

**STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. DIMITER TZANTCHEV, DEPUTY MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA,
AT THE 100TH COUNCIL OF THE IOM**

7 December 2011, Geneva

Mr. Chairperson,
Director General,
Excellences, distinguished delegates,

At the outset, allow me to express our highest appreciation for the outstanding leadership of the Director General in achieving the goals of the Organization and meeting the challenges of the modern world.

Bulgaria welcomes the new members and observers of the IOM and believes they will bring new vitality to its activities.

Mr. Chairperson,

The celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Organization creates an excellent opportunity to analyze the achievements, to confirm the priorities and to define new, more ambitious goals for the future.

The complexity of the challenges our world is facing today clearly shows the need for coordinated and comprehensive response. No single country is able to face these challenges acting alone. We believe that the experience of the last 60 years provides IOM with a real opportunity to enhance its capacity on the basis of the lessons learned and the difficulties overcome.

We live in a world marked by challenges such as demographic growth and economic disparities, economic and financial crisis, political tensions and political changes in different regions, climate change, large scale natural disasters. Those are real challenges for the national migration policies and they require rapid and definite measures. In this context, we welcome the adoption of the IOM Resolution on the establishment of a Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism as an important tool for swift and effective answer to emerging crises.

Bulgaria has repeatedly emphasized its support for the IOM's structural reform. In our view it strengthens the Organization's management mechanism by increasing the transparency of its activities.

We attach high importance to the close cooperation of IOM with other international bodies engaged in migration policies and, in particular, with the United Nations.

We are strongly committed to play an active role in expanding cooperation, including on strategic level, between IOM and the European Union on the basis of the Framework Agreement, signed on November 8th 2011.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to underline the excellent cooperation of the Bulgarian Government with the IOM Office in Bulgaria – a main partner in implementing and enforcing our national priorities in the field of migration.

In early 2011 the Bulgarian Government adopted a National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration 2011-2020 as well as an Action Plan for implementing the Strategy in 2011. The objective of the Strategy is to create a policy framework for building a comprehensive and sustainable legal and institutional basis in order to ensure the management of the legal migration and integration. The implementation of the Strategy will lead to a more effective prevention of the illegal migration and will facilitate the conversion of the migration and mobility into positive forces for economic and demographic development.

One of the main activities of the Bulgarian institutions is the fight against human trafficking. Bulgaria shares the position that a systematic and integrated approach is needed. The cooperation at regional and international level is also a key element against the trafficking in human beings.

Bulgaria reckons that while implementing the policies, programmes and specific measures aimed at countering the trafficking in human beings and protecting the victims, the roots of this phenomenon must be taken into consideration. Education, including special school programmes, and the dissemination of information about the methods of traffickers serve for better public awareness and understanding of the risks and dangers of trafficking. Adequate measures to improve the economic and living conditions, policies to improve women and child protection shall be added to the above mentioned steps.

We attach particular importance to joint programmes and initiatives in South-Eastern Europe: collection and exchange of data, information, experts and good practices, building of transnational mechanisms and realization of projects and operations.

As an active member of the Organization of the Black sea Economic Cooperation, Bulgaria is committed to contribute for further strengthening of the cooperation in migration policies with the other countries in the Black Sea region. In 2008 we have successfully completed two joint Black sea Economic Cooperation – UN projects (with IOM and UNODC) in combating illegal trafficking of people and illegal emigration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to emphasize the high importance we place on the role of IOM in addressing the challenges of the modern world and in creating a better future for millions of people around the globe. The Republic of Bulgaria shares completely the humanistic ideals of the Organization and stays committed to contribute to the realization of its goals.

Thank you for the attention