



OSCE PA Autumn Meeting

Report of Vice-President Dr. Daniela De Ridder Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration to the Standing Committee

(Yerevan, 18 November 2023)

Madam President,
Dear Colleagues,

I am honoured to have been appointed by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma to Chair the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. Our Committee now consists of 20 Members from 16 different countries (see Annex I), bringing with them a wealth of expertise. I look forward to working with all to ensure that the issue of effective migration governance remains high on the agenda of our Assembly.

The Committee met virtually on 3 November to discuss priorities and upcoming activities (Annex II). Here are some of our main decisions:

Parliamentary exchange of ‘best practice’

We agreed that there is a need to emphasize the positive aspects of migration, when effectively managed. We will therefore prioritise the **sharing of ‘best practice’ in migration and asylum policies**, for example in the field of integration in the labour market.

❖ Panel on “Best practices and challenges regarding the sponsorship of refugees and the integration and settlement of newcomers to Canada” (online, 9 November 2023)

On 9 November Committee members participated in an online panel discussion organized by Dr. Hedy Fry on “Best practices and challenges regarding the sponsorship of refugees and the integration and settlement of newcomers to Canada”. Speakers included representatives of the NGO [S.U.C.C.E.S.S.](#), one of the largest newcomer social service agencies in Canada offering integrated services for newcomers, affordable housing and seniors care, as well as representatives of [Rainbow Refugee](#) which provides support to LGBTQI+ refugees and refugee claimants.

The pre-arrival services offered were a notable element of ‘best practice’ as they enable newcomers to be knowledgeable about their rights and realities before arriving on Canadian soil. They also help match them with the right communities where their skills can be best utilized and provide occupation specific information to help refugees find their first job.

Another example of best practice is the needs assessment which is carried out after arrival in Canada to determine the particular settlement services needed for each person and the provision

of referral services to begin the settlement process; settlement plans are created for more complex cases.

By involving local communities in the process of refugee resettlement and integration through the private sponsorship system, Canada ensures that refugees receive not only financial but also emotional and social support as well as practical assistance with completing basic administrative tasks. While there are still challenges, the benefits for the refugees and for the communities sponsoring them are clear: Sharing responsibility for integration across communities enhances the likelihood of a smoother transition and durable integration.

Panellists also underlined the importance of providing equitable services, e.g., when it comes to housing, so as not to create resentment amongst local populations and to keep public opinion on board in a context of rising anti-immigrant sentiments.

The Committee is extremely grateful to Dr. Fry and her staff for providing us with the opportunity to learn more about Canada's example of best practice and for the chance to engage directly with the settlement organisations vital to the success of these initiatives.

❖ *Other topics for discussion*

Committee Members have expressed interest in a number of policy areas where there is a need to exchange best practice, including:

- gender-sensitive migration policies;
- the protection of vulnerable groups (unaccompanied minors, women, elderly, persons with disabilities) along migration routes;
- repatriation agreements with safe third countries (criteria and monitoring);
- best practice in the welcoming and integration of Ukrainian refugees.

Throughout our work we will seek to identify what measures countries are implementing to ensure that migration policies are sustainable. One important characteristic of sustainable migration policies is taking into consideration the needs not just of migrants and refugees but also of whole communities. Such comprehensive approaches can contribute to building and maintaining the support of host populations. They also need to be complemented by information campaigns to counter fake news and anti-migrant rhetoric.

- EU Migration and Asylum Policy: The Committee is also monitoring the discussions regarding the EU Migration and Asylum Pact which is to be finalized by February 2024 and is envisaging exchanges with members of the European Parliament and other policy makers in Brussels on this topic.

Geo-political areas of focus / field visits

Since its establishment in 2016, the Committee has carried out nearly 15 field visits to countries of first arrival, transit and destination. In the past year, the focus was mainly on countries hosting significant numbers of Ukrainian refugees and we will continue to monitor the situation of the more than 6 million refugees globally. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the challenges faced along other migration routes. The Committee is hoping to carry out two to three field visits before the next Annual Session.

