained in Chapter III of the Report, namely that relating to the 'challenge of irregular migration'.

Indeed, this is one of the major challenges facing Malta. Boats of irregular migrants are landing in Malta at regular intervals and confirm Malta's condition of transit country of migratory flows on the way to Europe, as well as a new destination country even though in practice they arrive in Malta unintentionally since their original destination is in reality mainland Europe. Malta's capacities to deal with migratory flows are limited and restricted by, among other things, its high population rate of density, second only to Hong Kong, and its limited human and financial resources, which makes it very difficult to deal appropriately when confronted with a seemingly never-ending influx of illegal immigrants. The Armed Forces of Malta as well as the Police are being overwhelmed with the patrol and control activities, in the management of the accommodation centres, and in the repatriation and escorting of irregular migrants.

Obviously such a small country cannot be expected to carry this considerable burden by itself. The Maltese Government has for some months now been calling on all concerned parties, both at the international level as well as at the regional level, to extend a hand of assistance to Malta in urgently intensifying collaboration to address and combat the international criminal phenomenon of illegal migration which is not only imposing a heavy burden on our human and financial resources, but is also endangering the lives of the migrants concerned. Malta has also sought the cooperation of International Organisations, such as IOM and UNHCR, in order to assist Malta in dealing with this "unexpected suddenness and magnitude" of the experience through which Malta is passing. Indeed, we are particularly grateful to the Netherlands for setting up a commendable precedent, that a number of other countries appear intent on emulating, to resettle a number of persons granted refugee status in Malta

Today, I would like to renew our call to all IOM Member States to re-double their efforts to co-operate and work with Malta and with other Mediterranean countries to address this phenomenon of irregular population movements in our region which according to the International Centre on Migration Policy Development have been the cause of the death of an estimated 2,000 migrants each year trying to cross the Mediterranean from Africa and Europe. In tackling this phenomenon we note the willingness of IOM to work with all concerned parties to provide coherent responses to needs in as effective and cost-efficient a manner as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

When Malta joined the IOM two years ago, it pledged to establish a closer relationship with IOM. Two years on, my Delegation is pleased to say that Malta's pledge is being fulfilled. In fact, a closer rapport and contacts have been established between IOM and Maltese Officials in Malta, Geneva and Rome.

Malta is also actively involved in MRF's Rome 'Migration Information and Liaison Service' (MILS) project, which is aimed at revising and updating of the Guide "Informed Migration: Training Modules for Embassy Staff and Other Key Migration

Personnel", which contains new provisions on migration in the 5 Mediterranean target countries (Malta, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain)

Following Malta's Membership in the EU, discussions started between the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs and IOM to set up a co-operation strategy. A draft AVR project proposal has been developed to be further tailored and adapted to actual needs and priorities of the Government of Malta.

In October 2004 a MRF assessment Mission took place, which together with the Maltese Authorities identified key Maltese priorities, including; the need for developing return and reintegration programmes; enhancing hosting and integration capacities; and the need for strengthening a multilateral approach toward migration related issues.

The Government of Malta looks forward to consolidating in the coming months its working relationship with IOM to address in a coherent and effective manner the challenges posed by migration for many countries but particularly so for small, densely populated countries such as Malta.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome with satisfaction IOM's view that it considers initiatives fostering interstate dialogue and cooperation as critical to creating coherence between countries so as to enhance prospects for successful and mutually beneficial migration.

In this context, Malta would like to commend the pro-active role IOM has been playing in regional fora in terms of assisting the policy debate and in operational capacity building endeavours. For many years now, Malta has been in the forefront in promoting and participating in regional initiatives as it believes that these initiatives are an excellent vehicle to make practical progress on diverse and important issues, including migration issues. We are pleased that IOM shares this perspective and hope that this can be elaborated further in the years to come.

In the Mediterranean region in particular, we note IOM's particular commitment to be actively engaged in the Cooperation Process in the Western Mediterranean, known as the 5+5 Dialogue. We note the Conclusions of the President of the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Migration in the Western Mediterranean, which was held last month (9 – 10 November 2005) in Paris, where the 10 Western Mediterranean Countries, the European Commission, the ILO, IOM and the ICMPD, considered co-operation on the movement of persons and the fight against illegal migration and human trafficking.

Earlier this week, at the EuroMed Tenth Anniversary Summit held in Barcelona (27-28 November 2005), Leaders from the European Member States and their Mediterranean Partners, agreed on an ambitious agenda to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. The Summit Leaders adopted the 10th Anniversary Statement and an outcomes-oriented Five-Year Work Plan with concrete medium-term targets in a number of fields. The Summit Leaders also committed themselves to the creation of an area of mutual co-operation in justice, security, migration and social integration.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year, as UN Member States, we all have an important rendezvous, namely, the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The UN Secretary-General in his Report to the current session of the UN General Assembly identifies a series of proposals with the main objective of ensuring that appropriate ways and means are taken to maximize the development benefits and minimize the negative impacts of the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development. Malta intends to participate actively in the debate particularly on the topic on international co-operation to prevent and combat the trafficking of persons which Malta considers as a very contemporary topic which requires a contemporary international debate and response.

In this context, we would like to recommend that IOM and its Member States engage themselves more actively in the coming months to prepare for what the UN Secretary-General describes as “a unique opportunity for the international community to set the foundation for enhanced international co-operation in addressing the multifaceted issues raised by the international movement of people.”

Thank you