

OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration
Report by Chair Filippo Lombardi to the Standing Committee
26th OSCE PA Annual Session
Minsk, 5 July 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Background

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration was established by a unanimous decision of the OSCE PA Standing Committee on 25 February 2016 in Vienna to serve as a focal point for the OSCE PA's work in the field of migration. More specifically, the Committee is tasked to promote discussion within the Assembly on issues related to migration and promote parliamentary exchanges of best practice in these fields; to develop policy recommendations aimed at enhancing OSCE work in the field of migration and at improving the treatment of, and prospects for, migrants in OSCE countries; and to work closely with the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions as well as with relevant outside actors on issues related to migration to promote the understanding among the members of the Assembly of the importance of the work done in this field.

I am currently assisted in the implementation of this mandate by five Vice-Chairs and a further 15 members, which brings the total membership of the Committee to 21 MPs representing 17 countries at present (Annex I).

This Committee has actively pursued its mandate, despite the busy parliamentary schedule. In the space of roughly 15 months since its first members were appointed, it has managed to carry out four field missions (France, Italy, Greece and Turkey) and to engage in extensive discussions in Brussels and Geneva with key European policy-makers and international actors active in the field of migration and refugees.

The Committee has also worked closely with its counterpart on the governmental side, notably the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows as well as with the OSCE's Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova.

It has also shared best practice, for example on Canada's refugee resettlement programmes and system of private sponsorships.

An overview of the Committee's past activities is provided in Annex II.

Recent Activities

In April, I reported to the Bureau in Copenhagen on recent developments with respect to the situation in the Mediterranean and the planned missions to Greece and Turkey as the Committee turned its attention to the Eastern Mediterranean route, and implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016.

Field Mission to Greece (2-4 May 2017)

Thus, in early May, I led a delegation of twelve members of the Migration Committee to Athens and Lesbos to assess how **Greece** had been coping with the strain of over 62,000 migrants, of which around 14,000 remained stranded on the islands. The delegation found that, despite significant improvements as a result of the transfer of vulnerable migrants to the mainland, Greece is still struggling to provide adequate shelter, protection and fair and efficient processing of asylum claims to thousands of refugees and migrants who have been living in limbo for prolonged periods. Most of those who remain in Greece have applied for asylum, with the result that, in 2016, three times more people applied for asylum in Greece than the year before (51,092 asylum applications in 2016). The new asylum procedures require greater capacity from the Greek authorities and support from the European Commission.

The despair was especially palpable in the case of those nationalities who do not at present qualify for relocation such as Afghans. The lack of appropriate shelter space for unaccompanied minors was also a source of concern.

While the EU-Turkey Statement has led to a significant reduction in irregular arrivals in Greece as well as associated deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean, the fact that refugees and migrants continue to arrive at an average daily rate of 68 (June 2017 figure), with over 8,000 arrivals so far as of 18 June 2017, underlines the need to maintain efforts to dismantle trafficking networks along that route.

Field Mission to Turkey (16-18 May 2017)

Two weeks later, Vice-Chair Isabel Santos led a delegation of seven members to **Turkey**, home to 3 million Syrian refugees as well as about 300,000 persons from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and other countries. After extensive briefings in Ankara with a wide range of authorities, the delegation visited two refugee camps in the southeast hosting primarily Syrian refugees. The delegation also had the opportunity learn more about the initiatives implemented by the municipality Gaziantep for the benefit of the non-camp Syrian population. The delegation also met with a number of local NGO representatives.

Turkey provides Syrians with accommodation, food items, as well as medical, educational and psycho-social services, vocational training and social activities. Syrians who live outside the temporary protection centers, and who represent 90 per cent of the overall Syrian population, are also under Turkey's protection regime and benefit from free health care and education services. It was encouraging to hear that over half of the approximately 835,000 school-age Syrian children in Turkey already have access to education and that the enrollment rate is projected to reach 65 per cent in the 2017/2018 school year, thanks to conditional cash transfer programmes targeted at the most

vulnerable children living outside the camps. Access to the labour market has also been made possible for Syrian refugees since January 2016.

The Committee expressed the hope that, with increased international support, similar levels of protection could be extended to other refugee populations in Turkey.

While we have repeatedly heard that Turkey is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, to witness firsthand the sheer scale of the numbers as well as the extent of the efforts by the Turkish government to respond to the Syrian humanitarian crisis underlines how much more the international community needs to do in order to live up to its commitments to provide additional financial resources as well as to resettle greater numbers of persons in need of international protection. As Vice-Chair Santos noted following the visit, we cannot ask more of Turkey, but we can certainly do more.