❖ *Armenia refugee emergency*

On 3 November the Committee was briefed by the UNHCR Representative in Armenia Kavita

Belani who highlighted the achievements and challenges related to managing the influx of over 100,000 persons from the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

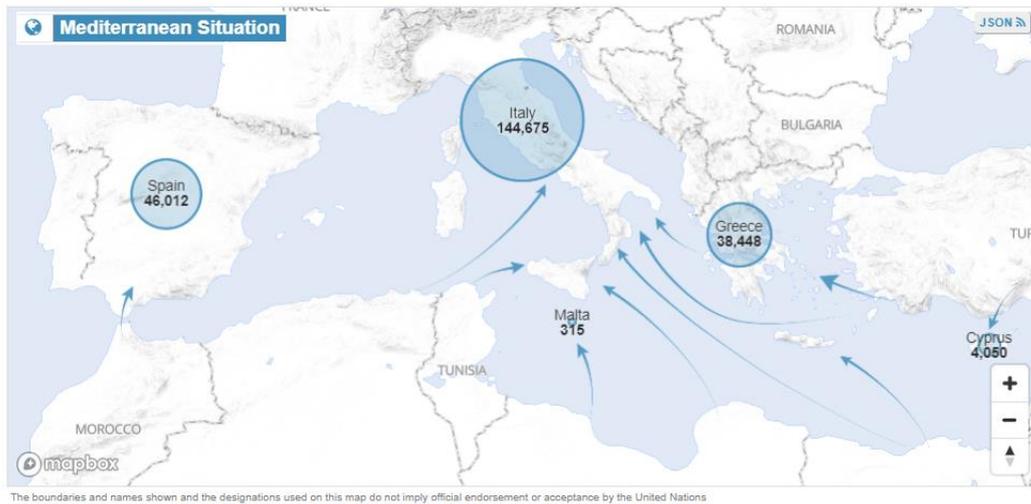
Areas where further action was needed included the following:

- bolstering the health system to manage the sudden increase in patients including those with special needs and chronic conditions, as well as mental health and psycho-social services.
- developing solutions for medium and long-term affordable housing and cash for short term emergency needs to ride over the winter period.
- facilitating economic inclusion and access to decent work through mapping of the socio-economic profile of the refugee population to ensure that jobs correspond with skills as well as Armenia's rural and urban development priorities.
- strengthening the social protection system and facilitating effective inclusion: access to schools; access for the elderly to specialized services; inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- enhancing the overall protection environment through access to legal information and advice.
- the need for legal inclusion: enabling those who have been granted temporary protection to apply for Armenian citizenship;
- ensuring the right to return to recover belongings; right to compensation of property, livestock, etc.
- Bearing in mind medium to long-term needs of the refugee population, including integration and ensuring support for host communities.

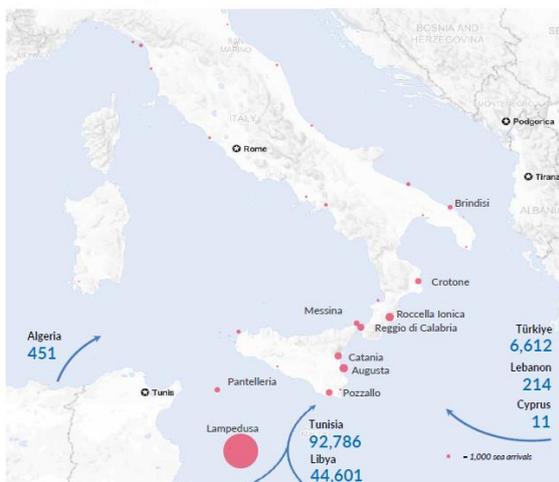
As the Committee has not had an opportunity to engage in discussions with the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan, I have invited President Kauma and PA Special Representative on South Caucasus Kari Henriksen to join our meeting in Yerevan to share the main takeaways from their visit to the region. The Committee will continue to monitor the situation, notably with regard to the granting of temporary protection to persons displaced from Karabakh. I also look forward to debating this issue here during the Autumn Meeting with my colleagues.

❖ Irregular migration across the Central Mediterranean route with a focus on Italy

Italy has experienced a sharp increase in irregular arrivals this past year. Indeed, as of 5 November 2023, irregular sea arrivals in Italy since the start of the year numbered 144,675, representing an increase of 65 percent compared to the previous year. Syrians represented only about 5% of arrivals after nationals of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Tunisia, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh and Pakistan. A large majority (72 percent) are men; a further 12 per cent are unaccompanied minors.



