



33rd OSCE PA Annual Session

Report of Ms. Farah KARIMI

Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

(The Hague, 8 July 2026)

Dear President,
Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to report to you on the recent activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and plans for the coming months.

Our Committee identified three priority topics last September to guide its work:

- Implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: Implications for EU and non-EU Member States
- The Experiences of Local Authorities with Migration
- Migration and Economic Development

1. Implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: Implications for EU and non-EU Member States

Our main focus this past year was on the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum and the expected impact of its implementation, not only on EU Member States but also on non-EU countries.

The Pact is a set of ten pieces of binding legislation, adopted in June 2024, that overhauls how the EU manages its borders, processes asylum applications, and addresses responsibility-sharing for asylum seekers. EU Member States were given two years to prepare for implementation of this complex legislation until 12 June 2026 – the date of its entry into application.

Following a preparatory online briefing for our Committee by representatives of the European Commission and UNHCR last November, our Committee travelled to Brussels in January 2026 for extensive discussions with a broad range of

stakeholders at the European Commission and Frontex as well as with representatives of International Governmental Organizations and think-tanks.

The discussions focused on the implications of implementation of the Migration Pact on EU Member States as well as those who are not part of the EU, especially in relation to countries of origin and transit. The delegation was particularly interested in the new procedures to be implemented at the EU's external borders. The need for strong human rights guarantees was stressed, and the role of the European Commission, Frontex, international organizations and civil society in safeguarding fundamental rights was also discussed. The members of the Committee also shared the experiences of their own countries in managing migration and exchanged views on how parliamentarians can contribute to a co-ordinated and human-rights compliant implementation of the EU Pact. The need to step up the fight against migrant smugglers and traffickers was also emphasized.

Also of significant interest for the Committee was the status of discussions on a separate piece of legislation – the return regulation – consisting of new rules governing the return of asylum seekers.

A separate report on our visit to Brussels is available. I will therefore only stress a few key points. As I emphasized in my previous reports, implementation of the EU Pact and the new Return Regulation have profound implications for people on the move and for legislation in EU Member States. While they bring some positive elements, such as reforms to help ensure the best interest of children seeking asylum, including by making multidisciplinary age assessments mandatory, guaranteeing access to education for child asylum seekers within two months, as well as the expansion of the definition of family to include families formed during the migration journey, there are also many concerning provisions.

New border procedures

We must remain particularly vigilant concerning the accelerated [border asylum procedures](#) which are now being implemented at the external borders of the EU.

Since the entry into application of the EU Pact on 12 June 2026, all irregular arrivals are subject to mandatory registration, identity checks, security, health and vulnerability assessments. The objective of these new procedures is to strengthen the Schengen area by preventing those who pose security or public health risks from entering the bloc undetected. The new screening procedures close a gap in the existing Schengen border regime by requiring all EU member states to apply uniform rules for monitoring and registering irregular migrants and asylum seekers entering the EU. Screening must be completed in a limited timeframe:

- 7 days for external border checks;
- 3 days for those apprehended within the territory.

Following screening, individuals requesting asylum will be directed to the appropriate procedure to process their application.

Furthermore, according to the European Commission¹, the [Mandatory border procedures](#)² now apply to those “unlikely to qualify for international protection, those posing security risks, or those who mislead the authorities”. This means that they will remain in the border area while their application is processed.

To guarantee the fundamental rights of people on the move, the Reception Conditions Directive establishes EU-wide standards, strengthening safeguards, establishing minimum living conditions and improving integration support for asylum seekers. Key improvements now in place include:

- Free legal counselling at all stages, including appeals;
- Guidance and assistance with applications, rights and obligations;
- Tailored support for vulnerable groups;
- EU-wide reception standards and contingency plans to ensure adequate capacity at all times.

