

**109th Session of the IOM Council (27 Nov – 30 Nov 2018)**  
**EU Statement - as of 26 November**

**Item 13 – General Debate**

- Chair, Director General, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,
- I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.
- Both 2017 as well as 2018 so far have proved to be critical years for IOM, not only as they are marked by the process to develop a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and the corresponding creation of the UN Migration Network as the successor of the Global Migration Group (GMG), but also these were the years observing further expansion of IOM's operations with crisis-related programming reaching over 28.9 million people in more than 79 countries.
- The European Union and its Member States continue to support IOM **as the lead agency of international migration**.<sup>1</sup> We work closely together with the IOM in addressing this **complex, global, long-lasting phenomenon**, which requires a **carefully designed, balanced, evidence-based and sustainable policy response which shall respect national competences**.<sup>2</sup>
- The European Union policy on migration relies on a comprehensive approach to migration which combines more effective control of the EU's external borders and increased external action, in line with our principles and values<sup>3</sup>.
- As for the European Union, we were able to observe important developments in addressing migration related issues. **Arrivals have overall been reduced. Although they are** continuing both from land and sea borders; and international cooperation is needed to address this challenging situation, this does not however lessen our deepest concern for the high mortality rate in the Mediterranean this year. **In this regard, the EU operations have helped rescue over 690,000 people at sea since 2015**.<sup>4</sup>
- The EU's extensive cooperation with IOM corresponds to the EU's increased external action. In the field of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people on the move, IOM has been operating assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes around the world for which the EU has been its main partner in Europe, Asia and Africa increasingly.<sup>5</sup> We also focus on complex regional migration situations such as North Africa funded by the EU Trust Fund for Africa.<sup>6</sup> We welcome and **call to support IOM's as well as other organisations' efforts in Libya, the Sahel and the region, in particular to further facilitate voluntary returns and resettlement of persons in need of international protection** to countries that decide to participate in such programmes and **to improve reception conditions in cooperation with Libyan authorities so as to ensure the humane treatment of**

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<sup>1</sup> EU coord. statement IOM Council Dec. 2017, at para. 6

<sup>2</sup> New European Consensus on development (NECD), at para. 39

<sup>3</sup> European Council conclusions, 28 June 2018

<sup>4</sup> State of the Union (12 September 2018), at p. 6

<sup>5</sup> IOM-EU relations 2016, at 40

<sup>6</sup> EU coord. statement IOM Council Dec. 2017 (General Debate), at 7

migrants.<sup>7</sup> It is also essential to continue to address humanitarian protection needs of the high number of people that remain displaced by disasters and the effects of climate change.

- Chair,
- The EU and its Member States would like to underline that a comprehensive approach to migration requires genuine **partnerships between countries of origin, transit and destination**.<sup>8</sup> Cooperation and partnerships are an integral part of our **coordinated, holistic and structured approach to migration**<sup>9</sup> in **maximising the synergies and applying the necessary leverage by using all relevant EU policies, instruments and tools, including development and trade**.<sup>10</sup>
- The EU and its Member States are committed to **promoting investment, trade and innovation in partner countries**<sup>11</sup> in order to address the root causes of irregular migration and further promote return and readmission in accordance with international law and the obligation of all countries to readmit their own citizens staying illegally in another country. For this end, **we combine short and long-term measures**.<sup>12</sup> These partnerships must be built on the basis of enhanced mutual support and solidarity.<sup>13</sup> In particular, we partner with countries in the Western Balkans,<sup>14</sup> and we intend to intensify our cooperation with Africa.<sup>15</sup> In particular on the latter, a partnership aiming at a substantial socio-economic transformation of the African continent building upon the principles and objectives as defined by the African countries in the African Union's Agenda 2063 is key to moving forward.
- <sup>The EU</sup> **We apply a rights-based approach, paying special attention to girls, women, accompanied and unaccompanied minors in a migration context**.<sup>16</sup> **Regular migration and mobility can make positive contributions to inclusive growth and sustainable development**.<sup>17</sup> It can benefit migrants, their communities, the countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as employers.
- The EU and IOM's partnership is mutually beneficial. The EU and its Member States together are the largest contributor to the operational budget of the IOM, and most importantly growing from \$502m in 2016 to \$644m last year.<sup>18</sup> But it is not only about the amount of funds, but also in view of ever-changing challenges, the EU draws the attention to the need for flexible instruments, allowing for fast disbursement.
- Thank you, Chair.

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<sup>7</sup> EC Conclusions (19 October 2017), at para. 4, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21620/19-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> EC Conclusions (18 October 2018), at para. 2

<sup>9</sup> NECD, at para 40

<sup>10</sup> NECD, at para 40

<sup>11</sup> NECD, at para. 41

<sup>12</sup> EU coord. statement at IOM Council Dec. 2017 (item 7: GCM)

<sup>13</sup> EU Coordinated Statement IOM Council Dec. 2017 (general debate), at 1

<sup>14</sup> EC Conclusions (28 June 2018), at para 4

<sup>15</sup> EC Conclusions (28 June 2018), at para 8

<sup>16</sup> NECD, at para. 42

<sup>17</sup> NECD, at para. 39

<sup>18</sup> EU coord. statement IOM Council Dec. 2017, at 7