Sea Arrivals in 2023 by disembarkation site



Lampedusa is the main disembarkation site for irregular migrants departing from North Africa (mainly Tunisia and Libya) and has been struggling to cope. In September 2023, the island experienced a rapid increase in arrivals, with over 8,500 migrants arriving in a single weekend. The authorities have been working hard to transfer the migrants to the mainland.

Following a high-level visit by EU officials, the European Commission presented a 10-point plan for swift support to Lampedusa to reduce irregular migration and provide immediate EU assistance to the Italian

authorities, in accordance with fundamental rights and international conventions. One issue is that, while Italy has a repatriation agreement with Tunisia to send back Tunisian citizens ineligible for asylum, it does not have similar agreements with most of the other countries whose citizens are arriving in Italy. There have also been serious concerns expressed by human rights organizations regarding human rights abuses not only in Libya but also in Tunisia.

The Committee would like to learn more about the situation on the ground as well as the Italian government's plans concerning the processing of asylum claims in a third country (Albania) and hopes that the Italian delegation will be able to host us in the coming months.

❖ *Irregular migration across the Eastern Mediterranean route*

The Committee has also carried out a number of field visits focussing on irregular migration along the Eastern Mediterranean (Greece, Türkiye) and implementation of the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement. Further details, including geographic focus, need to be discussed with the delegation of Türkiye and our Turkish colleague Mr. Kemal Çelik.

❖ *Ukraine Refugee Situation*

As we approach the second anniversary of the Russian invasion, the Committee continues to monitor the situation of Ukrainian refugees throughout the OSCE region. There are now 6.2 million Ukrainian refugees globally, 5,85 million of whom are in Europe alone.

5,850,100*
refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe (as of 7 Nov)

392,100
refugees from Ukraine recorded beyond Europe (as of 14 Oct)

6,242,200
refugees from Ukraine recorded globally (as of 7 Nov)

3,674,000**
Estimated number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Ukraine (as of 06 Nov) (Source: [IOM](#))

More details: UNHCR Operational Data Portal [Ukraine Refugee Situation](#)

REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE ACROSS EUROPE (as of 07 November 2023)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
*Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 [1999]) Source: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe

More information available on the UNHCR [Ukraine operational data portal](#) page.

Our Committee will continue to promote the sharing of best practice when it comes to implementing temporary protection and promoting integration and durable solutions, while keeping local communities on board. The Committee has already carried two visits to countries hosting important Ukrainian communities (Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova) and would like to learn more about how other countries are transitioning to medium- to long-term policies.

❖ *Situation in the Middle East and impact on migration flows to the OSCE region*

I also believe that we need to move beyond the immediate refugee emergencies and try and better understand the reasons which lead people to leave their homes. We have to of course differentiate between people fleeing conflict and who are entitled to protection under international refugee law and those who embark upon dangerous migration for other reasons.

We have to accept that the global food crisis and climate change will have a significant impact on the OSCE region. It is therefore crucial to anticipate these population movements and to explore how we can work together with countries in North and West Africa to better manage migration flows. I look forward to discussing these issues during the Mediterranean Forum on 20 November here in Yerevan, together with colleagues from the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

Cooperation with OSCE and its Institutions, relevant International Organisations, European Parliament, PACE

The Committee will also continue to work closely with the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions as well as with relevant outside actors on issues related to migration to discuss synergies and areas for cooperation.

I have had a number of co-ordination meetings with colleagues from ODIHR's Migration and Freedom of Movement unit as well as the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (EEA) at the OSCE Secretariat to share our priorities and work plan and learn more about their upcoming initiatives. I hope that we can further work together to promote best practice. Potential areas for joint initiatives include: identifying gaps and good practice in national migration and integration policy; evaluating States' compliance with international human rights standards and OSCE commitments; supporting national and local authorities in designing and implementing sustainable integration policies in line with human rights; implementing gender-sensitive migration policies.

The 2023 Human Dimension Conference in Warsaw which I attended on 12 October provided a good opportunity to bring a parliamentary perspective, notably on the question of effective migration governance. In my remarks to the session devoted to humanitarian challenges including in the context of armed conflicts, freedom of movement, and refugees, I underlined the importance of differentiating between flight due to conflict, persecution or climate change, on the one hand, and labour migration on the other. I also stressed the need to provide protection to refugees and to respect their rights, especially where vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, women, persons with disabilities and elderly persons are concerned. Turning to migration, we need to devote more attention to sustainable social integration, notably through integration in the labour market and by tackling discrimination against immigrants. I also called for a more pro-active approach to migration while we regulate irregular migration and combat trafficking in human beings. Finally, it is not enough to manage migration, we also need to address root causes of flight such as hunger, gender-based violence and climate change.

The Committee has also enjoyed good cooperation in the past with the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings. I look forward to meeting with the new SR/CTHB Dr. Kari Johnstone and to working closely with our own PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues Chris Smith.

The Committee will also continue to regularly engage with representatives of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as national and local NGOs where relevant.

Last but not least, the PA itself offers a wealth of expertise through its Members and I remain open to proposals for joint initiatives.

Concluding Remarks

Our Committee will meet here in Yerevan on 19 November to further discuss our ambitious work plan and how to implement it. I look forward to reporting to you again in Vienna at the Winter Meeting next February, by which time I hope we will have managed to carry out at least one field visit.

Thank you for your attention.

ANNEX I

OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

- **Mandate**

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** *(as of 2 November 2023)*

1. **Chair:** Dr. Daniela DE RIDDER (Germany), OSCE PA Vice-President
2. Lord Alfred DUBS (United Kingdom), **Vice-Chair**
3. Kyriakos HADJIYIANNI (Cyprus), **Vice-Chair**, OSCE PA Vice-President
4. Farah KARIMI (The Netherlands), **Vice-Chair**
5. Gudrun KUGLER (Austria), **Vice-Chair**
6. Alessandro ALFIERI (Italy)
7. Susana AMADOR (Portugal)
8. Jan BAUER (Czech Republic)
9. Malik BEN ACHOUR (Belgium)
10. Valérie BOYER (France)
11. Johan BÜSER (Sweden)
12. Kemal ÇELİK (Türkiye)
13. Fabrizio COMBA (Italy)
14. Hedy FRY (Canada)
15. Sheila JACKSON LEE (United States of America)
16. Laurynas KASČIŪNAS (Lithuania)
17. Kristian KLINCK (Germany)
18. Dimitrios MARKOPOULOS (Greece)
19. Gwen MOORE (United States of America)
20. David STÖGMÜLLER (Austria)

ANNEX II
Work Plan 2023/2024

2023		
<i>Implemented:</i>		
12 October	Warsaw	Participation in the 2023 Human Dimension Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remarks in Plenary Session VIII on Humanitarian Issues - Coordination meeting with ODIHR (Ms. Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director; Ms. Julia Gebhard, Deputy Head, Democratization Department; and Ms. Alice Szczepanikova, Migration and Freedom of Movement Advisor, Democratization Department)
3 November, 16:00-17:15 CET	<i>online</i>	Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration convened by the new Chair, Dr. Daniela De Ridder, Vice-President of the OSCE PA, to discuss priorities and upcoming activities, incl. a presentation by the UNHCR Representative in Armenia Kavita Belani on the situation of refugees in Armenia.
9 November, 17:00-18:30 CET	<i>online</i>	Activity #1: Panel discussion on “ <i>Best practices and challenges regarding the sponsorship of refugees and the integration and settlement of newcomers to Canada</i> ”
10 November, 12:00-13:00 CET	<i>Online</i>	Follow-up co-ordination call with ODIHR to discuss synergies and cooperation (Ms. Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director; Ms. Alice Szczepanikova and Ms. Lola Girard, Migration and Freedom of Movement Advisors, Democratization Department; and Mr. Guido Tintori, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Governance Unit, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (EEA))
<i>Upcoming:</i>		
18-20 November	Yerevan	21st OSCE PA Autumn Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report of the Chair to the Standing Committee (18 November) - Meeting of the Committee (19 November, 12:15-13:15) - OSCE PA Mediterranean Forum (20 November) incl. statement of the Chair
close to 18 December	online	Policy discussion/statement in conjunction with International Migrants Day (tbc)
2024		
End January /first half February	tbd	Field Visit #1: Italy (tbc)
22-23 February	Vienna	23rd OSCE PA Winter Meeting

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the Committee, incl. briefing by an external speaker - Report of the Chair
March/April or May	TBD	Field Visit #2: Türkiye (tbc) or Policy Discussion
29 April	Copenhagen	Bureau Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report of the Chair
20 June (World Refugee Day)	<i>online</i>	Policy discussion/statement in conjunction with World Refugee Day
29 June – 3 July	Bucharest	31st Annual Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of the Committee - Report of the Chair - Supplementary Item (tbc)