However, during our exchanges, we heard serious concerns that the new border asylum procedures would lead to an increase in the numbers of persons in *de facto* detention at the EU’s external borders. Indeed, the new rules effectively create a process under which people can potentially be detained for six months, for the purposes of identification, asylum processing, and possible deportation. The first step is a screening that will determine whether an asylum seeker has access to the normal asylum procedure or a new “asylum border procedure” linked directly to a deportation process in the event the application is rejected. Many asylum seekers are likely to be subjected to the border procedure, which may involve detention for up to twelve weeks during the examination of the asylum application and an additional twelve weeks pending deportation.

Under the new rules, EU countries will have to examine asylum applications from nationals of countries with an average EU-wide refugee recognition rate of 20 per cent or less via the new “asylum border procedure.” This is an arbitrary threshold that creates a presumption that asylum seekers from particular countries are not likely to need protection. It undermines the principle that each asylum seeker is entitled to an individual assessment and imposes a higher burden of proof on those against whom the presumption works.

¹ European Commission, Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, “New migration and asylum rules enter into application: what is changing?” (12 June 2026), at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-migration-and-asylum-rules-enter-application-what-changing-2026-06-12_en.

² European Commission, Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, “Asylum in the EU” (11 June 2026), at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu_en#the-border-procedures.

The new legislation also incorporates a problematic legal interpretation under which people going through screening, although physically on the territory of an EU country, are not considered to have legally entered the country. This “fiction of non-entry” is currently applied by all EU countries in airport transit zones, raising concerns about the erosion of rights, such as the right to asylum and the right to an effective remedy, as well as opportunities for unlawful pushbacks and misuse of detention.

Some of our interlocutors also stressed the risk that persons with vulnerabilities will not be properly identified in the case of large numbers of arrivals and therefore subject to the procedures after all.

The new rules mandate that all children under age 12 traveling with family members are exempt from the border procedure; all unaccompanied children should also go through the regular asylum procedure and be placed in appropriate reception centres unless they are identified as a security risk. However, children aged 13 and older can be detained with their families and processed under the border procedure. The difference in treatment between children, and in particular whether their best interests are being met, raises serious concerns under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Furthermore, the EU has adopted an EU-wide list of countries deemed safe. The application of the concept of “safe country of origin” is now mandatory. In addition, a country can now be considered a “safe country of origin” even if it is not safe throughout its territory or for all people. Nationals from these countries will thus face an automatic presumption that they do not need protection and will be channelled into an accelerated processing of their claims that could overlook their individual circumstances.

Our Committee has also underlined the importance of ensuring that each EU Member State fulfils its obligation under the Pact to set up an independent monitoring authority to ensure that fundamental rights as well as the principle of *non-refoulement* are respected. Sufficient resources must also be allocated to ensure access to legal assistance and referral to other services notably for vulnerable migrants such as victims of trafficking and gender-based violence.

New rules governing returns of asylum seekers

The new Return Regulation which complements the EU Pact and which replaces the Return Directive, was agreed upon by the European Commission and the European Parliament on 1 June 2026.³ On 17 June, the Regulation was formally

³ European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, “Commission welcomes political agreement on the Return Regulation” (2 June 2026), at: <https://home->

approved by the European Parliament, thereby establishing a new Common European System for Returns. It was approved by 418 votes to 218, with 30 abstentions.

According to the Commission, the Return Regulation will give EU Member States the necessary tools to make returns more efficient, with swifter, simpler and more effective procedures across the EU, in full respect of fundamental rights. It thus seeks to boost the rate of effective returns which, in 2025, averaged 28 per cent.

However, it has also been criticized as yet another effort to boost the EU's policy of deterrence and externalisation of migration management by outsourcing the processing of asylum claims. Indeed, the Return Regulation introduces the possibility to set up so-called "return hubs" in third countries, where people with no legal right to stay in the EU and subject to a return decision can be returned. However, there are concerns that these countries might not have sufficient capacities and that, despite the requirement to observe human rights and the principle of *non-refoulement*, that these might not be respected in practice.

Furthermore, asylum seekers could be sent to a "safe third country" with which they have no connection or meaningful ties, for the processing of their claim and spend an extended period of time there. Indeed, the regulation raises the maximum legal detention period for irregular migrants waiting to be returned from six months to two years, with a possible six-month extension and an unlimited duration for persons considered as posing a security risk. Only unaccompanied minors would be exempt, while families with children could be transferred to these hubs.

