



**Statement by Ambassador Dušan MATULAY, Permanent Representative
of SLOVAKIA to the United Nations and other International Organizations
in Geneva**

IOM 114th Council - Item 10 General debate

(27 – 29 November 2023)

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Chairperson,

Slovakia fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union on behalf of its Member States.

I will use my three minutes to make brief comments in my national capacity to highlight the points which are of special importance to my delegation and country.

First of all, my delegation offers its repeated congratulations to the Director General on assuming her post this last October. We thank her not only for delivering her report to this Council but also for her active dialogue and interaction with the IOM membership in recent months. We have been seeing this as an unequivocal sign of her energy and determination to cope with the ever increasing size of the migration challenge. *You can rely on our support, Director General.*

Chair,

The importance of IOM's mandate and its delivery cannot be overstated - especially at present when we are witnessing the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the war in Ukraine further unfold. My delegation commends the IOM for swiftly taking a major role in the collective humanitarian response.

Slovakia has always strived to shoulder its part. And that is why it has decided to contribute EUR 100.000 to the World Food Program to help provide food supplies to the population of Gaza.

The situation in Ukraine as a result of the ongoing war remains of utmost concern, with its repercussions still in place across the wider region and the world. Since the outset of the crisis, the concentrated support of my government to the neighbor in need included humanitarian and other assistance as well as receiving and hosting 'thousands' forced to flee their homes and, eventually, their country.

Slovakia commits to stay further this humanitarian course and help the Ukrainians through these testing times. Here, we cannot but thank again the IOM for providing assistance to affected persons in Ukraine, and also to those arriving in Slovakia. We see in you a valued partner and collaborator.

Chair,

In the course of this year, it was also my country that had experienced a sharp increase in the irregular migration flows which had often been accompanied by organized migrant smuggling activity. We continue to be concerned about risks, including for migrants, such trends may further create. This heightened migratory pressure bring again to the fore of our consideration the need of a strengthened dialogue with countries of transit and origin. Returns should also have their acknowledged place in such a dialogue as one of the legitimate tools for easing the pressure. We recognize that in the real life refugees and migrant flows cannot be separated. But still, it is important to uphold the distinction between their definitions and, consequently, between the rights and obligations that apply along their route.

To close, I would like to thank again the Director General for her initiative and consistency in reaching out to the IOM membership and presenting her vision and priorities. My delegation is confident that they will make a crucial contribution to the IOM activity in the field as well as strengthen its in-house management. We all will profit - the IOM executing its mandate, the Member States to whom it serves, and above all the people on the move and in need of our help.

Thank you.