

German statement during the High-Level Segment of the 115th IOM Council
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Regular migration pathways: A global call for action

Chair, Director General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- On behalf of the German government, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the IOM Council today.
- Let me come straight to today's topic “regular migration pathways”, and let me make three points.
- First: Regular migration pathways are of utmost importance to us.
- In view of demographic changes, attracting and securing workers of almost all skill levels is one of the major challenges for Germany in the coming decades. Our government therefore has a strong interest in long-term immigration of workers and in making Germany and the EU more attractive for workers from third countries in such a way that all parties – migrants, their countries of origin and their countries of destination – benefit.
- That is why we - like other EU Member States - have been doing a great deal in this area for a long time. Only recently, for example, we have further liberalized our immigration law. Our holistic approach allows for various options to study and work in Germany. This year's numbers of labour immigration to Germany are already showing some encouraging results. Marking one of the major innovations in this context, we expanded options for immigration without a previously concluded employment contract with the so-called “opportunity card” (“Chancenkarte”), that allows for residence for up to one year in order to find a job.
- Germany considers the efforts of the European Commission in the area of legal migration to be important and very useful. We follow developments like the Talent Partnerships and the Talent Pool initiative closely and take part in an active manner.

- Strengthening cooperation on immigration for training and work purposes is also an integral component of the migration partnerships that DEU is currently promoting with various third countries.
- And even in times of a tense migration situation, it is important for Germany to remain a reliable partner in the area of refugee resettlement and admission and create legal pathways for the most vulnerable.
- At the same time, Germany has experienced large numbers of asylum seekers in recent years and the admission of more than a million refugees from Ukraine. While we remain a reliable partner in this area, the situation has started to strain our infrastructure, not only when it comes to refugee housing, but also to school and kindergarten places or medical care.
- That brings me to my second point: Politically and in public, the issue of irregular migration has been at the centre of attention in Germany for several years now.
- Several terrorist attacks in recent months have made irregular migration the focus of even more intense attention from policy-makers than it already was.
- All of this threatens to overturn the fundamentally positive attitude of large parts of our population towards regular immigration - which we urgently need.
- It is therefore eminently important to us to address the problem of irregular migration and to ensure a more consistent return of people who do not have the right to stay in our country, while assuring safe, dignified and fair treatment of migrants.
- And that takes me to my third and final point: Germany very much appreciates the work of IOM and the cooperation with IOM, be it in the area of resettlement, voluntary return and reintegration, or in the area of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. We would therefore like to encourage IOM to use its opportunities and channels to publicise the existing legal channels for regular migration while also helping to address and prevent irregular migration.

- In other words, let's work together to harness the potential of regular migration and to prevent irregular migration.

Thank you for your attention!