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Statement by

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G e n e r a l D e b a t e

Thank you, Madam Chairperson,

Austria aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Director General,

This year, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of IOM. That is to say:

- 70 years of professional delivery – by a reliable and crisis-experienced partner – of a wide range of migration services including orientation activities, language training, medical examination, activities facilitating reception and integration as well as voluntary return, repatriation and reintegration;
- 70 years of dedication and commitment for the benefit of migrants in need, very often in complicated and dangerous environments;
- 70 years of open dialogue, effective cooperation and fruitful exchange of views in the area of migration.

Let me express Austria's heartfelt congratulations to this 70th birthday – thank you for the hard work done and for your preparedness to face the challenges ahead.

Madam Chairperson,

It goes without saying that large movements of migrants have political, economic, social, developmental, humanitarian and human rights ramifications, which transcend all borders. These are global phenomena that call for global solutions.

Among the wide range of IOM's activities, Austria, in particular, appreciates the organisation's work on promoting gender equality and mainstreaming. We commend IOM for its measures to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, protecting the rights of migrant women and girls, eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, contribute to achieving decent work and equal pay for work of equal value as well as ensuring women's full and effective participation.

We welcome IOM's support for the provision of life-saving primary health care, including access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and services to victims of sexual and gender-based violence; nutrition support; case management of non-communicable diseases; HIV, malaria and tuberculosis services; reintegration support to migrants returning voluntarily to their countries of origin; and mental health and psychosocial support around the world. We support IOM's efforts towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities as well as the inclusion of LGBTI migrants.

Madam Chairperson,

In Austria, the latest amendment to the Residence and Stay Act further facilitates the entry and stay of family members of EU citizens, including nationals of non-EU Member States. Provided they meet the legal preconditions, they shall immediately obtain a residence permit, entitling them – from the beginning of their stay – to exercise a self-employed activity in Austria.

In addition, previous requirements with regard to accommodation have been abolished in order to facilitate the immigration of qualified workers and help them obtain the relevant residence permit called "Red White Red Card".

Madam Chairperson,

In recent months, we have seen attempts by States to exploit human beings for political purposes. We consider the orchestrated instrumentalisation of migrants, including women and children, by States through hybrid attacks in order to exert pressure on the European Union to be utterly unacceptable and condemn any such attempts.

Not only do they break international law, they also disregard the fundamental human rights States are internationally obliged to uphold. We remain determined to protect the EU's external borders and ensure an immediate and appropriate response in line with EU law and international obligations, including fundamental rights.

In addition to migration pressure at the external border, we are observing a sharp increase of mixed migratory flows, entailing additional pressure on asylum systems and underlining the need for efficient asylum and return procedures, ensuring swift return for those without protection needs and providing adequate protection to those, who really need it. Moreover, secondary movements and asylum shopping in the EU threaten to undermine our common objective for orderly migration and targeted protection for those most in need.

Director-General,

Austria is grateful for the excellent bilateral cooperation with your organisation. We are proud to host and support IOM's Country Office and its Regional Office for Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Vienna.

In 2021, Austria supported IOM's operations in particular in the areas of migration management, information campaigns, assisted voluntary return and reintegration and combatting migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Austria also contributed to the IOM COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan for Libya, and, as in previous years, to the IOM Development Fund.

IOM's important role as a key partner in migration programming and the implementation of various migration projects, including accommodation, care of migrants in transit countries and return and reintegration, cannot be underestimated, be it in Austria or in other countries, including in our neighbourhood.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to IOM for having been a reliable partner for Austria in all those years.

We continue to support IOM as the leading UN agency on migration.

Thank you very much.