

**Speech of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia
Davor Božinović at the
Intergovernmental Conference on the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Marrakech, 10 and 11 December 2018**

Thank you, Mr President,
Your Excellency, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to start by **thanking Morocco for hosting this Conference** and for its **efforts invested in providing us with a stimulating working environment.**

We have **gathered here in Marrakech** under the auspices of the organization built on the **fundamental principle of coexistence – the principle of solidarity.**

This is the **first time that at this level we recognize the importance of a global approach to migration**, which is – following the great crisis in Europe and large migratory movements in the Mediterranean, and recently also in Latin America – **more than necessary.**

Since 1951, when the UN Refugee Convention was adopted to address the situation faced by the world back then, **there was no need to make a clear distinction between refugees and migrants.**

Today this **need is evident more than ever before.**

We have to **introduce a clear distinction between these two categories of people on the move**, define those categories well and **apply those definitions consistently.**

We have to **clearly differentiate between regular and irregular migration** and **invest all necessary efforts in combating the irregular ones.**

This is key to **preserve our values based on the rule of law, respect for human dignity and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.**

No state can efficiently tackle migration on its own, precisely due to its **nature that is transcending national and regional**

boundaries. The solution to this challenge is international, regional and bilateral cooperation and dialogue.

Mr. President,

In our view, this document is intended precisely for regulating migratory movements and directing them into legally defined frameworks and procedures.

The Compact is a non-legally binding framework and it does not in any way create legal obligations for states nor does it seek to establish international customary law or further interpret existing treaties or national obligations.

It reaffirms the sovereign right of each individual state to determine its national migration policy as well as the prerogative to govern migration in accordance with its national realities and priorities.

For Croatia, it is also crucial that there is no transfer of national sovereignty when it comes to issues related to migrants' right of entry, transit, residence and work.

Only in this way this Global Compact can be truly perceived as an expression of our joint will to start applying efficient solutions in facing this global challenge.

Croatia is currently facing mostly irregular migration and smuggling networks related to this phenomenon. We must not forget that it is precisely in these circumstances that human rights are violated to the highest extent.

Therefore, we find it especially important that the Compact encourages the fight against smugglers and traffickers in human beings.

Of great significance for us is also the provision pursuant to which it is our common objective that all migrants have proof of legal identity and hold valid travel documents. This would also facilitate repatriation procedures.

In this regard, it is important that by readmitting their own citizens, partner countries meet their obligations under international law.

Under the current challenges it faces, **Croatia will continue to be as persistent as it has been so far in protecting the Croatian international border, which is also the longest external border of the European Union.**

When it comes to **regional cooperation**, Croatia acknowledges the fact that a **certain number of countries in our immediate neighborhood** have withdrawn from this process and do not accept this Compact.

We are aware that **this will have an impact on the launch of interstate cooperation**, as well as the **implementation of that particular dimension of the Compact.**

Croatia believes that **this document will also provide an incentive to address the real causes** for large migratory movements.

Some of the main ones include **armed conflicts, deficiencies in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the unstoppable consequences of climate change**, as well as the **lack of opportunities in the countries of origin of migrant**. It is therefore important that we **find comprehensive solutions to these challenges.**

In conclusion, it is the most important that **we all become aware that migration is a phenomenon that will not go away and that we will continue to face for many years to come.**

We see this **Compact as the beginning of a process**. It is thus, our task, as responsible members of the international community, **to define our sovereign roles in it.**

Due to time constraint, I delivered the shorter version of my statement, while the full version will be available on the internet site of the Conference.

Thank you Mr. President!