



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
G E N E V A**

**Statement of the Republic of Croatia
IOM 115 Council
Item 12
General Debate**

Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies

Croatia aligns itself with the EU statement. As a member of the European Union, Croatia values strategic partnership with IOM on all aspects of migration and mobility, including countering of irregular migration, border management, returns, readmission and reintegration as well as the promotion of regular pathways.

- As crises around the world continue to expand and force people to move, IOM's timely responses have further highlighted its critical and invaluable role as well as the special nature of its work. We commend IOM for its response in all crises around the globe including Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, extremely difficult humanitarian situation in Gaza, worsening of the crises in Sudan and Lebanon, to name just a few.
- We commend IOM's response to the impacts of climate change on human mobility and work across the whole spectrum of humanitarian-development-peace nexus,
- In line with the strategic objective that IOM set out – the need to promote legal pathways globally, Croatia supports IOM in taking this objective forward as a part of comprehensive, human rights based approach to migration in cooperation with other international organisations and stakeholders.

- Chair,
- Due to its geographical position, Croatia is highly impacted by irregular migratory routes, especially by the Western Balkan route. During the course of 2024 we have registered around 24.000 illegal border crossings (58% less than in 2023).
- Out of this number , 87% of persons filed the asylum application, compared to last year's 98% of asylum applications. Still, the majority of applicants in fact do not want to stay in Croatia as over 70% of requests for international protection is suspended as the applicants leave Croatia. We are aware that this problem is being faced by other transit countries.
- For those who decide to stay, Croatia is currently developing a whole spectrum of programmes designed to better and faster integrate asylum applicants into the society. The new law on foreigners was adopted which regulates and simplifies integration procedures through the free language and culture courses.
- Systematic, comprehensive and sustainable migration and asylum policy, migration governance and a comprehensive approach to migration remain a key priority for Croatia and we count on IOM's leadership in that respect.
- Let me conclude by reiterating Croatia's appreciation and support for the vital role and work of IOM.

Thank you!