



European Union
Statement

IOM 112th Council (29 November – 1 December 2021)

EU SPEAKING ELEMENTS – Item 12
General debate

Geneva, 30 November 2021

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU Statement

Item 12 – General Debate

1. Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,
2. I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.
3. We thank the Director-General for his statement and the update on current activities.
4. However, before we turn to the present issues, allow me to extend on behalf of EU and its Member States our best wishes to IOM on its 70th birthday. Despite its advanced age it remains resilient, mobile and well governed. We remain committed to continuation of our strategic partnership in the future.
5. We appreciate this opportunity to discuss IOM's work and issues of importance in these challenging times still marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. We value our partnership with IOM in the development and implementation of comprehensive migration policies and support to forcibly displaced people and people on the move in vulnerable situations.
6. We have behind us yet another very eventful year. However, while the pandemic continues to affect countries and people globally, creating new vulnerabilities, we are greatly saddened by many new as well as protracted humanitarian crises.

7. We are deeply concerned about the recent deterioration of the situation in several places, in particular in relation to latest developments in Afghanistan and Ethiopia.
8. The EU and its Member States stand by the Afghan people and remain committed to support them and address their urgent needs in the country and in neighbouring countries. We have demonstrated our strong commitment to stepping up the response inside Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries. Notably, in October this year, President of the Commission von der Leyen announced the wider Afghan Support Package, totalling €1 billion for the Afghan people and neighbouring countries.
9. The danger of a major humanitarian crisis is imminent also in Ethiopia and an immediate de-escalation is needed. Human rights and international humanitarian law need to be upheld, including ensuring full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, respect and protection of humanitarian relief personnel and free movement of civilians.
10. In recent months, we have also seen attempts by States to exploit human beings for political purposes. The orchestrated instrumentalisation of migrants, including women and children, by States through hybrid attacks aiming at exerting pressure on the EU is utterly unacceptable. The EU and its Member States condemn any such attempts. Not only are they a breach of international law, but they also disregard the fundamental human rights States' are internationally obliged to uphold. We remain determined to protect the EU's external borders and ensure an immediate and appropriate response in line with

EU law and values and its international obligations, including the protection of fundamental rights.

11. We commend IOM's staff for their commitment and dedication in providing support and response worldwide, often in remote and conflict-affected areas, with important challenges regarding access. The protection and the preservation of humanitarian space and humanitarian access must remain a priority. To this end, full respect for the humanitarian principles is indispensable.
12. We appreciate IOM's flexibility in adapting its activities to the new challenges. The rising and increasingly complex needs worldwide have highlighted very clearly the importance of a strong collective response, including the "One UN" approach. We therefore emphasize the need to continue strengthening cooperation and synergies within the UN family and beyond, in line with each and everyone's respective core strengths and mandates and with a strong focus on implementing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
13. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has deepened many already existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. We urge IOM to continue paying particular attention to address the needs of migrant women, children, victims of torture and trafficking and persons with disabilities, who are all disproportionately affected by the pandemic. We also strongly encourage IOM to strengthen resilience and leverage the potential of those left behind, in particular women and girls.

14. We recognise that as articulated by the United Nations Secretary-General, people on the move must be a part of the response and recovery in the post-COVID-19 reality, while respecting national competences. We also underline the role played by among others migrant workers in COVID-related response efforts. The recently presented Common Agenda further accentuates the premise of leaving no one behind and enabling all to participate in society, as promised in the 2030 Agenda.
15. We commend IOM for consistently advocating for the full inclusion of people on the move in national vaccination plans, health responses and other services to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic, while respecting national competencies. We are strongly committed to vaccine solidarity and ensuring universal and equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines as part of a lasting solution to the pandemic.
16. We firmly believe that the impact of the pandemic will only be contained through a comprehensive global response. Under the ‘Team Europe’ approach, we have mobilized a package of over 46 billion EUR – combining resources and expertise from the European Commission, the Member States and the EU financial institutions – to address the emergency response and humanitarian needs, strengthen health, water/sanitation and nutrition systems and mitigate the economic and social impacts of the pandemic worldwide.
17. Similarly, since December 2020, the EU has exported over 1 billion vaccine doses worldwide to more than 150 countries. With 3.2 billion

EUR in pledges, the EU remains the main financial donor to COVAX, together with the US. We are also supporting the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer, which helps deliver vaccines to people in vulnerable situations who could not be reached through national vaccine deployment plans.

Chair,

18. The EU and its Member States continue to pursue a comprehensive and whole of route approach to migration, addressing the need of assistance to forcibly displaced people and people on the move in vulnerable situations, as well as their host communities, in relation to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum presented by the European Commission in September last year. It includes building capacity for migration management, combating smuggling and trafficking, reinforcing border management and search and rescue cooperation, enhancing legal migration while respecting national competences, ensuring effective return, readmission and sustainable reintegration and tackling the root causes of irregular migration, as well as reaping the benefits of regular migration based on the own decision of each Member State. We underline the importance of working together with our partners through comprehensive, tailor-made and mutually beneficial partnerships, based on common interests and commitments.
19. The European Union and its Member States continue to support IOM as the lead UN agency on migration. We recognise IOM's role in ensuring better coordination of migration related work within the UN, notably as the coordinator and secretariat for the Migration Network.

Comprehensive and balanced migration policies and partnerships built on norms, practises and joint commitments need to continue across the globe, taking into account the lessons learnt from the pandemic. We are looking forward to next year's UN Secretary General report and subsequent migration-related discussions in Geneva and New York.

20. We consider IOM as an essential partner in pursuing a comprehensive approach to migration, at both strategic and operational levels. The EU and its Member States are providing significant support to IOM, including financially as the largest contributors to IOM's budget, collectively and individually. We call on other donors to continue supporting IOM in its endeavours and thus ensure that IOM is fit for purpose to deliver on its multiple responsibilities.
21. In this regard, it is particularly important that IOM possess the means necessary for the full accomplishment of its missions. The EU and its Member States support ongoing critical structural reforms, including in relation to IOM's core functions.
22. Nevertheless, funding alone cannot address our common challenges successfully. We therefore call on all countries - of origin, transit and destination - to also live up to their political commitments to this end, including by addressing the root causes of irregular migration and upholding the human rights of migrants. It is key that we build on concrete lessons learnt and good practices achieved during the last years, including by building capacities wherever needed.

23. During the last years, the partnership between the EU, its Member States and IOM has strengthened even further, and we will continue to contribute to the agenda of the organisation. We welcome the continued efforts by the administration with regard to its reform agenda with the aim of making IOM more fit for purpose, strengthening the core structure and creating increased synergies between the operational and the strategic level, underpinned by improved knowledge management and improved capacities to support forward looking anticipatory action. We encourage IOM to continue ensuring full transparency, integrity, robust monitoring and reporting as well as oversight. At the same time, we reiterate our zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse.
24. The EU and its Member States will continue to support IOM in its important work.
25. Thank you!