The regulation also features a provision to search a "place of residence or other relevant premises" of irregular migrants, which NGOs have compared to raids conducted by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

We will continue to closely follow implementation of the Pact and I encourage all Members to remain vigilant and to ensure that the fundamental rights of people on the move are respected.

2. The Experiences of Local Authorities in Large Urban Centres with Migration

The idea behind this second area of focus is to generate insights into how large urban centres deal with the complex realities of migration, focusing on the governance challenges and opportunities created by the presence of diverse groups of migrants and refugees. In line with its mandate, the Committee has sought to highlight examples of best practice and to also draw some lessons as to

affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-welcomes-political-agreement-return-regulation-2026-06-02_en.

how we can foster more effective, equitable and sustainable approaches to migration management while strengthening social cohesion.

Our first case study was the city of Istanbul which hosted us for the November 2025 Autumn Meeting, followed by Vienna in connection with the Winter Meeting. As host of the 2026 Annual Session in The Hague, I organized a series of activities focussing on the experience of the Netherlands with migration.

3. Focus on the Netherlands

In my dual capacity of Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and Head of the Delegation of the Netherlands, I organized an online briefing for our Committee on 1 July, on recent developments in migration and asylum policy in the Netherlands. We discussed the new border asylum procedure introduced as a result of the entry into force of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. We also gained insight into how local authorities have fostered integration.

Our Committee first heard from the Dutch Council for Refugees (VluchtelingenWerk) which is the leading civil society organization providing legal assistance to asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the Netherlands, as well as facilitating their integration into Dutch society. The Dutch Council for Refugees is hired by municipalities and local governments to carry out these tasks. Mr. Sjoerd Warmerdam outlined the current legal landscape in the Netherlands, highlighting implementation of the EU Pact as well as the newly introduced two-status system as the most profound shifts in the country's legal framework.

Implementation of the EU Pact: New border asylum procedures in the Netherlands

Concerning the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, Mr. Warmerdam expressed scepticism regarding predictions that it would lead in a reduction in the volume of asylum applications. He also regretted that the Dutch Council for Refugees has not been given access to monitor procedures related to the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and called for a renewal of dialogue with civil society in the Netherlands.

We also heard from two representatives of the Directorate-General for Migration and Asylum at the Ministry of Asylum and Migration. Mr. Time Kaptein, Deputy Head of the Asylum, Reception and Return Division, gave a brief overview of the new asylum border procedure being implemented in the Netherlands as required by the EU Pact. He shared that the procedure was functioning well and outlined the safeguards such as the right to a lawyer, free of charge, during the administrative and appeals phase. The new Asylum Border Procedure is accompanied with a measure of deprivation of liberty; cases will be assessed on an individual basis to assess whether the deprivation of liberty is proportionate or not. If it is found not

to be proportional, the border procedure will be halted and the person in question will be allowed to enter the territory of the Netherlands and a regular asylum procedure will start. He also underlined that the new asylum border procedure has stood up in court.

Some changes had to be introduced as a result of the Pact which requires that border procedures be completed within twelve weeks. A decision must now be made within five weeks, which leaves the remaining seven weeks for the possibility of an appeal and court procedures. If no decision has been made within 5 weeks, the border procedure will automatically be transferred to a regular asylum procedure in an asylum centre.

Mr. Maykel Bouma, legal advisor at the Ministry, addressed the changes and challenges introduced by the EU Pact to the Netherlands, explaining that the newly streamlined procedure eliminates the back-and-forth communication between legal counsel and immigration authorities, noting that only time will tell how this affects asylum case numbers and whether the new procedure would lead to an increase in the number of cases which would have to be reviewed.

In the Netherlands, there is no location where the fiction of “non-entry” can be maintained as provided for by the EU Pact. The country as therefore opted for a closed facility, Mr. Bouma explained. This approach poses specific challenges regarding the detention of families with children.

