



**European Union**

**Council of the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

**103<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**(26-29 November 2013)**

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**Agenda item 7**  
**General Debate**

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**Geneva, 26 November 2013**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

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### **Agenda item 7 – General Debate**

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished delegates, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Turkey\*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>†</sup>, Montenegro<sup>†</sup>, Iceland<sup>‡</sup>, Serbia<sup>†</sup>, Albania<sup>†</sup>, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

We extend our thanks to Ambassador Hannan for steering the works of the Council in the last year. Our wishes of success for Ambassador Chávez Basagoitia of Peru as incoming Council Chair. We also want to commend the Ambassador de Crombrugghe of Belgium for steering so skilfully the budget discussions. Finally, a warm welcome for the new members of the IOM.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let us congratulate the Director General on his leadership and dynamism in leading the Organization, for his efforts to secure IOM recognition as the leading global migration agency and for the operational work of the IOM. An organisation with 154 Members represents a driving force for leading the migration debate on the main human mobility challenges of our time.

The EU and its Member States are working together to build a strong and coherent EU policy in the field of migration. We share a strategic vision, a Global Approach, which is, on one hand, an important tool for our dialogue and cooperation with third countries in the area of migration and

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\* Candidate country

<sup>†</sup> The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

<sup>‡</sup> Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

mobility, and on the other, a consistent link with other relevant EU policy areas, including development cooperation. The EU and its MS share a strong commitment for a strategic approach to promoting regular mobility of third country nationals across EU external borders. Also, it is our aim to offer adequate response to the root causes of forced migration, such as conflicts, poverty, unemployment or climate change. We are particularly attentive to the protection needs of the most vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied minors, women, asylum-seekers, victims of trafficking or stranded migrants. IOM's work in these areas benefits from our cooperation and financial support.

Mr. Chairperson,

IOM has been and continues to be a most relevant partner in looking after migrants' wellbeing and in advocating unabatedly for the positive impact of migration on development. There are success stories related to these efforts which deserve our praise. At the same time, IOM has to prove itself in a context that has witnessed the widest range of complex humanitarian emergencies in recent times, whether related to conflicts or natural disasters. IOM was extremely responsive to the consequences of the crises in Syria, Libya, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, DRC, Afghanistan or Yemen. The 2013 mid-year review of IOM's humanitarian activities highlighted the growing humanitarian demands, to which the Organisation had to respond, as a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as a strong partner in the cluster system, and as an active participant in the appeals coordinated by OCHA. .

The IOM also had to respond this year to the emergency and recovery needs of large communities affected by natural disasters or food insecurity in Haiti, Chad, Zimbabwe, Pakistan or the Philippines. The massive humanitarian response to the consequences of Typhoon Haiyan which affected the Philippines only recently has also demanded IOM to react and assist swiftly. IOM longstanding presence in the country has proven to be of great value in this regard. On this last point, we want to commend the IOM for its work in complex emergencies and for its efforts to promote disaster preparedness.

The EU would like to draw attention to the plight of the thousands of migrants that have risked their lives, with many lost, in their efforts to reach European shores through irregular means. The tragic incidents in the Mediterranean last October have been well documented, but these are just a fraction of the lives lost at sea, and many more still on land while in transit. The EU remains vigilant and

resolute in its fight against smugglers and traffickers, but is also engaged in efforts to improve legal means of entry into Europe within the existing partnership frameworks, whilst also assisting countries of origin with the afore-mentioned Global Approach.

In this context it is important to commend a substantial contribution of the IOM to the work of the EU Task-Force for the Mediterranean in the area of migrants' protection and lives saving. IOM's proposals on immediate responses and priority policy issues demonstrates its firm commitment to support the EU, its Member States and countries of origin and transition in developing human rights-based responses to these complex migration flows across the Central Mediterranean.

Mr. Chairperson,

The UN High Level Dialogue on migration and development held in New York in October this year was a success. Participants stressed several priority areas in order to strengthen the migration agenda, such as the protection of the human rights of migrants, improving the perceptions of migrants and migration, addressing the exploitation of migrants and human trafficking, addressing the plight of stranded migrants and integrating migrants' contributions in national and global development agendas. The High Level Dialogue Declaration and its positive echoes are incentives to ensure that our debates explore avenues for maximising the development impact of migration and minimizing its negative aspects. The EU and its Member States were very active in the preparations leading up to the High-level Dialogue and we shall continue to engage in the follow-up. We also shall continue to work with the IOM and other relevant actors in highlighting the positive aspects of migration and bringing out its potential for development.

In order to fully harness the benefits of migration and minimize its negative aspects, we need migration to be well-managed. Implementation of effective return and readmission policies are prerequisites for well-managed migration, and the EU and its Member States strongly urge all countries to meet their obligation under international customary law to readmit their own nationals and take all appropriate measures in this respect.

The UN High Level Dialogue also focussed on the importance of good and sound migration management and highlighted the crucial role of cooperation and partnership in this regard. We have several tools at our disposal to reach this goal. The Global Forum for Migration and Development, which was created by the First High Level Dialogue as an opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices, has already proven to be an important platform to foster a climate of trust and

understanding among states. We were pleased with the strong recognition of the value of the Global Forum at the HLD and the EU and its Member States remain committed to continue to contribute to this process. We also recognise the significant contribution made over the years by the Special Representative of the Secretary General on international migration and development. The Global Migration Group, if reformed and becoming more active and transparent on its activities, could also contribute. We believe that the IOM, as the leading migration organisation, should further pursue its proactive role in this regard and foster coordination with the UN system. It is indeed very positive that the existing interaction between the UN SG's Special Representative on international migration and development, GMG and the GFMD contributes to improved coordination on international migration and development.

Mr. Chairperson,

The EU and its Member States will continue to engage with IOM and other stakeholders in international dialogue and cooperation in order to strengthen the Organisation and ensure it can properly respond to the current challenges and those that lie ahead. In this regard, the EU and IOM have established a framework for strategic partnership, which testifies to our shared interest in bringing the benefits of well managed migration to migrants and society. We hope that this partnership will be a true enabler for our common goals for migration and development.