

German statement during the General Debate of the 114th IOM Council

(27 November, 15:00 - 18:00, or 29 November, 10:00 - 18:00, - **max. 3 min.**)

- Check against delivery -

Madam Chair, Director General, Excellencies,

Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

First of all: Let me stress that Germany strongly condemns the unprecedented terrorist attack carried out by Hamas in Israel. And we are extremely concerned by the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. International humanitarian law must be adhered to by all parties at all times. We welcome the negotiated release of some hostages. However, Hamas must, release all hostages and refrain from abusing civilians as human shields. We express our pain at seeing so many innocent lives destroyed on and since 7th October.

At IOM, our priorities are in line with yours, DG Pope: fostering regular migration as well as the nexus of climate change and human mobility.

We are facing an extremely tense migration situation in Germany. Since 2022, Germany has taken in nearly 1.5 million refugees – about 1 million of them fleeing the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. And we have seen an increase in illegal migrant smuggling, both in irregular entries and in applications for asylum. Some statistics will set new records by the end of this year.

Irregular migration is a major topic in Germany. We have to reduce irregular entries, also by improving structures for regular migration and finalising the Common European Asylum System's reform.

As only about half of all asylum applications are successful, the area of returns is vital. The focus should be on voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, an area in which IOM has been a long-term, trusted partner.

At the same time, attracting skilled migrant workers that our labour market urgently needs and securing legal pathways for regular migration remains a key challenge. We welcome that IOM intends to expand its programmes for the promotion of regular migration.

Germany has to become more attractive for labor migrants from third countries by offering pre-departure measures to migrants and refugees to better prepare for their future in Germany. We thank IOM for its assistance in this regard.

We must also continue to strive for solutions for displaced persons. We are grateful to IOM and its staff members for always having taken immediate and effective actions for those in need.

With the harsh drought over three years in the Horn of Africa and the devastating floods in Libya this September, we have seen that climate change destroys people's livelihoods and forces people to leave their homes.

Working on human mobility in the context of climate change is a priority for us. We appreciate that you, DG Pope, made this nexus a top priority, and we support your leadership.

Neither the effects of the climate crisis nor migration experiences are gender blind. Therefore, we need to strengthen our focus on the gender nexus in both our policy and programming efforts.

Good coordination between IOM and UNHCR is especially important. As chair of the IOM Council and the UNHCR Executive Committee, we will be committed to this objective.

Germany values IOM as a reliable partner. We have increased our humanitarian assistance funding to IOM fivefold to almost 100 Mio. Euro since 2020. For this contribution, we have set up a flexible funding program. With IOM's budget

growing, we appreciate your focus, DG Pope, on strengthening IOM's risk management systems and internal oversight.

Last but not least, we are proud that we hosted last week the official launch of the IOM Global Data Institute in Berlin and we hope it will develop into the central migration data centre within the UN family.

Once again, DG Pope, let me express my government's readiness to support you, your staff and your work going forward.

Thank you!