

IOM Council
113th Session, 29 November – 2 December 2022
Agenda item 14 General debate
Statement by Bulgaria

Distinguished Chairperson,
Director General Vitorino,
Distinguished Delegates,

Bulgaria aligns with the EU statement and the statement made by Ukraine on behalf of a group of States.

We note with concern that **in 2022 the displacement continues reaching new record levels**, and state our support to IOM's tireless work to assist those in need. We highlight particularly IOM's action in Ukraine and Afghanistan, aimed at providing assistance and access to basic services and healthcare support to IDPs and returnees.

Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine provoked a huge displacement, and a humanitarian crisis in Europe, and created a deepening food insecurity worldwide. With the continuing targeted destruction of Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure many tens of thousands, and maybe millions of internally displaced persons in the country will need help to get through the coldest months of the upcoming winter. It is heartening to hear that IOM is already ramping up its winterization support to help people prepare for what will come.

We share IOM's approach to meet not only the humanitarian needs but also support sustainable livelihoods and work with the Ukrainian authorities and communities to rebuild and promote community stabilization.

Bulgaria also appreciates IOM's action in the application of whole- of – society “Whole-of-Syria” approach in addressing the humanitarian situation in Syria, including provision of services for rapid recovery of local communities, child protection, and prevention of violence against women. We hope that in this regard Bulgaria's voluntary contribution has been helpful for the IOM mission on the ground.

Mental health and psychosocial support to displaced people and communities affected by war are important part of IOMs work and should be encouraged, as well as the continued aid to persons in vulnerable situations, especially women, children and persons with disabilities.

Climate change and its devastating effects have serious humanitarian consequences in terms of food security, welfare of communities and economic security. IOM is in a unique position to respond to the escalating humanitarian and development needs related to human mobility in the context of natural disasters and we support its work in this regard.

Bulgaria continues to support the **ongoing process of IOM internal reforms**. We hope that the IOM leadership will use the newly agreed increase of IOM budget for further and better progress in the implementation

of the business transformation and the strengthening of the results-based management.

As regards **Human resources**, Bulgaria welcomes the tireless efforts and the impressive work of IOM staff to be always on their posts, fearless and devoted to their mission. We can only encourage IOM's management to strengthen the care for their welfare and mental health.

We also value IOM as our key partner at national level in areas such as return, reintegration, and integration of foreigners, in raising public awareness about migration policies, and in efforts to combat human trafficking.

Improving the effectiveness of the return policy of illegal residents is one of the priorities in our migration policy, with a clear emphasis on promoting the voluntary nature of this process. The support that the IOM provides in this respect is of key importance to us.

Thank you.