For a Coherent, Shared and Responsible Governance of Migration and Refugee Flows

As the media's focus shifts to terrorist attacks, natural disasters or other tragic events, we must not allow ourselves to engage in wishful thinking that the crisis will pass. Already this year, nearly **3,000 migrant deaths** have been recorded worldwide of which over **2,000** perished while attempting to cross the Mediterranean (Annex III). It is very likely that last year's shocking record of over 5,000 migrant deaths in the Mediterranean will be broken.

There is an urgent need for a cohesive, balanced and co-ordinated response to the situation in Italy, Greece and Turkey which continue to accommodate a disproportionate share of migrants and refugees. A global response based on shared responsibility is vital.

It is now clear that the emergency mechanism adopted by the EU in 2015 to re-distribute asylum-seekers to other European countries has not worked, at least not in its present form, as fewer than 21,000 persons have been re-located from Greece and Italy, far below the initial target of 160,000. And only about 16,400 persons have been resettled from outside the EU, primarily from Turkey, under the EU's resettlement scheme.

Family unification for unaccompanied minors is not functioning properly either, in large part due to the failure to properly investigate claims and the lengthy process. This has prompted many minors to 'disappear' and seek to reach their relatives often with the help of human traffickers. Urgent action is needed to protect these most vulnerable refugees.

The conflict continues to rage in Syria while we are hearing increasingly disturbing reports of torture, rape and other forms of abuse being committed against migrants and refugees in detention facilities in Libya.

Following a surge in arrivals, with over 8,000 migrants arriving within the space of one week alone last month, Italy announced that it was considering closing its ports to boats carrying migrants if the boat was not flying the Italian flag. And accusations that rescue operations by NGOs near the Libyan coast are acting as a 'pull factor' are spreading. The list of challenges seems endless.

The Committee reconvened yesterday here in Minsk to discuss its draft Report and Recommendations and to take stock of its investigations and deliberations since it was established. Meeting in Vienna last February, the Committee agreed that it would not be possible to adopt concrete, implementable and fact-based recommendations through consensus and undertook to reflect dissenting views in its report.

The scope of the Recommendations is ambitious as they seek to address a number of the interlinking aspects of the current migration crisis, with the aim of developing a coherent, shared and responsible approach to migration governance. They cover issues from the basic principles which should guide migration policies such as solidarity, responsibility sharing and respect for human rights, to specific areas such as internal reforms of the EU's asylum policies as well as the external aspects of migration such as how to manage mixed migration flows from countries outside the EU, in particular Libya and Turkey.

Special attention is devoted to the case of unaccompanied and separated children, calling for the harmonization of procedures, the adoption of common guidelines and procedures for assessing the 'best interests of the child' and the implementation of functioning family reunification programmes. OSCE participating States are also encouraged to take in unaccompanied child refugees at immediate risk of trafficking or sexual exploitation.

The Recommendations also stress the need to bear in mind the particular vulnerabilities facing women and girls along the migration route and to develop gender sensitive policies, programmes and services.

The urgency of tackling migration upstream in partnership with third countries, to support alternative livelihoods to human smuggling, and to promote legal channels for migration for persons in clear need of international protection are also emphasized.

The Recommendations call for greater inter- and intra-institutional cohesion and co-operation. Better communication and co-operation is needed at the transnational and transregional levels, for example in the sharing of information on unaccompanied and separated minors and the verification of family claims.

The Committee's Recommendations also address a topic which until now has not received much attention – the issue of missing and deceased migrants, calling *inter alia* for the establishment of a centralized databank as well as improved co-ordination and communication to help locate missing migrants and, in the case of deceased migrants, to facilitate the identification and dignified management of remains.

The Recommendations also emphasize the need to further promote integration in host countries, including through fast family reunion, hosting refugees in smaller housing units, ensuring access to education as well as the labour market.

Expectations are also high with respect to the OSCE which has yet to send a clear political signal that it is willing to place migration at the top of its agenda by appointing a high-level coordinating position on migration and develop a cohesive, organization-wide response, capitalizing on its comprehensive approach to security and field presences as well as Mediterranean partnerships.

On Thursday I will present a draft Resolution resulting from the work of the Committee. I hope that this will generate a fruitful debate on how to achieve a coherent, shared and responsible governance of migration and refugee flows. I also look forward to the debates on migration in the Committees.

Next Steps

The Committee is currently examining how best it can pursue its mandate over the coming year and will meet again tomorrow to discuss further course of action. The calendar of activities for the upcoming year will also include follow-up activities to the Committee's Recommendations as well as joint initiatives with the OSCE, e.g., on the topic of trafficking.

The Committee plans to reconvene in Andorra in early October on the sidelines of the Autumn Meeting.

