The questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur for human rights of the migrants on the impact of COVID-19 on the human rights of migrants:

1. *Please provide information on the healthcare responses taken by your Government to counter the pandemic providing migrants and their families' access to adequate health care on the same basis as nationals. These include equitable access to treatment, testing, vaccines, reproductive health, gender responsive health protocols, protective equipment and other health and basic services such as water, sanitation and information. Please also indicate if adequate firewall protections and professional capacities are available to ensure that migrants who fear seeking medical support can access health services without risking immigration enforcement measures, as well as personal protection measures.*

The Act on the International and Temporary Protection guarantees all applicants for international protection in the Republic of Croatia the right to health care, with emphasis on those applicants for international protection who need special procedural and/or acceptance guarantees, especially for the victims of torture, rape or other severe mental, physical or sexual violence.

During the pandemic, access to health facilities was carried out according to a special, stricter protocol in order to prevent the spread of the infection. Such a protocol was in force for all citizens of the Republic of Croatia. Every applicant for international protection was provided with timely health care and was regularly informed about all the safety health protocols and epidemiological measures and recommendations of the Croatian Institute of Public Health.

During their accommodation in shelters for applicants for international protection, medical care is available on a daily basis, sufficient quantities of protective equipment and disinfectants have been procured, and all necessary measures have been taken to protect the health safety of the applicants for international protection.

Third-country nationals in the process of return have the right to emergency medical care and basic treatment; this includes medical treatment in case of COVID infection as well. Unaccompanied children have the right to medical care to the same extent as children of Croatian citizenship. When the police treat illegal migrants and foreigners who express an intention for international protection, the existence of COVID symptoms is checked. If aliens have symptoms of COVID, the competent epidemiologist is notified and they take further action. If the aliens do not have symptoms, the police continues the procedure, that is, takes decisions regarding the return in accordance with the Aliens Act (Official Gazette 130/11, 74/13, 69/17, 46/18 and 53/20) or receives the request for international protection. In the case of a decision on return, the deadline for independent departure is determined taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, provided that the deadline should not be shorter than 7 or longer than 30. If foreigners are transported by police vehicles, those vehicles are regularly disinfected and police officers wear appropriate protective equipment. As for unaccompanied minors, the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy has issued guidelines on how to protect unaccompanied children in situations of risk of threat or epidemic.

Every officer working with illegal migrants, applicants for international protection or persons with approved international protection, follow the instructions and recommendations of the Public Health Institute and the Civil Protection Headquarters on a daily basis and adapt their work to the current epidemiological situation. The Ministry of the Interior has provided all employees with protective equipment and disinfectants, and other activities are being undertaken to ensure the highest possible level of hygienic and healthy working conditions. Vaccination of employees of the Ministry of the Interior is prescribed and carried out according to defined priority groups in accordance with the Government plan for vaccination against COVID-19 and the instruction of the Croatian Institute of Public Health.

1. *Please indicate what solidarity measures and initiatives have been put in place or are planned by the Government, the civil society and other relevant stakeholder to support migrants in the context of the pandemic.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all layers of society globally and has caused numerous socio-economic and psychological consequences. In this segment, seekers of international protection, especially unaccompanied children and minors, stand out as a vulnerable group. In order to support them, the Ministry of the Interior, as the competent body, in cooperation with civil society organizations, provides international protection seekers with psychosocial support through individual and group interviews which in turn enable easier identification of vulnerable groups and thus an approach tailored to their specific needs.

1. *In the context of immigration detention, please indicate if measures have been considered to minimize health risks associated with the COVID-19 transmission by reducing migrants' detention and opting for alternatives to detention and, if not, kindly elaborate on challenges preventing such options. Please indicate if immigration detention of children has been practiced during the pandemic.*

Information leaflets on conscientious and responsible behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic developed by IOM and translated into 26 languages, and leaflets with instructions from the Croatian Institute of Public Health are available at the reception centres. Also, dispensers with disinfectants have been installed in the facilities.

During the accommodation in the reception centre for foreigners, a medical examination is performed. If it is determined that the centre user has symptoms of COVID-19, they are discharged from the Centre and the treatment is taken over by the competent epidemiologist. All measures for protection against COVID-19 diseases prescribed by decisions, instructions and recommendations of the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia, the Croatian Institute of Public Health, the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration and the Ministry of the Interior are systematically applied in reception centres for foreigners. Prior to accommodation in the Centre, the police station that makes the decision on accommodation obtains a negative test for COVID-19, which is a prerequisite for accommodation.

Upon arrival, the foreigners are placed in a seven-day self-isolation, after which a negative test for COVID-19 is obtained again and then they are placed in collective accommodation. Centre users are given protective masks, and hygienic measures and disinfection of clothes are carried out. Protective masks must be worn in common areas and a prescribed distance of 2 meters must be maintained. Body temperature is measured three times a day, and all users are continuously educated at the Centre on the implementation of self-protection measures in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Disinfection of telephone booths, all contact areas is carried out regularly, and social rooms are regularly ventilated.

