

BULGARIA
STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. DEYANA KOSTADINOVA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN OFFICE AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA
AT THE 107TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL
(5th - 8th December 2016, Geneva)

Mr. Chair,
Director-General,
Deputy Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States to which I would like to add some points in my national capacity.

At the outset let me thank the Director-General and Deputy Director-General for their excellent leadership of the Organization.

The IOM is the lead agency in the field of international migration and the comprehensive report presented by the Director General yesterday demonstrated this very clearly.

Bulgaria welcomes the signature of the Agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration through which the IOM joined the United Nations as a related organization. It is a timely event that coincides with the 65th anniversary celebration of our Organization.

Mr. Chair,

International and regional cooperation, and in particular cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination, has never been more important. Migration is a global phenomenon and it should be managed through collective global efforts in an orderly, safe, regular and responsible way.

There is also a need for a closer collaboration between governments and international organizations. In this context we deeply appreciate the excellent cooperation between the IOM and Bulgaria. It was further strengthened with the signature of the

Agreement on Cooperation between the IOM and the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria in 2015. The IOM is our key partner in view of the voluntary return of migrants to their countries of origin in a safe and dignified manner. Since January 2016 IOM has supported 415 voluntary returns of migrants mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran compared to 2015 when only 89 migrants were returned to their countries of origin under the IOM programmes. This is the result of the new Agreement which builds upon the existing cooperation and puts it on a more solid base. Thus, the support provided by the IOM has a real added value and is an example of successful partnership and collaboration.

Counter-trafficking is another important aspect of the interaction between the IOM and Bulgaria. With the assistance of the Organization we improved our institutional framework and increased significantly the capacity to combat this phenomenon. Regular exchange of best practices and expertise is conducted between the IOM office in Bulgaria and the competent authorities within the Ministry of Interior mainly in the framework of working groups and seminars.

Mr. Chair,

Moving from the national to the global perspective Bulgaria considers the follow up processes leading to the adoption of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as a unique opportunity for the international community to address migration challenges in a more systematic manner and to apply a comprehensive and balanced approach that deals with all aspects of international migration – humanitarian, developmental, security, human rights related as well as those related to return, readmission and effective border management.

In order to have a comprehensive Global Compact on migration, Geneva based consultation process with a strong IOM role is essential. We believe that the IOM Director-General has to play an important role in the paths leading to the adoption of the Global Compact.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I would like to express our full support for the IOM's activities for the benefit of all migrants. Last but not least I would also like to extend our sincere appreciation for the hard and dedicated work of the IOM staff in the field and headquarters.

I thank you.