



**Address by MP António Rodrigues of the
Assembly of the Republic of Portugal to the 105th Session of the Council
of the International Organization for Migration
Geneva, 26 November 2014**

Ambassador William Lacy, Director General of the IOM,

Honorable members of the Council,

In the name of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean - and President of the Portuguese Parliament - Ms. Assunção Esteves -, I wish to convey to you the Parliamentary Assembly's deep honor and satisfaction with your decision to accord us Observer status at the International Organization for Migration's Council meetings.

When Portugal assumed, this past February, the Presidency of the PA-UfM, we were determined to make Migrations the central drive of the Assembly's political action. With this aim, the Portuguese Parliament organized a first meeting in Lisbon with the Mayor of Ceuta, and, this October, a fact finding mission to Lampedusa. Both counted with the incomparable participation and priceless contribution of Ambassador William Lacy. We were able to draw the attention of our Member Parliaments of the EU and the South Mediterranean to the persistent drama of the loss of migrants' lives in the Mediterranean. And we wanted to emphasize the crucial role that Parliamentarians have and must play to that regard.

At these meetings, we discussed a number of short, medium and long terms measures that we want to develop further and formally propose to the political authorities of the European Union and the United Nations by the end of our mandate. The idea is to enunciate a Decalogue of concrete policies to be taken in the short and medium term. This intent, if agreed by the Members at the next Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, will carry the legitimacy that only a Parliamentary body can carry. We count on your contribution to develop these proposals and make them feasible.



Our work is progressing over the next weeks with meetings with the Mayors of the Cities of Catania, Tangier and Melilla. In February, we'll receive in Lisbon the Speakers of our 44 member Parliaments, as well as the EU Commissioner for Migration, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and several authorities from the Southern Mediterranean, to discuss urgent political responses to the challenges we face in the EuroMediterranean and to the need of maximizing the positive impacts of human mobility in this region.

Mr. Director General, members of the Council,

As the Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament said in Lampedusa, “a new action is needed to address the issue of Migrations in a globalised world. Something truly new, a policy that focuses on the causes; a systemic, across-the-board approach with concrete measures, new methods; the need for the EU to take development policy seriously, with safe and legal immigration channels to avoid a cloistered, anachronistic Europe; the end of a rhetorical discussion that has led to nowhere.”

Today, as we enter IOM's family as Observers, it is our belief that all Migrants can benefit from this “network of networks”, this interlacement of institutions, which provides migration policies with a most needed structured transversal and multidisciplinary approach.

We look forward to a fruitful cooperation. Thank you.

António Rodrigues

Member of the Delegation of the Assembly of the Republic to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean.