



REPUBLIC OF MALTA

103rd Council of the International Organisation for Migration

Statement by H.E. Dr John Paul GRECH
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Organisations in Geneva

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your Chairmanship of the 103rd Council Session of the International Organization for Migration and to wish you and other members of the Bureau a successful meeting.

Malta fully supports the statement delivered by the Delegation of the European Union. We would like to deliver the following views in our national capacity:

Migration is a phenomenon of many facets and complexities. It is a motor for boosting economies and trade, and a force against old cultural misconceptions. However this year, especially in the Mediterranean Sea, which is our home, migration has represented tragedy. On the 3 October 2013, a trawler carrying an excessively large number of African migrants, mainly from Eritrea and Somalia, sank off the coast of the island of Lampedusa. Nearly 500 people are estimated to have been onboard. 155 persons were saved and brought to land. On 11 October 2013, the Mediterranean region witnessed a second tragedy, as a result of another attempted illegal crossing into Europe. The Armed Forces of Malta rescued 146 people, a number of them children. These two incidents represent a fraction of the reported, and unreported, incidents of migrants losing their lives at sea, as well as on land while in transit, consequent of criminal smuggling or trafficking operations.

The Government of Malta has long been insisting that the issue of irregular migration cannot be addressed by the frontier countries alone – irregular migration is an international problem and requires an international solution with all stake holders assuming their responsibility. While encouraged by the European Union's recent stance to address this issue more directly, we urge all Members of the IOM to show solidarity with the victims of smuggling and trafficking of persons. Malta has long been advocating that migration must be well-managed and via legal means, whereby movement is transparent for the countries of origin, transit and destination, and that migrants travel with full knowledge of their rights, without fear or coercion, and with a clear goal of their future prospects. In this respect, we believe that the IOM paper entitled: 'Addressing

Complex Migration Flows and Upholding the Rights of Migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route' in response to the EU Task Force's initiative to draw up a tangible action plan in response to these recent tragedies, is a concrete and timely contribution in addressing this phenomenon.

Mr. Chairman,

I avail of this opportunity to publicly thank the IOM for the support it is extending towards Malta, in particular on two aspects of the migration phenomenon which are of particular importance to Malta, namely the return of failed asylum seekers and the resettlement of beneficiaries of international protection. This partnership is much appreciated, particularly in view of IOM's extensive international representation, its expertise and experience. At present, we are already collaborating on various programmes such as RESTART IV and COMAM II, and as their names suggest, these are all follow up programmes to other successful ones, which have been of primary benefit to migrants, as well as for Malta. I also thank the IOM for their assistance with the resettlement of beneficiaries of international protection. Such good will toward Malta by the IOM was clearly manifest earlier this month when Malta had the pleasure of receiving Director General Ambassador William Lacy Swing, on a visit of support to Malta's particular and extreme circumstances. We are thankful to His Excellency's expression of solidarity, but also for his recommendations in helping alleviate some of the difficulties being suffered both by migrants and also by Malta.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration is a complex phenomenon. It is only by addressing its different aspects in a holistic manner that we can maximise the effects of our efforts. This is what we seek to do with the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, by which we aim to tackle migration comprehensively, by combating irregular immigration, enhancing well-managed migration, ensuring international protection for those who need it, and strengthening the migration and development nexus. Development-oriented actions are essential to address the root causes of migratory flows by generating opportunities and economic activity in the countries of origin, thus lessening the propensity to migrate.

Allow me to conclude by expressing Malta's support for the IOM's work in upholding the dignity of the person; less we forget that every migrant is a person with dignity, irrespective of their legal status. We foresee the international role of the IOM to grow just as migration will increase, and remain confident that on the basis of its past work, the Organization will remain a faithful servant of those most in need of its assistance.

Thank you