



CROATIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE

GENEVA

Statement by:

H.E. Ms. Vesna Batistić Kos

**Ambassador, Permanent
Representative
Permanent Mission of Croatia to
the United Nations in Geneva**

**106th Council of IOM
General Debate**

24-27 November 2015
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair, Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Congratulations to the Chairman for assuming his duty.

Croatia aligns itself with the EU statement.

I would like to thank Director General for his effective leadership as well as comprehensive and inspiring report.

We would also like to thank IOM for excellent documents prepared for the 106th Council. Croatia welcomes the IOM Migration Governance Framework and supports the principles of enhanced coordination and improved legal basis of relationship between IOM, as the global lead agency on migration, and United Nations, as contained in the adopted resolution.

The migratory and refugee crisis on this scale has not been seen in 70 years, representing a new and unprecedented challenge that is leaving a deep worldwide impact, directly and profoundly affecting many States.

We are facing serious challenges in adapting and coordinating policy responses at national, EU and international levels in the countries already hosting large numbers of migrants, in the countries of chosen destination, and in the countries of entry and transit within Europe.

Croatia, as one of the affected countries, takes this opportunity to thank IOM for providing invaluable support and assistance in the current crisis.

Since September this year, close to 440 000 migrants and refugees have passed through Croatia, coming through the so-called West-Balkan route and entering the EU on their way to the Western and Northern Europe. On average 6.000 – 7.000 migrants are still entering Croatia daily. Although winter approached, the numbers of migrants have not diminished.

We have taken a number of measures to ease their plight and to assist them in any way possible. We remain dedicated to ensuring a humane treatment of all affected and to the respect for human rights of refugees and migrants.

Let me briefly mention just a few: in Croatia, transit and reception centres were established, providing migrants and refugees with food, heated tents, clothing, sanitation, free wi-fi and medical care; the migrants are being registered and special care for women, children and other vulnerable groups is provided and these are tangible operational results.

This is, unfortunately, not a first refugee crisis for us. The crisis reminds us of our own recent history. During the war in the 90s, Croatia took care of more than half a million refugees and internally displaced persons. Many of our citizens have the first-hand experience.

In the current crisis, it is our moral and human obligation to save people's lives and assist them as much as we can. However, this is task beyond national or regional solutions. It is a global challenge.

We firmly believe that the current crises and its unprecedented magnitude, of humanitarian and security dimension alike, can be addressed only in a comprehensive and coordinated way. In that regard, we strongly support an inclusive, effective approach on bilateral, regional and global level.

Top priority remains to tackle the root causes of refugee situations and irregular migration. Countries of origin need our help to build sustainable societies with responsible institutions and strong rule of law. European Union, UN and IOM play a crucial role in finding appropriate and operative solutions to the current flow of migrants.

In this regard, I would also like to stress the importance of cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination; the importance of strengthening efforts in the fight against terrorism and extremist groups, as well as in countering radicalisation and violent extremism; and the urgent need to allocate appropriate resources and to strengthen humanitarian assistance.

We also underline the utmost importance of the fight against smuggling and trafficking networks. People's hardship and misery are being ruthlessly exploited by traffickers. We must work together towards ensuring zero tolerance for the trafficking of children which is becoming widespread along the Mediterranean route.

We appreciate the role that IOM plays in migration crisis and especially their assistance in response planning and implementation. The document on IOM's humanitarian policy is also very timely and precious for taking steps to address humanitarian crisis.

In conclusion, we hope that the debates and conclusions of the 106th Council will strengthen our resolve to find decisive solutions through the use of all appropriate international instruments in addressing the current challenges.

Thank you.