

**Statement by Mr. Frano Matušić, State Secretary for Political Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
IOM 112th Council (29 November – 1 December 2021)**

High level segment

Geneva, 29 November 2021

- Thank you Chair.
- Chair, Director General, Excellences and Distinguished Delegates,
- We thank the Director-General for his statement and I am honoured to be able to represent the Republic of Croatia at this festive event and share our reflections on these important issues.
- Allow me to extend Croatia's best wishes to IOM on its 70th birthday. In the 70 years of its existence, IOM has constantly grown and developed. From a small organisation that was mainly a service provider, to one of the biggest UN agencies that remains resilient, flexible, adaptive and well governed. Croatia remains a strong supporter of IOMs work and believes that our durable partnership will continue in the years to come.
- Nearly three years ago, Croatia supported the Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and continues to support it. The parties of the Compact proved how much they value its partnership with the IOM, by entrusting the implementation of the GCM to the leadership of the Organisation. I would like to use this opportunity to thank you director Vitorino for guiding us through the successful Regional reviews in unconventional times, the success of which will certainly continue to be proven in the upcoming International Migration Review Forum in May 2022.
- Croatia gladly took part in the GCM Regional Review and exchanged challenges and good practices in migration management with partner

countries. Croatia is fully committed to respecting the human rights of all migrants. Our ultimate aim is to ensure that migration takes place in a safe and regular manner, avoiding loss of life, and providing international protection to those who need it.

- Furthermore, since its presentation in September last year, Croatia has been supporting an early agreement on the legislative proposals of the New Pact on Migration. The discussion on the new Pact, with its ambition to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive EU migration policy, has already contributed to stepping up the dialogue among EU member states.
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- Migration is in no way a new phenomenon, it is part of our history and built in the development of each of our nations today. What did change as our nations developed were the obligations, as well as the rights of our citizens and the people we welcome to our territories. Regular and legal migration is what Croatia has always supported and believes is a necessary and natural way to progress the fabric of both our society and our economy.
- The COVID-19 pandemic was the situation that caught us all by surprise, one that we have not yet encountered in our history. All of us, like the IOM itself, needed to adapt swiftly to the new conditions all on their own scale with its own priorities and interests.
- Looking back at history, we can see that societies attempted to separate people with disease from those who remained unaffected. In Dubrovnik, the first “quarantine” facilities in Europe were created in 1377. What Dubrovnik did when the plague was ravaging the world was not to shut its doors completely like some other city states did, but instead ordered diseased people to quarantine, thus enabling its trade and economy to continue functioning.

- Therefore, on the question whether we see the efficiency or lack of it in closing our borders, and to what extent, Croatia believes that history gives us valuable know-how that we can and to a certain extent have already adapted to new challenges and realities.
- During the COVID pandemic, Croatia embraced the Secretary General's plea to "leave no one behind" as it was articulated in the Common Agenda and in line with the 2030 Agenda. Thus, Croatia has included migrants in both the national recovery programme, provided access to health care and included both registered migrants and asylum seekers in the vaccination plans.
- Croatia strongly believes in vaccine solidarity and so far we committed to allocating almost 2 million vaccine doses (1.950.323) to other countries.
- In addition to our bilateral donations, Croatia donated a total of 1.3 million doses of vaccine to the COVAX system.
- Dear Colleagues,
- Croatia continues to support the 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.
- With the aim of ensuring faster and easier access to information for persons in resettlement programs, the application "Resettle in Croatia" was developed, offering in one place useful data on the rights and obligations of persons under international protection.
- Facilitating the integration of resettled refugees in Croatia, in cooperation with the IOM and other partners, the programme COMMIT was implemented with a specific focus on the integration of vulnerable groups such as women and children.

- Through 2021, we continued our valuable cooperation with the IOM through the implementation of "Croatia National Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme“, providing assistance to migrants in Croatia who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin, supporting their return decision and assisting in their socio-economic integration.
- Within the PROTECT project, IOM Croatia assisted to strengthen the capacities of existing national support services for sexual and gender based violence to coordinate better and make these systems available for refugee, migrant and asylum seeker victims and potential victims of SGBV.
- Dear Friends,
- 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 discussions in Geneva and New York in course of the International Migration Review Forum.
- Thank you.