

**International Organization for Migration**

**Ninety-Ninth Session of the Council  
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**General Debate**

*Republic of Serbia  
Statement by Ambassador, Dr Ugljesa Ugi Zvekic*

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Director – General,

First of all let me join others in expressing our warm congratulations to you for taking this important position. Let me assure you that Serbia will do its utmost to assist you in carrying out this duty.

I also warmly welcome the ~~six~~ new member states and the new observer organizations.

Let me express our congratulations to the Director-General and the SMT for the leadership and vision both as regards the mandate of the Organization as well as the necessary strategic and organizational focus to match the capacity of the Organization to the challenges it faces.

Allow me to make few remarks of relevance to the work of IOM in general and in particular in Serbia and the region of the Western Balkans on the strategic level.

The IOM Strategy for the Western Balkans for the period 2011-2013 reflects well the current problems and challenges. It promotes a

comprehensive approach which in turn comprises and appreciates that the region is of crucial importance in terms of the migratory flows into and from the EU as the main destination of illegal migrants. The region of South-Eastern Europe is not only the site of the origin and transit, but increasingly so of return to the region from the EU and other western countries. It should be recalled that Serbia received enormous number of refugees and IDPs from the region, whose situation still has not been sustainably resolved. Economic and financial crisis as well as a well noted trend in the report of the D-G regarding certain level of anti-migrant sentiments have affected the already quite complex migratory matrix of the region and, indeed, that of Serbia (refugees, IDPs and returnees). In July 2009, Serbia adopted the National Migration Management Strategy, as a pioneer in the region. Most recently, on the regional level, concerted efforts are underway to better this situation. There is a need for greater understanding and support to cope with the existing refugee and IDP levels in our territory, and not only for the return and integration of new individuals through readmission. Therefore, a call for better understanding and assistance to Serbia and the region to provide adequate and sustainable responses to the very complex migration matrix earlier referred to.

On the level of a general strategic approach it is of utmost importance that partnership arrangements are cherished among the IOM, UNHCR, EU, other UN agencies and programmes, local, national, regional and international NGOs and donor community. This partnership may bring about further fine tuning in the application of the IOM Strategy in order to encompass in action certain issues not specifically mentioned in the 12 point Strategy (e.g. resettlement, reparations, etc). This global strategic partnership outreach is of utmost importance in Serbia and the Western Balkans region.

Mr. Chairmen,

Serbia is a very keen supporter of the positive link between human rights and migration and therefore joins the appeal for further ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Thank you.