

**Statement by Romania at the 111st session of the Council of the International
Organization for Migration
(24 – 27 November 2020)**

*Mr. Chair,
Director general,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,*

Romania fully aligns itself with the EU and its Member States statement and would like to present the following intervention in a national capacity.

1. Countering the COVID-19 spread has occupied the forefront of our activities for the most part of this year. The crisis has had a strong, multisectoral impact on our societies and, as it has been said on numerous occasions – it is an uneven pandemic. The most vulnerable have been hit the hardest, including the people on the move, through the loss of jobs and livelihoods, stigmatization and insecurity.

2. All the more we appreciate in this context the significant efforts the IOM has made throughout these months in order to continue its activities despite the pandemic situation. We wish to thank Director General Vitorino, for his leadership during these most trying and unusual times, for his sustained work to mobilize and inspire not only IOM's staff, but also the member states. The Director General's report largely demonstrates that IOM has shown the ability not only to act in the most challenging situations, but also to adapt and innovate in order to achieve its mission.

3. The IOM should be able to act at its full potential and capacity, with a complete, robust and engaged senior management team. Romania fully supports the consolidation process that has been approved at the 4th session of the Special IOM Council, less than a month ago, and appreciates the proposed timeline. Reaching an agreeable outcome for all the parties involved was a long and complex endeavor and we would like to thank Denmark, the former President of the Council, for the manner and efforts made as the leading and managing voice of the working group on this subject.

Mr. Chair,

4. Romania will continue to do its best to face the challenges of mitigating and countering the spread of the SARS-COV-2. Throughout this period, Romania has remained committed as an emergent donor, relocation state and promoter of the humanitarian agenda.

5. As a Member State of the EU, Romania has committed through "Team Europe" to contribute, on the global and multisectoral level, to the efforts of countering the

pandemic. In this vein, Romania looks forward to the debates on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the European Commission last September.

Mr. Chair,

6. Romania wishes to thank IOM for the support provided and the sustained cooperation, all the more appreciated during this very difficult and unusual times. We are particularly happy that through our combined efforts, together with IOM and UNHCR, on the 16th of October, 32 Syrian refugees arrived safely in Bucharest after departing from Turkey, as part of Romania's refugee resettlement programme.

7. Along the same line of cooperation, in June this year, the Romanian Government, IOM and UNHCR signed a new Working Agreement for the Emergency Transit Centre for Refugees in the city of Timisoara. This enables a smoother and more efficient approach and response to the refugee's needs. The Centre will have a new home in the shortest period of time, that will allow us to ensure assistance at high standards for those hosted there.

8. We would also like to underline a new role that IOM is playing in Romania in favour of increasing awareness about migration and the complexity of this phenomenon. In this regard, IOM is partnering with the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest for the implementation of a master programme on the nexus between international development and cooperation and humanitarian aid and migration. This programme will facilitate contacts between students and UN experts on migration in order to consolidate their knowledge in this field.

9. Finally, the Romanian competent authorities have taken important steps toward adoption a new National Strategy on Migration for a three-year period. The document will embrace a series of general objectives, including the development and promotion of new legal migration pathways, in order to limit illegal migration. The Strategy will emphasize the positive impact of legal migration, aiming at contributing to the prevention and fight against illegal trafficking and exploitation of persons, as well as to the dismantling of the networks that facilitate illegal migration.

I thank you.