



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF ESTONIA  
TO THE UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

## **ESTONIA**

**Statement delivered by Ms Arnika Kalbus**

**Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia**

**at the IOM COUNCIL 115th session**

**(26 November – 28 November 2024)**

Chair, Director General, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Estonia aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of the EU and its Member States and with the cross-regional statement delivered by Ukraine.

Estonia is proud to be a committed partner of IOM, marking this year the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Estonia's membership. The importance and responsibility of IOM working in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is growing, as global challenges continue to increase. Sudan is facing a devastating crisis, conflict in the Middle East is inflicting horrendous human suffering and aggression is ongoing in our close neighbourhood in Europe.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine passed the 1,000-day mark. Over 10 million Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes. The humanitarian crisis is deepening due to Russia's intensified and deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian and critical infrastructure. In the long list of crimes committed by Russia's representatives, the deportation of at least 20,000 Ukrainian children is one of the most horrific. Estonia has the deepest respect and affinity towards the perseverance and courage of the Ukrainian people suffering from Russia's war of aggression. As an international community we have to respond with an equal commitment to help Ukraine.

Estonia lauds the life-saving assistance that IOM is giving to the Ukrainian citizens and urges to continue providing this acute support on the ground as long as needed.

Director General,

Multifold challenges need a holistic approach. We commend IOM for undertaking extensive policy and institutional reforms and for drafting regional strategies that aim to focus on the specific situation in every part of the world. In light of the increasingly tense financial context, we encourage IOM to pursue the work to reinforce private sector engagement. To achieve safe, orderly and regular migration, we need to address all aspects of migration policy. We need to enhance cooperation through comprehensive mutually beneficial partnerships, to address root causes, to fight trafficking and smuggling in order to prevent loss of life, to counter irregular departures and instrumentalisation of migration, and also to promote regular pathways. We have a lot of work to do to achieve this. Furthermore, in our region, we are facing the challenge of defending our democracies and our values against illegal and inhumane activities of Russia and Belarus. For us, countering the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes is of utmost importance.

In conclusion, Estonia values the role of IOM as a vital partner in the international humanitarian system. We commend the hard work of IOM's dedicated staff on the ground.

Thank you for your attention.