

News from Copenhagen

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration members visit Sweden and Denmark



Migration committee members at Sandholm reception centre for asylum seekers in Denmark, 23 October 2018



Briefing by Swedish border police at Hyllie train station in Malmo, Sweden, 22 October 2018

A two-day field visit this week by members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, led by Chair Nahima Lanjri (MP, Belgium), explored the multifaceted responses to migration challenges in Denmark and Sweden. They met with representatives from the Swedish and Danish migration authorities, local officials, border police, school administrators, the international community, civil society, and migrants and refugees to assess current developments.

The delegation noted that authorities on the national and local levels, working with non-governmental organizations, have responded effectively to the refugee and migrant crisis that took hold in late 2015, but that there is room for improvement in clarifying legal rights of asylum seekers, and in particular ensuring that unaccompanied minors are fully protected. Ad Hoc Committee members welcomed positive achievements in employment rates for refugees but observed that a long-term strategy was needed in both countries to create more inclusive societies.

The delegation included Ad Hoc Committee Vice-Chair Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) and members Haydar Akar (MP, Turkey), Jan Bauer (MP, Czech Republic), Margareta Cederfelt (MP, Sweden), Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (MP, Cyprus), Mehmet Sait Kirazoglu (MP, Turkey), and Georgios Varenenos (MP, Greece), as well as Head of the Danish Delegation to the

OSCE PA Peter Juel Jensen and OSCE PA member Soeren Soendergaard (MP, Denmark).

The OSCE parliamentarians noted the extraordinary efforts made by governments in processing the large number of asylum claims made in 2015-2016, as well as the continued challenges to provide housing, quality schooling, and, in the case of recognized refugees, access to the labour market. Committee members recognized the difficult task to implement the growing number of return decisions. All OSCE countries should ensure that international humanitarian obligations are fully upheld for asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers alike, Ad Hoc Committee members said.

During the visit, topics of discussion included developments in improving the legislative framework and the need for responsibilities to be shared fairly between countries as well as between municipalities within countries. Delegation members observed living facilities for asylum seekers in Denmark, both those beginning their asylum application procedures and rejected asylum seekers.

Members also commended the work of humanitarian groups and NGOs working with migrants and refugees and urged greater support for voluntary return and integration schemes such as those offered by the International Organization for Migration.

Italian Ambassador meets with SG Montella



Luigi Ferrari and Roberto Montella in Copenhagen, 17 Oct. 2018

Italy's Ambassador to Denmark, Luigi Ferrari, visited OSCE PA headquarters in Copenhagen on 17 October. Discussions with Secretary General Roberto Montella focused on continuing the productive co-operation between the OSCE PA and the Italian OSCE Chairmanship, as well as the general activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Former PA President visits Secretariat



Javier Ruperez speaks with staff at the Secretariat, 19 Oct. 2018.

Former PA President Javier Ruperez (Spain) visited the International Secretariat on 19 October and discussed OSCE matters with members of the staff. Ruperez was President of the Assembly from 1996-1998. Previously, he was a member of the Spanish Delegation in the initial CSCE (1972-75) and participated in the drafting of the Helsinki Decalogue.