In the centres, foreigners have the possibility of unhindered access to legal aid. Before carrying out a forced removal, the Centre must obtain a negative test for COVID-19 not older than 48 hours, as such a test is a prerequisite for return to a third country. Police vehicles for escorting to the border are regularly disinfected, and escorts are performed with the obligatory use of protective masks and hand disinfection. During the pandemic, minors were generally not housed in centres.

1. *Please provide information on any emergency measures or declarations or any special legislation activating extraordinary powers based on the COVID-19 pandemic taken by your Government at national or local level, and whether such measures have been temporary and proportional and tailored to migrants' human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

At the end of 2020, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a Decision on taking measures in state administration bodies to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and to ensure conditions for regular work in state administration bodies (Official Gazette, no. 116/20).

The instructions elaborate the modalities of work organization in state administration bodies and give each state administration body the opportunity to choose the way of work organization that is most appropriate for that body.

The Ministry of the Interior has applied the method of working from home in teams in a two-week rotation for the work of officers performing tasks related to the procedures for granting international protection. This way of organizing work was applied during 2020 until the beginning of 2021 and was fully adapted to the needs of applicants for international protection, both in terms of reception and accommodation and in the implementation of the procedure for granting international protection. Requests for international protection were received regularly taking into account the fact that all applicants for international protection upon arrival in the Republic of Croatia and expressing intent for international protection were placed in a 14-day quarantine in accordance with the recommendation of the Croatian Institute of Public Health.

International protection procedures were not suspended during the pandemic. With the organization of work, the emphasis was placed on resolving the requests of already heard applicants for international protection and on completing the proceedings within the legal deadlines. However, in order to protect the rights of applicants for international protection, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups, proceedings were still conducted regarding applications for international protection, which sought to achieve proportionality between reduced human capacity to preserve the health of officials working for international protection. respect for the rights of applicants for international protection.

1. *Please provide information on any relevant legislation or policy adopted during the pandemic in relation to the regularization of migrants, including those in an irregular situation, through the adoption of for example regularization processes and pathways, extensions of work visas, and other appropriate measures for improving decent work and dignified living conditions, strengthening migrants' contributions and fostering cooperation. Please indicate if the regularization programs are devised as long-term solutions.*

On March 30, 2020, the Ministry of the Interior issued a public statement stating that due to the current situation, caused by the COVID-19 virus, a number of foreigners on short-term stays (stays up to a maximum of 90 days over a period of 180 days) are unable, for objective reasons, to leave the Republic of Croatia within the period prescribed by the Schengen Borders Code.

In accordance with the recommendations of epidemiologists, all foreign nationals, who found themselves in such a situation, were instructed to submit their data for the purpose of registration, primarily by e-mail or by calling the telephone number on the website of the competent police administration, thus preventing possible problems at the border crossing when leaving the Republic of Croatia. Due to the above mentioned, no measures prescribed by the Aliens Act will be taken against such foreigners.

1. *Please indicate if your country has adopted or is planning to adopt a COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery plan, and if human rights- based approach and human rights and gender-sensitive indicators are considered to ensure that no one will be left behind. Please indicate which are the available mechanisms enabling different parts of the Government as well as civil society actors and other key stakeholders to participate at all stages of the response and recovery plans and to monitor them.*

In April this year, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the National Recovery and Resilience Plan for the period 2021-2026. In the National Plan, in the part related to gender equality and equal opportunities for all, women seekers of international protection are recognized as a particularly vulnerable group additionally exposed to the negative consequences of the crisis.

The National Plan also envisages measures aimed at improving employment and the legal framework for the modern labour market and the economy of the future, which are primarily aimed at the most vulnerable groups of the population in the labour market, including migrants. The reforms, in particular the introduction of the universal right to early and pre-school education, will increase the involvement of the most vulnerable groups of children, including migrant children, thus directly equalizing their later opportunities and fulfilling their full potential.

1. *Has the Government experienced specific challenges in protecting and fulfilling the human rights of migrants in the COVID-19 context- including their right to health, housing, education, information, social protection, basic service, safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration and others? Kindly provide information on emerging practices and opportunities for strengthening the protection of migrants in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

The Ministry of the Interior, as the competent body, took all measures and activities in a timely manner in order to protect and exercise all the rights of applicants for international protection and persons granted international protection.

The organization of work in teams on a two-week rotation was introduced to protect the health safety of officials, applicants for international protection and persons granted international protection, but at the same time it was a challenge. The smaller number of employees in the workplace meant making an extra effort to fulfil all work tasks and ensure that international protection seekers exercise all their rights. The positive side of such an organization of work, in addition to the protection of health security, is the maintenance of continuity and timeliness in the provision of information and access to legal rights of applicants for international protection and persons who have been granted international protection.

A special challenge was the availability of the institutions which persons already granted international protection addressed for claiming the rights provided by their status. Numerous other institutions had limited opportunities to work with parties or were closed (apart from the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 Zagreb and Sisak were also hit by devastating earthquakes). In order to overcome this challenge, the officials of the Integration Department of the Ministry of the Interior actively coordinated and exchanged information with the employees of the competent institutions and acted accordingly through electronic and telecommunication channels. In this way, the Integration Department has preserved the continuity of receiving, referring to and responding to requests and advising persons with approved international protection regarding the exercise of their rights and meeting their basic needs.