

**112th session of IOM Council – Council Panel on the launch of the World Migration Report 2022
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Statement by Minister for Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hon. Samuel Cikotić

Thank you very much chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, Director General, it is a privilege to be here with you today and discuss the findings of the World Migration Report 2022 which has focused us to think about this very complex issue. This report forces us to stress how critical it is to get facts right as talking about migration and its effects can drastically change public opinion and reactions on such a generally perceived controversial issue.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, part of the so-called “Western Balkan Route”, the number of migrants transiting through the country as a standing post to Europe has been literally used to force arguments for or against State inefficiency in dealing with this issue.

After having introduced strategic methodologies to check and count migrants, especially those residing outside of the official reception facilities, we are increasingly confident that, while numbers are decreasing, the need of dealing comprehensively with the phenomenon of migration remains.

Interestingly enough, Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a country traditionally characterized by migrations of its own nationals to Europe and some other parts of the world, such as the United States and Australia, which was exacerbated during and after the war. When one compares the number of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which today runs some around 3 to 3.5 thousands, to the number of migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina outside the country, some 2.5 million estimated, we are forced to discuss ways in which this labour gap will be filled or compensated one day.

Likewise, with increasing climate change adverse factors, internal displacement induced by disasters will be on the rise and we are ramping up our State efforts of disaster-risk reduction as a matter of priority.

There are some political aspects of migration in Bosnia and Herzegovina related to the fact that different political parties coming from different ethnic backgrounds have got somewhat different attitudes towards the issue.

The report pushes even further the argument of international cooperation when dealing with migration. For us, this means successful cooperation with our neighbours in the Western Balkans, but also with European and non-European origin countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Egypt and some other States where the migrants are coming and with whom we have consistently built dialogue and cooperation. This has been particularly significant when COVID-19 has all caught

us by surprise and we had to learn to adapt to better closures, lack of returns to continue to countries of origin and other key impediments.

Today I am glad to report that we are advancing in the return measurement agenda to many of these countries. In addition, and in relation to COVID-19, we have included migrants in our cantonal vaccination schemes, with a satisfactory rate of vaccinated people, some 40 per cent of total migrants per populations counting interested and vaccinated, and despite the challenges posed by the extreme mobility population.

In summary, migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon which needs to be understood with solid figures and facts. As an academic scholar, I could only praise the comprehensive view that the World Migration Report provides to the issue, enabling to disperse misperceptions and miscommunications.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.