

**BULGARIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. DEYANA KOSTADINOVA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE  
UN OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA  
AT THE 110<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL  
(26-29 November 2019, Geneva)**

*Chair,*

I would like to congratulate you on your election as a Chair of the IOM Council. My delegation would also like to extend a warm welcome to Lebanon as a new member of the Organization.

Aligning with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States let me share some remarks from a national perspective.

International migration affects all regions of the world with “different and growing complexities in migration dynamics across them”. We are also witnessing the highest levels of migration flows on record: according to the World Migration Report 2020, which will be presented later today there are 272 million international migrants globally representing 3.5% of the world’s population. This reality is a clear demonstration of the need for informed and effective migrations policies and measures more than ever.

Evidence-based migration policies and programs should be based on comprehensive and robust research. In this context we strongly support the IOM’s increasing efforts to collect, analyze and share data on international migration and its trends as being critical part of its work.

Moreover, to effectively address international migration we should apply a comprehensive approach incorporating all its dimensions, including addressing the root causes of irregular migration. Taking into account the global character of this phenomenon our approach needs also to be based on enhanced and genuine international cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.

In the recent years IOM has evolved significantly in different aspects: its membership, budget, programs and projects, its partnerships. In this context Bulgaria welcomes the ongoing process of internal reform of IOM aimed at improving accountability and ensuring that its internal structures are fit for purpose. We also welcome the Strategic Vision as a “first step in a longer strategic planning process that will guide the Organization in the future” and we are looking forward to the first draft of the five-year implementation plan. At the same time it is our key priority for IOM to remain not only its character as a responsive,

flexible, efficient, cost-effective and non-normative organization with a vast presence in the field but also to maintain its core values and activities placed in the center of its work such as the AVRR (Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration) programs.

AVRR programs are an indispensable part of a comprehensive, holistic and humane approach to migration management based on cooperation and participation of a broad range of actors, including migrants themselves. IOM is a key partner of Bulgaria in implementing the National Strategy for Migration and Integration (2015-2020). From a national perspective around 70 % of the assisted voluntary returns have been supported by the AVRR activities of the Organization.

Bulgaria fully supports IOM's determination and commitment to further incorporate disability in all aspects of its humanitarian response including through strengthening technical cooperation and partnership with other UN agencies. We appreciate that disability inclusion in all areas of IOM programming is one of the core priorities for IOM operations as reflected in the DG's report presented yesterday.

Finally, let me conclude by reaffirming our strong support for IOM as the global lead agency for migration and express our appreciation for the excellent, long-standing and strategic partnership between IOM and Bulgaria in important areas, including assisted voluntary return and reintegration and combating human trafficking.

I thank you.