Mr. Warmerdam commended the Dutch authorities for their efforts to make the asylum process shorter. At the same time, he pointed to the issue of insufficient legal scrutiny. There is no room to adjust mistakes anymore in the process, because of the government’s will to streamline the process and make it “rapid” and “fast”, he cautioned. And the democratic risk will be that courts and judges will be blamed for this. So instead of solving the problem, the burden has been shifted from immigration authorities and the government to the legal system, he underlined.

The Dutch Two-Tier System

The representative of the Dutch Council for Refugees also shared his view about legislative amendments adopted in April 2026, amending the Aliens Act 2000 (*Vreemdelingen Wet 2000*) and which tighten the requirements for family reunification for subsidiary protection beneficiaries (Status B).⁴ Mr. Warmerdam voiced concerns that the two-status system was restricting access to family

⁴ Dutch authorities place asylum seekers into two categories: Status A - People fleeing persecution due to their sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion (refugees as defined by the Refugee Convention); Status B - People fleeing from war and the consequences of climate change (persons granted subsidiary protection).

reunification and that it could create obstacles for the successful integration of asylum seekers into Dutch society.

In Mr. Warmerdam's view, positive developments in the Netherlands are predominantly occurring at the local level and called for the national government to support local authorities in these efforts. Amsterdam for example has been stepping up to address the shortage of shelter for asylum seekers. The response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees was also very encouraging. At the same time, he noted that some local governments either do not want to take responsibility for integration or actively hinder the process, despite a law mandating all municipalities to provide shelter for asylum seekers.

The two representatives from the Ministry agreed that difficulties surrounding the sourcing of accommodation for asylum seekers was indeed a critical issue, noting that this was mainly due to the lack of housing and environmental regulations limiting building of new facilities but also the lack of co-operation from municipal authorities to provide accommodation to persons who have been granted international protection. While this is a right, there is at present no law imposing the obligation on municipalities to provide housing to persons who have been granted international protection.

I would like to express my solidarity for Mr. Warmerdam's concluding remarks in which he emphasized the significance of democracy and the critical role of civil society within it. He also drew attention to the increasingly polarized rhetoric on migration in the Netherlands at the local level which is hindering integration efforts. I also want to again highlight the critical issue of lack of shelter which is having a huge impact on society.

Fenix Migration Museum

On 5 July, our Committee will visit a new museum in Rotterdam, Fenix, focussing on the experiences of migration. The museum is located in a warehouse on the quay from which over three million people departed for America and Canada at the beginning of the last century to start a new life, while on the other side, a great many more people arrived. This field visit will be an opportunity for Committee members to reflect on the human stories of migration and to step back from numbers and statistics, politics and laws and regulations, for a moment.

4. Migration and Economic Development

The third priority topic, that of the dynamic relationship between migration and economic development, will be at the centre of our next field visit to Uzbekistan which we are currently planning for October 2026. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome our newest Member from Uzbekistan, Dr. Ulugbek Shermatov, who is putting together an excellent programme for us. This visit will offer a precious opportunity to learn more about labour mobility of Central Asian

migrants towards the EU and other countries and their contribution to the economic growth in host societies through labour market participation, entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer.

At the same time, we are mindful of the risk of 'brain drain' and we will seek to identify initiatives which also factor in the development priorities of the country of origin and which maximize the developmental benefits of migration while mitigating its adverse effects, fostering more balanced and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders.

5. Next Steps

Our Committee will continue to monitor developments related to implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. I also hope that we will have the opportunity to add a few more case studies of large urban centres and the role of local authorities in migration management.

The Committee has expressed its interest in expanding its geographical focus which has been primarily on Europe and in learning more about migration policies across the OSCE region. The inclusion of a new Member from Central Asia and the upcoming visit to Uzbekistan is an important step in this direction. I hope that the Committee will also welcome additional Members from other regions in particular the United States so that we also have the opportunity to discuss developments which are taking place there.

