



European Union

Statement

**IOM 110th Session of the Council
26 to 29 November 2019**

General debate

Geneva, 26 November 2019

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU Statement

Item 13 – General Debate

1. Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,
2. I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.
3. Every time we reflect on the previous twelve months since the last IOM Council, **it feels they were even busier and more eventful than the preceding year.**
4. IOM has been **expanding its operations further** with the operational part of the budget estimate having increased to over USD 2.045 billion. The last months were also marked by important **discussions on the Organisation's strategic vision and internal governance framework.** In December 2018, **the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was adopted by the UN General Assembly** as a non-legally binding international cooperation framework which has a potential to contribute to strengthening the international response to migration flows in full respect of the sovereignty of each State. The **UN Migration Network**, with IOM acting as its coordinator, will steer its implementation, follow-up, review and provide coordinated system-wide support to Member States.

5. **The European Union and its Member States continue to support IOM as the lead agency on migration.** And migration continues to remain the **EU's top priority**, as reconfirmed by the President-elect of the new European Commission, Ms. Ursula von der Leyen.
6. We believe **no country can address migration on its own.** The EU and its Member States continue to pursue a **comprehensive approach to migration**, including addressing the challenges and root causes of irregular migration, through the building of effective, sustainable and tailor-made partnerships and closer cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors. To this end, it is important that all actors contribute in line with their respective mandates.
7. This commitment building on the efforts of the recent years has translated into a **comprehensive policy and funding migration framework.**
8. **The migration landscape continues to evolve and the situation remains volatile.** For example, compared to previous years we see a reduction in number of arrivals across all Mediterranean migration routes altogether, however for the last months we have seen surge in arrivals along the Eastern Mediterranean route. Since 2015 EU operations and support have helped 760,000 rescues at sea, yet even if numbers of deaths are significantly lower than in 2015, some migrants attempting to cross the

Mediterranean are still found dead or missing. Overall, as reported by European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the number of detections of illegal border crossings on Europe's main migratory routes in the first ten months of 2019 has reached 107.900¹.

9. **The EU's comprehensive approach to migration relies on close cooperation with countries of origin, transit and other partners, with IOM being one of the most important.** Much of our collaboration builds on existing structures, for example the African Union - European Union - United Nations Joint Task Force on Migrant Protection in Libya, and the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration. Our important collaboration focuses on protection of migrants in vulnerable situations, including cooperation on anti-trafficking, community stabilisation, as well as other areas such as Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in line with the EU return acquis. All these contribute to a joint strategic management of migration in all its dimensions.

10. In addition, **IOM remains an important EU implementing partner in response to humanitarian crises.** We value our cooperation both on unfolding situations, such as Venezuela crisis as well as in more protracted situations, such as north of Nigeria.

¹ <https://frontex.europa.eu/along-eu-borders/migratory-map/>

We would like to stress the need for principled humanitarian response, in order to continue to reach the most vulnerable.

11. **The EU and its Member States collectively are the largest contributors to IOM's budget.** Between 2015 and 2018, the European Commission alone contracted IOM for about 420 projects worldwide with an approximate value of EUR 1.3 billion. In 2019 consolidated joint contributions from the European Union and EU Member States are estimated to reach USD 855 million, half of which from the European Commission.
12. **However, it is not only about the amount of funds.** In view of ever-changing challenges, the EU and its Member States continue working with IOM on identifying the fit-for-purpose adaptable instruments, allowing for quick reaction to altering environment and sudden new developments.
13. Thank you, Chair.