



**NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL  
(GENEVA, 28 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 2006)**

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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**By**

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AMBASSADOR  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND**

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*Check against delivery*

**92<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOM Council**

**Geneva 28 November - 1 December 2006**

**Statement on behalf of the European Union**

Madame Chairperson

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*<sup>1</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.
2. We wish to congratulate you, Madame Chairperson, and the members of the bureau on your election and wish you success. Furthermore, the EU thanks the outgoing Chairman and bureau. The EU expresses its appreciation to the Director General, Mr. Brunson McKinley, and to the Deputy Director General, Ms. Ndioro Ndiaye, for their comprehensive and informative statements. The EU also welcomes the Republic of Montenegro and Nepal, the new members of IOM, and Qatar Charity as an observer, and wishes them fruitful cooperation with the Organisation.
3. As this is the first time that the EU makes a statement at the IOM Council, let me start by highlighting some issues with regard to the activities of the EU on migration. The EU recognises the importance of international migration as one of the key challenges for the 21st century. The EU has, in recent years, intensified its cooperation with third countries on the management of migration flows.
4. For the European Union a comprehensive and a global approach to migration is fundamental. The establishment of a successful migration policy requires the development of real partnership for the better management of migratory flows, including border control, readmission, institutional capacity building and strengthening the protection of refugees, along with addressing the root causes of migration and combating smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Well-managed migration is beneficial to countries of origin, transit and destination, and it can help meet existing and future labour needs as well. Emphasis on interlinkages between migration and development is an essential element of the EU policy. Within this framework, the EU recognises the role played by migrants and diaspora communities in the development of their countries of origin and of destination.

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<sup>1</sup> \* *Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

5. The European Council, in its Conclusions in December 2005, recalled that migration issues are a central element in the EU's relations with third countries. Developing the Global Approach to Migration, with priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean, is a fundamental priority for the Union. The EU engages very actively in bilateral and regional level dialogue on migration issues with its partners, particularly in Africa and the Mediterranean region. The ministerial level meeting on migration and development held in Rabat in July 2006 was an important step towards a strengthened dialogue between countries of origin, transit and destination in that region. Work with Eastern African routes has started as well. One concrete example is the creation of an immigration liaison officers' network. A recent example of cooperation is the Africa-EU ministerial conference on migration and development held in Libya on 22-23 November 2006 which agreed on strengthening partnership and cooperation and adopted a comprehensive joint declaration on migration and development and an action plan on combatting trafficking in human beings, especially women and children. Now it's the time to start implementing the joint commitments. The EU is also looking forward to the EuroMed ministerial meeting on migration to be organised in 2007.
6. Now that all EU members are also members of IOM the European Union is in a better position to strengthen its collective input in this organisation. EU Member States and the European Commission welcome IOM's good work in respect to their own domestic and multi-lateral and international priorities, in countries and regions of EU priority through multiple approaches covering different migration issues and fields of activities.
7. Furthermore, the EU recognises the usefulness and importance of multilateral discussions. In preparing for the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development the European Union adopted a position which touched many aspects of migration. The EU was pleased with the constructive atmosphere in the HLD where we also emphasized the need for the follow-up of the HLD. In this context, the EU welcomes Belgium's offer to organise the Global Forum meeting next July and is pleased to note that preparations for the Forum are undertaken in close coordination and consultation, not only with governments, but also with the Global Migration Group, civil society and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN.
8. The EU commends IOM's dedicated work in assisting migrants all over the world. We appreciate IOM's capacity to respond flexibly to the needs of migrants. IOM, as all other international actors, is faced with rapidly changing challenges and the EU commends the willingness of IOM to take on and meet these challenges. However, it is important that the IOM's activities are implemented in a strategic way so as to enable the organisation to meet the challenges in an efficient way, within its mandate, optimising its expertise and comparative advantages - and those of other relevant actors. We therefore very much welcome the renewed efforts to agree on a new strategy, identifying priorities for IOM, building on its constitution and on the strategy from 1995.
9. Let me now turn to the question of IOM's strategy. The negotiations on the strategy have been under way for a few years now. The EU wishes to express its support for the objective of concluding the discussions on all three components of the strategy document during the first half of next year in order to maintain the current momentum. The Union takes these negotiations, which should take place within IOM's governing bodies, very seriously. The aim should be a clearly defined document which will serve as a guideline for IOM's work in the coming years. The EU believes it is important that the governing structures of IOM are strengthened, and encourages IOM to consult with its member states on all its operational

activities and on the administrative and budgetary issues of the organization in a transparent manner. In this respect it is of importance for the IOM Member States to ratify the 1998 amendments to the IOM constitution, which are meant to improve governance.

10. Duplication and overlap in activities with other relevant organisations should be avoided. The EU underlines the importance of close cooperation and coordination with all other relevant organisations, in particular with the UN system and within the Global Migration Group. This includes also the preparations of the Global Forum, and its outcome should also be taken into account in the future work of IOM. Improved coordination and cooperation will best serve the target group - migrants themselves. In this context, IOM and its membership will need to keep under active review the question of IOM's relationship to the United Nations with a view to ensuring maximum synergies.
11. The Member States of the EU and the European Commission together are the most significant donor to IOM. As regards the budget for 2007, the member states of the EU are prepared to accept the increase of the administrative part of the budget as proposed by IOM. We want to recall that many of IOM's member states agreed to this only on an exceptional basis, keeping in mind that this decision is not a precedent for the coming years. We call on IOM to keep its expenditure under strict review and to bear in mind that the quality of the projects is more important than the quantity.
12. For years we have discussed the issue of outstanding contributions of some member states. The EU underlines that it is every member state's responsibility to pay its assessed contributions to IOM in a timely manner. It is obvious that the arrears have a negative impact on the administrative part of the budget. The EU expresses its concerns about this chronic situation. The IOM Administration is not able to solve this problem alone without the active commitment of the member states in arrears. We urge all those members to cooperate closely with IOM and to agree on repayment plans in order to solve this problem. Furthermore, we encourage the members in arrears to explain their situation during this Council session.
13. Finally, the EU would like to pay tribute to the dedicated staff of IOM. We want to emphasize that the staff is IOM's most valuable asset. A more regular and open dialogue with IOM administration and the staff would be of great importance, and much appreciated by the EU, especially addressing the concerns expressed by the staff association.
14. The EU takes this opportunity to confirm its commitment to working closely with IOM and to address challenges related to migration. We look forward to our continued constructive cooperation with IOM.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson