

**Vice-President Kristian Vigenin,
Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration**

Report to the Bureau

(Bureau Meeting, Copenhagen, 4 April 2022)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madam President,
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for this opportunity to present to you an overview of the most recent activities of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration.

I. Current Migration Trends

Since my last report at the OSCE PA Winter Meeting in Vienna on 25 February 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has forced thousands of civilians, mostly women and children, to leave their homes and seek shelter elsewhere. A month into the war, a quarter of the population of Ukraine has been displaced. 6,5 million people have fled to other parts of the country and another 4 million out of the country.¹ With armed hostilities ongoing, these numbers will only continue to rise. Neighboring countries have been particularly impacted, with over 2,3 million Ukrainian refugees registered in Poland and over 610,000 refugees in Romania. With around 385,000 refugees, Moldova has received the largest number of refugees in proportion to the general population.² Russia has also recorded over 350,000 arrivals, and Belarus about 10,000.

Many Ukrainian refugees seek to transit onwards. In a historic first, the EU's Temporary Protection Directive was activated on 4 March to avoid the overburdening of local reception capacities and to offer Ukrainian refugees harmonized rights across Europe. These rights include residence, integration into the labor market, access to education and medical care. Yet this is only one of many necessary measures to be taken to address this unprecedented mass arrival of refugees.

While most of the international community's focus has shifted to the war in Ukraine, other developments in the OSCE region similarly deserve our sustained attention. Protracted crises in countries like Afghanistan continue to render many individuals desperate to reach Europe. Due to the favorable weather conditions in spring, major migration routes such as the Mediterranean one will most probably experience increased traffic in the coming months, reaffirming the need for a well-functioning and comprehensive European approach to migration management.

¹ Data as of 31 March 2022: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine?>

² <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

II. Implemented Activities

1. Greece

From 20-23 March 2022, I led a delegation of the Committee consisting of Vice-Chairs Luigi Augussori, Kyriakos Hadjiyianni, Farah Karimi and Gudrun Kugler on a visit to Lesbos and Samos, as a follow up to a previous mission to Greece in May 2017. Our aim was to bring renewed attention to the situation on the Aegean islands and to assess progress made in the past five years. We were joined by Head of the Hellenic Delegation to the OSCE PA Theodoros Karaoglou and Committee Member Dimitrios Markopoulos.

In preparation for this visit, we held an online briefing with the Secretary General for the Reception of Asylum Seekers Emmanouil Logothetis, who provided an overview of facilities to be visited and measures taken by the government to improve conditions therein. We also heard from a number of non-governmental actors engaged in migration matters.

On the ground, participants were invited to tour the Reception and Identification Center Mytilene, in Mavrovouni, Lesbos. This temporary camp was erected in the wake of a fire that destroyed the Moria camp in September 2020, at the time the largest of its kind within Europe and which was significantly over capacity with over 8,000 persons living in facility designed for 3,000. Mavrovouni has undergone structural changes since then and is due to be replaced by a permanent facility next year.

The program also featured the new Closed Controlled Access Centre at Zervou on Samos. Participants had the opportunity to inspect this new EU-funded facility meant to address the deficiencies of previous camps and to ensure the proper implementation of reception and asylum procedures. Zervou CCAC is one of five such centres planned for the Aegean islands of Greece, including Lesbos.

As part of our visit, we met with a broad range of interlocutors, ranging from local authorities, the Greek coast guard and police and Frontex to UNHCR and a number of non-governmental actors. In a press release at the conclusion of the visit, I shared my impression that “it is important to prevent asylum seekers from spending prolonged periods in a legal limbo, while their cases either undergo successive, lengthy reviews or eventually end with no possibility of deportation.” I also observed “the gap in terms of lack of sufficient support to recognized refugees”, encouraging “programs to foster contacts with the local community and facilitate a smooth transition from the camps into society if refugee status is awarded.”

The online Committee meeting on 28 March 2022 provided an opportunity for participants in the visit to share their impressions with other Committee members. A consultation with the Minister for Migration and Asylum Panagiotis A. Mitarakis has been re-scheduled for 6 April 2022. Based on these discussions, a more comprehensive report, including recommendations of the Committee, will be presented at the 29th OSCE PA Annual Session on 2-6 July 2022.

2. Ukraine

The Committee has been closely monitoring developments since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Upon an invitation of the Polish delegation, I took part in a high-level PA visit to the Polish-Ukrainian border on 13-14 March 2022. Led by OSCE PA President Cederfelt, the delegation also included Second Committee Rapporteur and Migration Committee Vice-Chair Gudrun Kugler and Third Committee Rapporteur and Migration

Committee Member Johan Buser. We visited a number of points of arrivals and reception centers along the border with Ukraine, and witnessed firsthand the misery caused by the Russian aggression, but also the generosity and solidarity of Polish authorities and citizens. Given the predominance of women and child refugees, we were grateful for the expertise of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey.

In a joint press release, we commended the response of the Polish authorities and citizens, encouraged European countries to increase their level of preparedness and stressed the need for special protection measures for unaccompanied minors.

Mr. Richey shared his recent recommendations to enhance anti-trafficking prevention amid mass arrivals³ (see Annex IV) at the Committee's online meeting on 28 March 2022, where we also discussed how the OSCE PA and we, as parliamentarians, could enhance the protection of refugees from Ukraine. I draw your attention in particular to the section on legislative and policy measures to prevent and mitigate vulnerabilities.

In addition, I have asked the OSCE PA International Secretariat to circulate a short questionnaire to all OSCE participating States on special measures to welcome Ukrainian refugees with the aim to obtain an overview and to contribute to the sharing of 'good practices'. We look forward to receiving your responses by the end of this week.

III. Next Steps

Going forward, the Committee will continue to advocate for the plight of Ukrainian refugees, both those having moved westwards and eastwards, and we will follow up on initiatives to coordinate humanitarian support and facilitate their reception and integration.

The successful implementation of the visit to Greece has proven once again that such missions are an invaluable part of our Committee's work. This visit has moreover enabled us to better understand the new reception and asylum procedures to be carried out at the EU's external borders as part of the EU's Migration and Asylum Pact which has yet to be adopted. As recent crises have shown, there is an urgent need for a robust European migration and asylum policy. We will continue to follow developments in this direction and to maintain regular contacts with EU agencies in Brussels.

I hope that we will be able to realize one more field visit before our 29th Annual Session.

Although there is no country in the OSCE region, or indeed anywhere, that has found the perfect solution to migration management, we can all learn from one another's successes and failures. Our Committee will continue to implement its mandate to facilitate dialogue within the OSCE PA on migration issues and to promote the parliamentary exchange of best practice with commitment and with passion.

I look forward to reporting to you again in Birmingham.

Thank you for your attention.

³ Recommendations of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings on the need to enhance anti-trafficking prevention amid mass migration flows, 9 March 2022, at: <https://www.osce.org/cthb/513784>.

ANNEX I

Mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration was established following the unanimous decision of the OSCE PA Standing Committee on 25 February 2016 in Vienna. Its mandate is defined as follows:

- Serve as a focal point for the OSCE PA's work in the field of migration in all three dimensions of the OSCE: political and security questions; economic issues; and human rights and humanitarian questions; and report back to the President and the Standing Committee;
- 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;
- Promote discussion within the Assembly on issues related to migration, and promote parliamentary exchanges of best practice in these fields;
- 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.

Membership of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration (as of 31 March 2022)

1. Vice-President Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria), **Chair**
2. Luigi Augussori (Italy), **Vice-Chair**
3. Lord Alfred Dubs (United Kingdom), **Vice-Chair**
4. Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), **Vice-Chair**
5. Farah Karimi (The Netherlands), **Vice-Chair**
6. Gudrun Kugler (Austria), **Vice-Chair**
7. Jan Bauer (Czech Republic)
8. Valerie Boyer (France)
9. Johan Büser (Sweden)
10. Hedy Fry (Canada)
11. Sheila Jackson Lee (USA)
12. Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania)
13. Mehmet Sait Kirazoglu (Turkey)
14. Massimo Mallegni (Italy)
15. Dimitrios Markopoulos (Greece)
16. Vesna Markovic (Serbia)
17. Gwen Moore (United States)
18. Georgios Varemenos (Greece)

ANNEX II

Implemented Activities (September 2021-March 2022)

24 September	Online	<p>Meeting of the Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Afghanistan, with the participation of Ms. Astrid SLETTEN, Country Director, Norwegian Refugee Council – Afghanistan, and Ms. Elizabeth COLLETT, Special Advisor to the Director General, IOM; • Report by Vice-Chair Gudrun Kugler on the joint visit with OSCE SR/CTHB to Bosnia and Herzegovina (11-14 July 2021).
13 October	Tirana (ALBANIA)	<p>Visit by Vice-Chair Farah Karimi focusing on Afghans sheltered in Albanian under Temporary Protected Status, incl. meetings with representatives from the NED, IRI, CIPE as well as the Directorate for Asylum, Ministry of Interior of Albania.</p>
13 December	Online	<p>Meeting of the Committee with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The situation at the EU-Belarus border, incl. contributions by • Mr. Laurynas Kasciunas (MP, Lithuania), Member of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration; • Mr. Patrice Quesada, Senior Regional Emergency and Post Crisis Specialist, IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, European Union and NATO, Brussels; • Ms. Frauke Ossig, Emergency Coordinator, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Holland, and Ms. Inma Vazquez, MSF Representative to the EU, Brussels; • Ms. Goda Jurevičiūtė, Project Manager, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Vilnius. <p>• Overview of OSCE efforts to develop a response to the implications of the situation in Afghanistan, incl. contribution by Mr. Luca Pianese, Senior Migration Security Expert, OSCE External Cooperation Section, OSCE Secretariat</p>
18 December	Online	<p>OSCE PA Statement on the occasion of International Migrants' Day</p>
24-25 February	Vienna/online	<p>OSCE PA Winter Meeting Report of the Chair, Vice-President Kristian Vigenin to the Standing Committee (25 February)</p>

13-14 March	Poland	High-level visit to the Polish-Ukrainian border organized by the Head of the Delegation of Poland to the OSCE PA Ms. Barbara Bartuś. The PA delegation was led by President Cederfelt and included Migration Committee Chair Kristian Vigenin, Vice-Chair Gudrun Kugler and Member Johan Büser as well as the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey. The delegation visited the reception point at the Railway Station in Przemyśl, the Polish-Ukrainian border crossings in Korczowa and Medyka, the reception centre for young people in Stalowa Wola, and the Caritas reception center in Bojanów. Meetings were held with representatives of the local government, border guard and social organizations.
18 March	Online	Briefing with the Secretary General for the Reception of Asylum Seekers Emmanouil Logothetis, as well as representatives of the NGOs Médecins Sans Frontières, the Greek Refugee Council and Lesbos Solidarity, in preparation for the field visit to Greece.
20-23 March	Lesbos, Samos, Athens	Field visit to Greece, including site visits to RIC Mytilene, Mavrovouni, and Closed Controlled Access Centre of Samos.
28 March	Online	Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief on the visit to Greece; • The Ukrainian Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis and European preparedness in situations of crisis, with the participation of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Mr. Valiant Richey.

ANNEX III

Draft Plan of Upcoming Activities (April-July 2022)

<i>6 April 2022</i>	online	Debrief with Greek Minister for Migration and Asylum Panagiotis A. Mitarakis
<i>tbd</i>		OSCE PA Migration Committee Field Visit #2 (tbc)
<i>20 June</i>	online	OSCE PA Statement on the occasion of World Refugee Day
<i>2-6 July</i>	Birmingham	OSCE PA Annual Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report of the Chair• Supplementary Item (tbc)• In-person meeting of the Committee on the sidelines of the Annual Session (tbc)

ANNEX IV



SEC.GAL/39/22
9 March 2022

ENGLISH only

Recommendations of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SR/CTHB) on the need to enhance anti-trafficking prevention amid mass migration flows

In recent weeks, an unprecedented number of persons seeking refuge from danger arrived in many OSCE participating States. These people, typically women, children and the elderly forced to leave their homes with little or no preparation, traveled a challenging and perilous path to reach the western borders of Ukraine and crossed in hope of help and safety. Responding to the situation, many governments—with the support of international organizations—have taken robust initial measures to welcome them and offer support and assistance to meet their immediate needs.

As earlier migration crises have demonstrated, criminal groups or individuals will take advantage of large flows of people to exploit the most vulnerable in transit and destination countries. While undertaking their journeys or upon reaching a destination, people seeking refuge can be exposed to trafficking for various purposes, including sexual and labour exploitation.

To prevent the current humanitarian crisis from turning into a human trafficking crisis, the SR/CTHB has developed the following practical recommendations to support OSCE participating States hosting Ukrainian people. As the humanitarian crisis is in an early phase, **prevention of human trafficking** through addressing vulnerabilities of people seeking refuge should be a **priority for all relevant actors**. The Office of the SR/CTHB stands ready to provide further support to OSCE participating States, including through tailored technical assistance for the development and implementation of policies as well as practical measures to combat human trafficking.

Immediate prevention measures and responses to pressing needs of persons seeking refuge

- Provide for housing and immediate needs of people seeking refuge, such as food, sanitation, clothing, access to mobile communication and internet, short-term financial assistance, in **agender-sensitive, age-appropriate and trauma-informed manner**.
- To facilitate well-informed decisions and decrease reliance on third-party sources, **establish centralized information sources (e.g. a website) and hotlines** that can provide clear, comprehensive and clearly marked **official information** from national authorities. Advise people seeking refuge on procedures and steps to be followed, including relating to registration, residence, freedom of movement and available assistance, in languages understood by them. **Disseminate the information as broadly as possible**, both on and offline, taking into account the means for people seeking refuge to access the information.
- Provide **information on opportunities across communities and countries** to enable people seeking refuge to make well-informed decisions on their travel or stay as well as to

respond to the needs of the host communities. Regularly exchange and provide information to communities and individuals who temporarily host people seeking refuge on available referral, assistance and housing opportunities.

- Monitor information sharing platforms (both online and printed) for **misleading or deceptive information on housing and employment opportunities to prevent trafficking in human beings** and fraud.
- When providing for housing, **address potentially risky scenarios through registration of various housing options** (housing with relatives or close ones, reception centers, housing offered by strangers) and inform people seeking refuge accordingly.
- Ensure psychological support for adults and children, including by **engaging with qualified psychologists, educators and other service providers among people seeking refuge themselves** and leveraging their professional competency and language skills.
- Establish **contacts and regular exchange with existing Ukrainian communities** in countries of transit or destination to align assistance and support efforts and leverage their language and other skills.

Legislative and policy measures to prevent and mitigate vulnerabilities

- Ensure that national laws and regulations are promptly updated to provide **clear and comprehensive guidance** regarding access of people seeking refuge to:
 - Information in the languages they understand, including through unrestricted access to mobile communication and internet resources;
 - Temporary residence permit;
 - Medical insurance and health care;
 - Family preservation and reunification, including the possibility to move to relatives or other close ones. Community support is crucial to prevent victimization, including of children: under no circumstances should children be separated, even temporarily, from their parents or guardians. States should also consider options for asylum application within country of destination rather than only country of first entrance;
 - Access to labour market and gainful employment to facilitate transition off of financial assistance;
 - Age-appropriate care and education for children;
 - Access to local financial services, including providing pathways to open bank accounts in the absence of biometric form of identification and permanent address.
- When amending national regulations, analyze and incorporate possible scenarios regarding the **availability of identity documents** for adults and children seeking refuge (e.g. possible lack of biometrical and non-biometrical IDs, birth registration certificates, expiry of previously issued permits to stay).
- Distribute reception facilities within and across countries to avoid overburdening assistance and support systems, which can **create additional vulnerabilities**.
- Establish clear procedures for **rapid exchange of information on people seeking refuge registered in the transit and destination countries and their place of residence** in order to prevent people, especially children, from going missing and reduce their vulnerability to trafficking in human beings.

Integration assistance and support to lessen refugees' vulnerability to exploitation

- Facilitate the provision of **language courses** for adults and children seeking refuge in destination countries.
- Establish procedures to **validate professional competency of people seeking refuge** based on the diplomas and certificates issued by Ukrainian educational institutions.
- Provide **training opportunities** for people seeking refuge to prepare them for the local labour market, taking into consideration their education and work experience, to benefit from their skills and knowledge.
- Support **employment and integration of people seeking refuge in the formal labour market** by:
 - Providing clear information on employment contracts and required provisions in line with national legislation;
 - Providing step-by-step guidance on the procedures for signing an employment contract as well as benefits and other obligatory clauses translated into the languages understood by people seeking refuge;
 - Hiring Ukrainian-speaking people to assist employment centers and other relevant stakeholders in providing consultations to people seeking refuge;
 - Engaging with chambers of commerce to help identify businesses looking for employees and promote a verified list of employers for Ukrainians seeking employment.
- Arrange for **inclusive and accessible schooling and pre-school care** for children seeking refuge in destination countries to facilitate their access to education and allow their parents and guardians to engage in sustainable employment.

Enhance preparedness of CTHB mechanisms to monitor the risks of human trafficking and scale up the responses as needed

- Introduce immediate measures to **inform people seeking refuge of the risks of human trafficking**, including “too good to be true” transportation, housing and job offers along migration routes as well as in vicinity of the reception facilities and online.
- Enhance operations of **anti-trafficking hotlines**, including in languages understood by people seeking refuge, and broadly publicize the hotline number through means accessible to them, encouraging them to contact hotline in case of possible questions or suspicions.
- Mindful that the majority of Ukrainians seeking refuge are women, boys and girls, **monitor locations known for high risks of human trafficking**, including those related to provision of sexual services—including online—street begging and informal sectors of economy.
- Step up labour inspections to exercise state **control over high-risk business sectors**, including the travel and hospitality, cleaning, domestic care, construction, agriculture (harvesting), meat and other processing industries known to pose increased risks of trafficking in human beings for sexual and labour exploitation.
- National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators, Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, multi-agency Task Forces, law enforcement, labour inspectorates, health care practitioners, educators, social service providers, including CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders at

national and local levels should **remain attentive to dynamic patterns** of large flows of people and the constantly changing tactics employed by traffickers, and should rapidly **exchange information to adjust their responses accordingly**.

- Provide **necessary resources** to ensure a robust CTHB prevention and response to exploitation within large flows of people, including assistance and support to victims and presumed victims, as well as prosecution and prevention programming.
- To foster efficient **co-operation between OSCE participating States** and better protect people seeking refuge from falling prey to trafficking in human beings, urgently establish direct contacts between National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators, Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms of the transit and destination countries to exchange data and information on trafficking patterns observed and to co-ordinate on responses, including with international organizations as appropriate