

ESTONIA
Statement delivered at the IOM COUNCIL 111st session
(24 November – 27 November 2020)

Thank you Mr Chair,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of its Member States.

I would like to start with welcoming you as the Chair of the 111th Council and express Estonia's full support to your work. I would also like to thank Denmark for the able leadership and tireless work throughout the previous challenging season, particularly in facilitating the successful solution for the issue of senior leadership of the organization.

I would now add some comments in the national capacity focusing on the strengthening of the organization.

Mr Chair,

First, let me commend the IOM on the very timely release of the Migration Data Strategy. COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns have especially emphasized the need for stronger data collection and analyses. As the Director General wisely said – high quality, accessible, disaggregated, reliable and timely data are essential to inform policies, action and public opinion. It would help to better prepare and respond to the future crises and emergencies. More importantly, it would help to mitigate the devastating socio-economic impact on the people in vulnerable situation, such as migrants and other people on the move. I would add, it could also save lives. Estonia would be delighted to contribute taken our long-term experience and knowhow on data interoperability, which is the key to unlock the potential. We agree, IOM is in a unique position to mobilize the international community for unified approach on data collection, use and sharing.

Second, without doubt, the key to success in efficient data management, leaving no one behind, lies in the solution of the identity issue. We are glad to hear, that IOM is undertaking the consultations with Member States and partners on developing Legal Identity Strategy. Trusted legal identity respecting human rights and privacy

for mobile populations has become even more urgent with the COVID situation. IOM play a very important role here, including in assistance and advice on responsible use of new technologies.

Third, we agree the COVID-19 will fundamentally reshape the migration, health and border management landscape. Hence, as the Director General mentioned, it is important to rethink how to develop evidence-based policies and practices to manage travel in a health-secure manner. I am pleased to inform that Estonia and the WHO recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of digital health. One of its aims is to explore ways to build a global trust architecture to support the interoperability of certified vaccine and testing centres in countries across the world. We will also be piloting the Smart Vaccination Certificate solution for reliable border-crossing and anonymous public health and supply chain reporting. We are happy to share further details about this project, as it could contribute to IOMs work on data, health and border-management using digital technologies, as well as to the equitable access to immunization, where the IOM also has an important role to play.

Finally, Estonia commends IOM for its tireless efforts to deal with the challenges but also enforce the opportunities that migration and human mobility bring about on a global as well as regional scale, particularly in the current circumstances. We therefore reassure our support to IOM in its endeavour to ensure humane and orderly management of migration.

We highly value the good bilateral cooperation with IOM and with its country office in Estonia who has supported us in providing civic orientation courses for beneficiaries of international protection already for the past few years. We also value and thank the IOM for the expertise and support it has provided in assisting with voluntary returns of third-country nationals.

We sincerely hope for the continuance of our fruitful cooperation with IOM.

Thank you for your attention!