



Written statement in lieu of a live intervention
by the
Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations Office
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
A m b a s s a d o r D u š a n M a t u l a y
in the General Debate of the IOM 112th Council (agenda item 12)
Geneva, 29 November – 1 December 2021

Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,

I thank the Director General for his comprehensive report to the Council and the update on the work of the IOM in which has been yet another extraordinary year for global mobility.

We welcome the two Deputy Directors General to their new positions and wish them well in that regard.

I am pleased to offer our warmest congratulations to you, Director General, and the entire staff of the IOM on its 70th anniversary. Ever since its founding in 1951, IOM has become the leading inter-governmental agency providing services and advice to governments and migrants and promoting dialogue and international cooperation across the world in accordance with its mandate. It has, over time, accumulated a wide range of practical experiences through both operational and policy work for the benefit of all stakeholders.

In view of the global migration and its dynamics, including the impact of climate change, it is crucial for the IOM to maintain its essential role in searching for sustainable and long-term response to contemporary challenges posed by migration. The Organization can count on the continued support of Slovakia in this regard.

Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,

My country too has a strong interest in ensuring the relevance of the multilateral system and preserving its legitimacy. In this context, we reiterate our support to the Director General's vision of how IOM needs to develop over the five-year period between 2019 to 2023 in order to meet new and emerging responsibilities as an organization. We welcome the progress so far achieved. Furthermore, we welcome the recent *IOM Strategy on migration, environment and*

climate change 2021–2030, which represents the commitment on the part of Organization to address the climate crisis and its effects on migration over the next decade.

Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,

In September this year, the Government adopted a new Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic until the year 2025. This new strategic document defines as its main goal the creation of conditions for legal migration in the country in keeping with other government priorities and the capacity to both receive foreigners and support their integration. The issue of migrant integration forms a substantial component of the new policy, which aims at ensuring inter alia the availability of education for migrant children, as well as access to decent housing and social and cultural support. The new policy also defines productive communication approaches towards public in connection with the migration-related issues as an important element that must accompany other policy measures in this area.

Over the last year the government also adopted a number of measures to alleviate the negative effects of COVID-19 and quarantine on foreigners, for instance by extending the legal residence period, so that third-country nationals with a temporary, permanent or tolerated residence permit which would have expired during the pandemic were automatically entitled to stay in the country for two months after the end of emergency measures.

I would also like to highlight that we support the IOM in its efforts in Belarus and Afghanistan. The artificially created situation of migrants stranded in Belarus is unacceptable and we call for their safe return home. We thank IOM for its ongoing efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the people of Afghanistan in the face of immense challenges in the country.

Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,

States have a sovereign right to determine whom to admit to their territory and have rights and responsibilities to manage and control their national borders in full compliance with their international obligations. However, no country can address migration on its own. Thus, I would like to reconfirm Slovakia's commitment to work with IMO and other Council members in the search for practical solutions to shared migration challenges and to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people in the crucial period ahead.

Thank you.