ANNEX I
Members of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration
(as of 9 June 2017)

The OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration currently consists of 21 members from 17 countries:

1. Mr. Filippo LOMBARDI (MP, Switzerland) – Chair
2. Mr. Alain NERI (MP, France) – Vice-Chair
3. Ms. Sena Nur CELIK (MP, Turkey) – Vice-Chair
4. Mr. Guglielmo PICCHI (MP, Italy) – Vice-Chair
5. Ms. Isabel SANTOS (MP, Portugal) – Vice-Chair
6. Mr. Makis VORIDIS (MP, Greece) – Vice-Chair
7. Mr. Geir Joergen BEKKEVOLD (MP, Norway)
8. Ms. Margareta CEDERFELT (MP, Sweden)
9. Mr. Jose Maria CHIQUILLO (MP, Spain)
10. Ms. Ivana DOBESOVA (MP, Czech Republic)
11. Ms. Elvira DROBINSKI-WEISS (MP, Germany)
12. Lord Alfred DUBS (MP, United Kingdom)
13. Ms. Hedy FRY (MP, Canada)
14. Mr. Roman HAIDER (MP, Austria)
15. Mr. Kyriakos KYRIAKOU-HADJIYIANNI (MP, Cyprus)
16. Ms. Nahima LANJRI (MP, Belgium)
17. Ms. Stefana MILADINOVIC (MP, Serbia)
18. Mr. Ignacio SANCHEZ AMOR (MP, Spain)
19. Ms. Bihlun TAMAYLIGIL (MP, Turkey)
20. Ms. Marietta TIDEI (MP, Italy)
21. Mr. Georgios VAREMENOS (MP, Greece)

ANNEX II

Past Activities (2016/2017)

DATES	VENUE	DESCRIPTION OF JOINT ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE
2016		
10-11 May	FRANCE	Field mission to FRANCE (Paris, Calais and Dunkirk)
27 June	Vienna	Contribution to the final meeting of the OSCE “Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows” on the theme “The media’s impact on the public perception of the refugee crisis” + screening of extract of the documentary “Exiles: The Wars” directed by Barbara Cupisti.
1-5 July	Tbilisi	Report by Chair Lombardi to the Standing Committee, 25 th OSCE PA Annual Session + First Meeting of the Committee (3 July)
20 July	Vienna	Report by Chair Lombardi to the Special OSCE Permanent Council on Migration and Refugee Flows
7- 8 September	ITALY	Field mission to ITALY (Sicily – Catania, Mineo, Pozzallo)
29 Sept. -2 Oct.	Skopje	Report by Chair Lombardi to the Standing Committee, OSCE PA Autumn Meeting + Second Meeting of the Committee (30 September)
2017		
15-17 January	Brussels, Geneva	Briefings with key international actors in BRUSSELS (EEAS, European Commission) and in GENEVA (ICRC, UNHCR, IOM) + Third Meeting of the Committee (17 January, Geneva)
22-24 February	Vienna	Discussion of the Interim Recommendations Report by Chair Lombardi to the Standing Committee, OSCE PA Winter Meeting + Fourth meeting of the Committee (22 February)
24 April	Copenhagen	Report by Chair Lombardi to the Bureau
2-4 May	GREECE	Field mission to GREECE (Athens and Lesvos) + Fifth Meeting of the Committee (4 May, Athens)
16-18 May	TURKEY	Field mission to TURKEY (Ankara, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş)
4-9 July 2017	Minsk	- Report by Chair Lombardi to the Standing Committee, 26 th OSCE PA Annual Session - Debate of the Draft Resolution “For a Coherent, Shared and Responsible Governance of Migration Flows” + Sixth Meeting of the Committee (4 July)

Note: This overview relates to the initiatives of the Committee as a whole and does not list migration-related activities undertaken by individual members of the Committee.

ANNEX III

Total Arrivals by Sea and Deaths in the Mediterranean, 2016-2017

TOTAL ARRIVALS BY SEA AND DEATHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN 2016-2017				
	1 JANUARY – 18 JUNE 2017		1 JANUARY – 18 JUNE 2016	
Country of Arrival	Arrivals	Deaths	Arrivals	Deaths
Italy	69,382	1,889 (Central Med. route)	56,329	2,449 (Central Med. route)
Greece	8,323	37 (Eastern Med. route)	157,676	376 (Eastern Med. route)
Cyprus	273 (as of 11/04)		345	
Spain	3,314 (as of 30/04)	59 (Western Med. route)	1,352 (as of 30/04)	86 (Western Med. route)
Estimated Total	81,292	1,985	215,702	2,911
Data on deaths of migrants compiled by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre. All numbers are minimum estimates. Arrivals based on data from respective governments and IOM field offices.				

Source: IOM. For the latest arrivals data in the Mediterranean, see: <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>.