

ESTONIA Riia SALSA Deputy Permanent Representative

**Statement delivered by H.E. ~~Mr. Andre PUNG~~, Ambassador, Permanent Representative**  
**at the**  
**IOM COUNCIL 108<sup>th</sup> session**  
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**General Debate – Item 9**

*Check against delivery*

Thank you Madam Chair,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of its Member States on Tuesday.

Allow me to start by thanking Director General Swing for his dedicated leadership of this organisation and for the report he presented to the Council two days ago. IOM's tireless engagement and dedicated response to global migration challenges are truly commendable. Estonia wishes to reiterate its support to IOM as the global lead agency on migration. Allow me to also welcome new members, Cuba and Cook Islands, and new observers to the Council.

As the DG reported, IOM continues to grow in every aspect: in number of Member States, projects, budget figures and global reach. While the soon quasi-global adherence to IOM witnesses the trust to and importance of IOM, the steady growth is also a result of many unresolved migration related challenges in the world. We welcome IOM's agility to face the growth of the organisation in order to remain fit for purpose in the context of multiplication of displacement crises. With regard to this phenomenal growth, attention has to be paid to coherent prioritization of activities to avoid possible duplication, including with other UN organisations, and diffused focus.

Estonia highly values the reinforced cooperation with IOM in recent years, which was enthroned by IOM DG's visit to Tallinn this spring. IOM – as well as UNHCR – has provided valuable support to Estonia in building capacity to address increased forced displacement flows, including assisting voluntary return of persons not in need for international protection. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to IOM and its office in Tallinn for the cooperation in the field of resettlement and relocation.

In its capacity as the Presidency of the EU Council since July 2017, Estonia has set migration as one of its EU Presidency priorities. At the EU level Estonia has been promoting comprehensive and holistic approaches to migration, that take into account both internal and external aspects and focus on the long-term perspective of the migration policy.

Madam Chair,

Estonia welcomes IOM's enhanced focus on data collection and evidence. IOM's Displacement Tracing Matrix and Global Migration Data Analysis Centre support informed decision making in the field of migration. Nonetheless, handling larger amounts of data also creates the need for better data protection. Estonia stands ready to share its experience in this regard.

DGs report to the Council also brought up IOM's wish to develop its policy-planning capacity and enhance its work in IDP contexts. We would like to encourage the DG to continue his commendably transparent updates to the Council to inform on the advancements and possible challenges. In the context of work on IDPs, timely and consistent coordination with other organisations, including UNHCR and OCHA, will help to avoid possible overlaps.

Madam Chair,

IOM's accession to the UN family, as the global lead agency on migration, was a milestone. We are pleased to hear DG's positive assessment of IOM's first year in the UN system and regarding IOM's greater access to information, visibility and funding.

Finally, a few remarks on the Global Compact on Migration – Estonia expects the Compact to be people-centred, human-rights-based, closely in line with other global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda, and taking into account the challenges and benefits of migration for all. We aim for a practical and implementable outcome that would enhance the cooperation and coordination globally between the countries of origin, transit and destination, and follow the principles of inclusiveness and transparency.

Allow me to reiterate also Estonia's support for a strong role of the IOM in the process of the Global Compact on Migration, including in the follow-up and review of the Compact. IOM as the global lead agency on migration, with a truly global mandate and reach, as well as operational and policy expertise in the field of migration, has to have a significant and specific role to play in this process. Considering the non-legally binding nature of the Global Compact on Migration, Estonia sees that the follow-up and review mechanism of the GCM should be efficient, light and responsive; based on the framework of existing UN fora; and it should not lead to the creation of any new structures.

Thank you for your attention!