ANNEX I

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

A. 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.

B. Membership

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration currently consists of 17 Members from 15 OSCE participating States (9 men, 8 women):

1. Chair: Ms. Farah KARIMI (Netherlands)
2. Mr. Alessandro ALFIERI (Italy), Vice-Chair
3. Mr. Kemal ÇELİK (Türkiye), Vice-Chair
4. Ms. Ayse ASAR (Germany)
5. Mr. Jan BAUER (Czechia)
6. Ms. Valérie BOYER (France)
7. Mr. Johan BÜSER (Sweden)
8. Mr. Fabrizio COMBA (Italy)
9. Mr. Mahmoud FARAHMAND (Norway)
10. Dr. Hedy FRY (Canada)
11. Ms. Pia KAUMA (Finland), President Emerita
12. Dr. Gudrun KUGLER (Austria), OSCE PA Vice-President
13. Mr. Artemi Vicent RALLO (Spain)
14. Ms. Özgül SAKI (Türkiye)
15. Mr. Ulugbek SHERMATOV (Uzbekistan)
16. Mr. Angelos SYRIGOS (Greece)
17. Baroness Rosie WINTERTON (United Kingdom)

ANNEX II
Activities 2025/2026

A. Implemented Activities

2025		
18 September	<i>online</i>	Meeting of the Committee convened by the new Chair, Farah Karimi (Netherlands), to discuss priorities and upcoming activities
3 November	<i>online</i>	Web Dialogue on “Implementation of the EU Migration and Asylum Pact: Implications for EU and non-EU Member States” Mr. Michael Shotter, Director, Directorate for Migration and Asylum (HOME C), DG- HOME (Migration and Home Affairs), European Commission, Brussels Ms. Cecilie Becker-Christensen Saenz Guerrero, Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Legal Support Unit, UNHCR’s Representation for EU Affairs, Brussels
17-19 November	Istanbul	23rd OSCE PA Autumn Meeting • Meeting of the Committee (17 November), with a focus on the experiences of local authorities with migration – The example of Istanbul - Ms. Serra Albayrakoglu, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations, PMM, Interior Ministry, Republic of Türkiye - Ms. Merve Ağca, Director of the Migration and Social Policy Center, Marmara Municipalities Union - Dr. Elif Güney Menderes, Senior Program Manager, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom - NGOs working with migrants & refugees • Report of the Chair to the Standing Committee (17 November)
18 December	<i>online</i>	<u>Statement</u> on the occasion of International Migrants Day
2026		
28-29 January	Brussels	Field Visit focusing on EU migration policy reform, incl. implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, Return Regulation, Pact for the Mediterranean
11 February	<i>online</i>	Meeting of the Committee focussing on the situation in the US and upcoming field visits
18-19 February	Vienna	Bilats of the Chair with key stakeholders in the area of migration: OSCE Secretariat (OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Transnational Threats Department/Border Security and Management Unit, External Co-operation Section, Co-ordinator of OSCE

		Economic and Environmental Affairs) and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
18 February	Vienna	Field Visit to Jugendcollege Advanced Ost – an initiative of the City of Vienna offering language training, basic education, vocational orientation and social skills training to young refugees and migrants aged 15-25 years old.
19-20 February	Vienna	25th OSCE PA Winter Meeting - Meeting of the Committee, with a focus on the experiences of local authorities with migration – The example of the City of Vienna (20 February) - Report of the Chair to the Standing Committee (20 February)
27 April	Copenhagen	Bureau Meeting Report of the Chair
20 June	<i>online</i>	Statement on the occasion of World Refugee Day
1 July	<i>online</i>	Meeting of the Committee on migration and asylum policy in The Netherlands with a focus on the role of local authorities - Mr. Sjoerd Warmerdam, Deputy Director of Services and Director of Public Affairs, Dutch Council for Refugees (VluchtelingenWerk) - Mr. Time Kaptein and Mr. Maykel Bouma, Directorate-General for Migration, Ministry of Asylum and Migration
4-8 July	The Hague	33rd OSCE PA Annual Session - Field visit to Fenix migration museum in Rotterdam (5 July) - Report of the Chair to the Plenary (8 July)

B. Upcoming Activities

2026		
October (exact dates tbd)	Tashkent, Samarkand	Field visit to Uzbekistan focusing on labour mobility