

Check against delivery

S T A T E M E N T

by

**H.E. Dr. Uglješa Zvekić, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia
to the United Nations at Geneva
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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligned itself with the statement of the European Union under this agenda item; allow me to add some considerations of our own.

The Republic of Serbia has been faced with complex and numerous migration challenges. Some of these challenges have been present for the past two decades such as refugees from former Yugoslavia and IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija, but some challenges are rather new, such as the sudden influx of the asylum seekers as well as reintegration of returnees upon the readmission agreement.

To respond to these multiple challenges, joint and coherent migration policies are needed. An important step towards coherent migration policy has been made this month, when a Law on Migration Management has been adopted. The Law on Migration Management provides a framework for coordinated efforts in the migration policy both among ministries, but also at the local level within municipalities where different state stakeholders are providing services to migrants. In addition, various tools and mechanisms have been developed for tracking migration and developing migration measures, such as a Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia for year 2010, which will be regularly updated.

Mr. Chairman,

The following are the highlights of the overall migration situation in the Republic of Serbia:

Serbia is still a host to 66.000 refugees and 210.000 IDPs. As regards the displaced persons, sadly, Serbia ranks 13 in the world and first in Europe. 10% of the current population of Serbia did not reside in Serbia prior to 1992. More than 250.000 of refugees have obtained citizenship in the Republic of Serbia, making it the largest integration process.

The National Strategy for resolving problems of refugees and IDPs envisages a set of comprehensive measures aiming to enable integration and durable solution for refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia if they decide to stay in the Republic of Serbia, as well as to enhance sustainable return to the country of origin. As for the IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia's firm position is that they should be provided with the option of sustainable return. However, the number of returnees to Kosovo and Metohija is exceptionally small primarily due to the lack of security, limited freedom of movement, limited access to public services, lack of economic perspective for returnees and the difficulties in property restitution. There are still 36 collective centres (13 of them in Kosovo) and 40 unrecognized collective centres (premises occupied without authorization) in the territory of Serbia. No lasting solutions for 15,000 IDPs within Kosovo have been found yet. However, bearing in mind quite limited opportunities for sustainable return as well as the fact that for years Serbia provided assistance to them, one strategic objective is to improve the living conditions of IDPs during their displacement status.

Mr. Chairman,

Regional process for finding durable solutions to refugees from former Yugoslavia which was initiated with the Belgrade conference in March 2010 and followed by two years of intensive negotiation of governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia was successful. Partial but substantial pledges were made at the Donor conference in April 2012 in Sarajevo. This process represents the largest collective effort to provide durable solutions for refugees in the former Yugoslavia and it will last for next 5 years targeting the housing needs of approximately 74.000 persons. The role of the international community was and still is very important. This regional process is of great significance for the regional reconciliation and integration of refugees.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to underline our long-lasting, open and fruitful cooperation with IOM in addressing the problem of displacement in my country. We would like to reiterate our full support to the IOM's activities and, in particular, to its dedicated staff in the field working in difficult and often very challenging environments throughout the world.

Thank you..