

IOM 109th Council

Geneva, 27 – 30 November

Greece's statement under "General Debate"

Thank you Mr Chair.

Greece aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of its Member States.

As we all know, in a few days an important summit meeting will take place in Marrakesh, Morocco; a meeting that for us signifies two things: the realization that international migration is one of the major challenges of our time and that no one country alone can tackle this issue. Hence, international dialogue, cooperation and support are prerequisites for finding sustainable solutions that benefit everyone concerned.

As one of the first EU member states to have faced the indirect consequences of war, violence, human rights abuses and also poverty and lack of development, we are in a position to know that root causes in one country have a direct impact not only to its neighbors, but also to countries far away from the country of origin.

The so-called "mixed flows" that have been reaching our shores, comprise not only of refugees from Syria and Iraq, but also irregular migrants from faraway places such as Bangladesh and Nigeria. People who are putting themselves at great risk and danger in the hands of smugglers and traffickers, who care only about profiting from the suffering of other human beings. This plague of our time, trafficking in human beings, must be curbed and that will happen only through international cooperation and the fight against impunity.

Many other countries in all continents are faced with mixed flows and are looking for ways to better address this aspect of human mobility; one that is filled with tragic human stories and a sense of urgency to protect and assist the most vulnerable. The numbers are so high and the needs so many that it is not possible for one country alone to deal with this. Which brings us back to the urgent need for international cooperation.

We believe that IOM and -the ready to be established- new UN Migration Network can advocate and promote this kind of cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination. This is a shared responsibility and a shared burden. That's what is encompassed in both Global Compacts and that is why we support both of them.

It is not only about recognizing our commitments and obligations and our part of the burden sharing; it is also about the countries of origin taking on and stepping up their part as far as their own nationals are concerned; it is about striving to realize the Goal of "leaving no one behind", which also applies to responsibilities of governments towards their own citizens. It is not only the countries of destination that should uphold human rights and international humanitarian law. It is every single country's obligation to do so.

What is certain is that the current situation, if not properly addressed, will not be sustainable in the near future. The ever increasing number of forcibly displaced people is reaching records high with no end in sight. Root causes need to be addressed and international cooperation must be extended, not limited, in order to achieve that.

International migration requires this of all of us, countries of origin, transit and destination alike. We all have obligations, we all have commitments, we are all

joined by our common humanity. If we do not work together, none of us –in the end- will be successful in honoring them, because each country individually on its own has only limited capacity and resources. However, if we pool this capacity and those resources together, we can all stand to benefit.

In this spirit, Greece is a staunch supporter of international dialogue and cooperation and is ready to do its part in the joint effort to better address an otherwise unsustainable situation.

Thank you.