

106th session of the IOM Council

**Intervention of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Nations Office and other International Organization in Geneva Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas
Geneva, 24-26 November, 2015**

Thank you, Mr. President.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Mr. Director General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the 13th of November, I cannot avoid stating that Lithuania strongly deplores the deadly terrorists' attacks in Paris and conveys its deep sympathy to the families and friends of killed people and to all Parisians. Lithuania stands firm with France and the entire democratic world in its resolve to counter terrorism. At the same time we are convinced that terrorists must not be equated and confused with migrants and refugees who are fleeing real danger and wars. Together with the European Union Lithuania will further support the joint international efforts to solve refugee and migration crisis. Lithuania also reiterates its commitments to share burden with other EU states that have been strongly affected by the influx of mixed migration flows.

We welcome dialogue between the regions, like the one that took place in Valetta, and cooperation aiming at mutual understanding, at developing viable solutions on the ground and eliminating the reasons for people's departure. We call on the international community and international organisations to unite their efforts to identify and destroy the networks of smugglers and traffickers in persons. Lithuania contributed additional 100 thousand EUR to the Fund for Syria and 50 thousand to the Fund of Africa to address the root causes of irregular migration. At the same time we are conscious that only political solutions can bring the conflicts to an end and stop mass displacement of people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania highly commends the activities of IOM in effectively helping migrants and refugees in the neighbourhood of Syria and other countries. Despite the increasing flows across the sea from the Middle East, Africa and Asia, we shouldn't forget other conflicts, perhaps smaller in scale or frozen ones, which nevertheless causes big human suffering. This year, Lithuania contributed 50 thousand EUR to the operational budget of the IOM for its activities helping displaced people in Ukraine, that are increasingly vulnerable to the human trafficking, and supporting host communities in their efforts to provide IDPs with shelter, training and employment opportunities. We will further support the involvement of IOM in Georgia where it trains the officers in border management.

Exploring all available opportunities and cooperating with partners, the IOM tirelessly leads the international efforts in addressing migration challenges. In the context of unprecedented human mobility the need for migration management is well reflected in the Migration Governance Framework prepared by the IOM. Without creating new norms and based on its expertise, the IOM focuses on governance and management of migration from the point of view of the State as the primary actor. We cannot but agree that the primary responsibility lies with the State, be it the country of origin, transit or destination, and that we together with the IOM can and should help each country to find ways how migration and human mobility should best be governed in that State. The government need Strategic support to address migration drivers, empowerment of migrants for the promotion of sustainable development.

Finally, I would like to thank Director General Swing and its team for the excellent job and cooperation. You have the Lithuania's firm support.

Thank you.