

**AUSTRIA**



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Statement**

**by**

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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON ADDRESSING  
LARGE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

***Roundtable 2: Addressing drivers of migration, particularly large  
movements, and highlighting the positive contribution of migrants***

**New York, 19 September 2016**

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I started working as State Secretary for Integration in Austria 5 years ago, in a very diverse country with 8 million inhabitants out of which 1.8 million have a migration background!

In these 5 years I learned that social integration is a very difficult task. But we have also proven with our work that progress is possible.

We know from our experience that successful integration depends on language skills, mutual respect and understanding.

And if immigrants find a job and contribute to our societies then integration can be a win-win situation for all of us.

But in these five years I also learned that the success of immigration also depends on the numbers of immigrants.

And that we can only reach the goals just mentioned if the numbers are not too high.

In the year 2015, Europe was hit by a massive refugee and migrant crisis.

Over a million people have transited through Austria to other European countries.

And nearly 100.000 applied for asylum in Austria - after Sweden the second highest number per capita in the EU.

We know what the root causes for migration are:

conflicts, poverty, lack of economic perspectives and no job opportunities.

But an important additional driver for this mass movement of people was the policy of opening our borders and waving refugees and migrants into the heart of Europe.

Besides the fact that we lost control over who entered our territory, we cannot accept the fact that not only those who are most in need managed to migrate to Europe but those who could afford to pay the smugglers.

And the most shocking consequence is that our open door policy did not stop the drowning in the Mediterranean, it just motivated more and more people to start this dangerous journey.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Migration is of such relevance to countries of origin, countries of destination and especially to the people that we need a clear and sustainable strategy!

We need to join forces

- to stop the irregular flow of migrants.
- to address the root causes of migration, especially by increasing our assistance to countries of origin;
- and to provide for legal ways to come to Europe by increasing resettlement programs in manageable numbers.

Therefore in Austria we decided to double our direct bilateral development cooperation and we have quadrupled our funding for humanitarian aid.

Ladies and gentlemen,

No country has the capacity and resources to take in unlimited numbers of migrants.

This is a global challenge and a shared responsibility!

We therefore thank the Secretary-General for organizing today's high-level meeting!

Thank you!