



**European Union**

**COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION**

**FOR MIGRATION**

**106th Session**

**(24 – 27 November 2015)**

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**General Debate**

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**Statement by**

**Peter Sørensen, Head of the EU Delegation to the United Nations and other International  
Organisations in Geneva**

**Geneva, 24 November 2015**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

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**EU Statement – General Debate**

Thank you Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

For a while the world is in a time marked by significant multiple simultaneous migration and humanitarian crises. For the EU, 2015 has been a year where the number of migrants and refugees has dramatically increased at our borders and within our borders. So far, more than 800,000 people of all categories have made their way on unsafe journeys by sea to Europe (according to the EU border agency, Frontex) a trend which is set to continue.

In response to these challenges unprecedented since the Second World War, the EU and EU Member States have devoted considerable efforts to save lives, ensure protection of those in need, fight organised crime responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking, address the root causes of the crisis, improve cooperation with partner countries on border management and return, and establish a more effective and sustainable management of migratory flows. In this regard, we are strengthening cooperation with key countries of transit and origin, as the recent Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean-Western Balkans Route and the Valletta Summit demonstrated. The migration issue is being addressed constantly at the highest political level by all EU institutions and Member States. An exceptional amount of financial resources has been mobilized in a short timeframe to support countries of origin and transit in a spirit of shared responsibility.

In times of severe crises and consecutive forced displacement, it is important not to forget the fundamental principles underpinning our policies and action, in particular respect for human rights and humanitarian principles as well as refugee law, to ensure that displaced people - regardless of status - have their rights respected. At the same time swift and effective return of migrants who have no right to stay in the EU, as well as well managed security aspects of migration are key for

credibility and proper functioning of EU's migration and asylum system.

In addressing these global challenges, the partnership with IOM is of paramount importance for the EU and its Member States. IOM can benefit for a number of years from significant financial support from the EU and its Member States, which are together the second largest contributor to the operational budget of a quickly growing organisation. IOM indeed remains a crucial partner in our efforts to effectively implement actions on the basis of mutual trust, transparency and proven efficiency. In particular, we commend the level of engagement and dedication whereby the IOM and its Director General continue to contribute tirelessly – as the global lead agency for international migration – to address the current global migration and refugee crises and to improve the management of the mixed migratory flows. IOM was a valuable partner in the preparation of the Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean-Western Balkans Route and the Valletta summit and its expertise will continue to be of great importance in the years ahead that will lead to the implementation of the commitments made. We salute the presence of the Director General Swing on these occasions as he has always been present and actively involved in European Union's deliberations during this crisis.

We commend the level of engagement and dedication whereby the IOM and its Director General continue to contribute to enhancing approaches of migration that benefits migrants and host societies, as well as countries of origin, transit and destination. The participation of IOM in international fora, in particular the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the Global Migration Group, as well as the negotiations in New York on the post-2015 development framework, and regional consultative processes contribute to mainstreaming migration in all relevant global discussions.

We welcome the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development now addresses contemporary human mobility, calling for “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” as a means of reducing inequalities within and among countries. It is now time to translate the political goals and targets into concrete action.

In this context, the EU and its Member States underline the need for IOM to retain its rightful position in the international system that allows it to contribute its expertise and field experience fully, and be granted systematic access to all relevant discussions including within the United Nations. For that reason, we welcome the resolution presented to this Council and will continue to

support the Director General in his discussions with the United Nations Secretariat General.

Maximising the positive impact of migration on development is an important policy priority for the EU, as demonstrated by its dual policy framework in this area. Migration and development is one of the thematic priorities of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, which provides the overarching framework for the EU external migration policy, and is also integrated into the EU development policy framework.

IOM continues to demonstrate to be an essential actor for addressing simultaneous complex humanitarian emergencies. The EU supports IOM's valuable assistance, especially to the most vulnerable persons. We applaud the IOM's extensive network, ability to respond quickly and effectively on the ground, maintaining a tradition of flexibility and reliability as a humanitarian partner, as testified by its role within the UN cluster system. We praise IOM for presenting its new Humanitarian Policy and embedding it within a broader inter-agency approach for ensuring synergy between its humanitarian and non-humanitarian activities. We welcome IOM's commitment to fully pursuing a rights-based approach in its humanitarian response and for mainstreaming protection within its activities, and those of its implementing partners.

We further commend the constructive role played by IOM in addressing the issue of cross-border displacements in the context of disasters and climate change.

We can only meet the challenges associated with migration if we address them jointly. We can only unleash the positive potential of migration if we work together. Taking into account migration in the implementation of world's development strategy will have a meaningful impact on the lives of migrants, affording them greater access to human rights.

The EU stands ready to continue its support to partner countries in their efforts to ensure effective migration and border management as well as improved protection and reception capacities.

Thank you very much, Chair.