



## **Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**IOM 114<sup>th</sup> Council (27 – 29 November 2023)**

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**Item 10**  
**General Debate**

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**Geneva, 27 November 2023**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

# **International Organization for Migration**

## **114<sup>th</sup> Council**

**27 – 29 November 2023**

### **Item 10 – General Debate**

#### **Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, and the potential candidate country Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Director-General,

1. We thank you for your report. The EU and its Member States highly value our partnership with IOM which is based on a comprehensive and humane approach to migration.
2. In recent years, IOM has grown significantly, driven in part by the emergence of new humanitarian crises, including rapid onset disasters, and the worsening conditions in many protracted crises. We express in particular our grave concern about Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the continued escalation of the conflict in Sudan and about the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and we recall relevant European Council Conclusions. We deplore all loss of civilian lives and we reiterate once again the obligation of all parties to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law.
3. In the face of these challenges, we commend IOM for maintaining its agility and flexibility, allowing it to adapt and respond swiftly, also thanks to its strong field presence. This substantial growth of IOM would not have been achievable without the EU and its Member States, which collectively once again stand as the largest donor. We underline the need to keep the strategic focus on core priorities and to continuously strengthen the core structure.
4. Director-General, we appreciate IOM's growing leadership as the UN migration agency and Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration. We encourage IOM to keep participating actively in the related initiatives of the Inter-

Agency Standing Committee and promote a “One UN” approach and strong partnerships for increased collective outcomes.

5. We trust that the new Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 and the Internal Governance Framework 2.0 will provide opportunities to consolidate the organisation and to further build on the ongoing reform processes, also guided by the recent MOPAN assessment.
6. As the Strategic Plan takes form, we have a view of the essential emerging priorities that you intend to establish for the organisation. In that sense, we share your view that it is essential to increase efforts to save lives and protect people on the move, working jointly with UNHCR on mixed migration flows through a whole-of-route approach, promote legal pathways for migration to prevent irregular migration and counter smuggling and human trafficking, and to understand climate change as one of the drivers of migration. We welcome your planned focus on data and its use for action and urge you to work on data sharing and interoperability with other UN agencies to better prioritise and increase the effectiveness of the overall response to migration. We value your aim to enhance cooperation with the private sector, academia, affected communities and other partners to find solutions. We also invite you to put a strong emphasis on oversight, accountability and transparency vis-à-vis Member States, donors and migrants.
7. Director-General, we encourage IOM to take forward the objective of promoting safe and legal pathways globally, in line with national competencies, including labour mobility schemes as part of a comprehensive human rights-based approach to migration, which also includes return and reintegration. We need to build triple win solutions – for countries of destination and origin and migrants themselves. With an ageing population, labour shortages in some sectors, and digital and green transitions, the EU will need to mobilise seven million more people into employment by 2030. While using the untapped potential of our domestic workforce, we would also rely on the right talents from abroad for sectors with labour shortages, across all qualification levels. We would appreciate IOM to build on and complement the EU initiatives in this field, in particular the Talent Partnerships and the recently proposed EU Talent Pool. These initiatives, together with bilateral initiatives of EU Member States, will provide a real alternative to smuggling and human trafficking networks, thus curbing irregular migration and saving lives.
8. We commend and share IOM’s commitment to finding and implementing solutions to climate change induced mobility. Such a complex issue requires a holistic

approach and sustainable responses in terms of resilience building and early warning that enables people to stay and that ensures protection and dignity for those who move. This requires action on all levels: national, regional and global. We therefore also welcome the focus on climate for this year's high-level segment. We thank you for the good collaboration during the EU chairpersonship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

9. The EU and its Member States believe that an additional effort must be made to guarantee a gender-responsive approach to the internal organization of IOM and the formulation and implementation of projects. We look forward to an updated version of the 2015 Gender Equality Policy to reflect this and we appreciate the recent launch of the Gender and Migration Research Policy Action Lab (GenMig).
10. We are looking forward to continuing our valuable strategic partnership with IOM.

Thank you!