

PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS



MISSION PERMANENTE
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SERBIE
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES
ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS
INTERNATIONALES

International Organization for Migration

108th Session of the Council

General Debate

28 November to 1 December 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

of H.E. Ambassador Vladislav Mladenovic

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia

to the United Nations and other International Organizations in
Geneva

Geneva, November 2017

Madam Chair,

I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I would also like to thank Ambassador John Quinn, for the work carried out during the previous year.

Let me express our delegations sincere appreciation to Director General, Ambassador William Lacy Swing for his dedicated leadership of the Organization and for presenting an excellent report. We also commend the outstanding work of the IOM staff, especially the women and men who work in the field offices, often in an unsafe and challenging environment.

The Republic of Serbia recognizes the importance and the role of IOM as the leading international agency on migration. Current migration movements present one of the most complex social challenges for states and civil society as well as global and regional organizations.

Serbia welcomed the adoption of the New York Declaration on refugees and migrants (in 2016) and the Agreement between the UN and IOM. We believe that only through coordinated actions, of all relevant national and international actors, a crucial step forward can be made in addressing refugee and migrant crises.

We are pleased to be a part of an active and transparent process of negotiations concerning the Global compact on migration. Serbia has significant experience in this regard. It received more than 300 000 displaced persons from ex-Yugoslavia, another 200 000 IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija and, more recently, provided assistance to nearly one million persons on the so called "Western Migration Route". Serbia is currently host to around 4500 migrants and refugees. It fully respects their human rights and provides them with appropriate accommodation, health care and assistance in food and medication. Special protection and care is secured for the vulnerable categories of migrants. A significant part of the migrant population are children, and for them, with the assistance of UNICEF, regular education is provided.

Together with donor countries and IOM, we have implemented more than 150 projects in Serbia. IOM has assisted us in securing shelter and basic care for over one million migrants and refugees. This includes housing programmes, voluntary returns, assisting human trafficking victims and re-integrations of returnees.

Madam Chair,

The Republic of Serbia has been confronted, over the last two decades, with both external and internal migration waves. Bearing in mind substantial experience in this area, we are ready and willing to share our best practices. We will remain an active supporter and contributor to the process of formulating guidelines and objectives in the field of migrations.

Being a country with sizeable Diaspora, we do acknowledge both challenges and benefits stemming from regular and controlled migrations. On the one hand, remittances provide a source of investment in economic development. On the other hand, movement of the young and highly educated part of the population to more prosperous countries has a negative effect on economic growth and the social environment. This is a problem for many countries. That is why we need to achieve long-term solutions for orderly migrations which could be beneficial to all, and within the context of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.