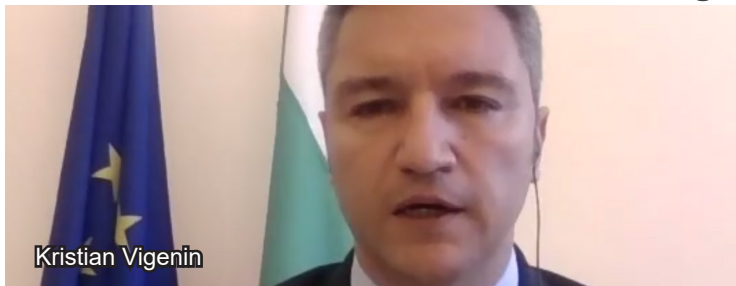


OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration discusses situation in Afghanistan



The OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration met virtually on 24 September to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and ongoing work of the committee. Introduced by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and newly appointed Ad Hoc Committee Chair Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria), the meeting focused on how Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis and economic collapse are contributing to displacement and impacting refugee flows to the OSCE region.

Astrid Sletten, Country Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council in Afghanistan, and Elizabeth Collett, Special Advisor to the Director General of the International Organization for Migration, described the dire situation in Afghanistan, which has

been impacted by four decades of war, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty, drought, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The reality on the ground is that Afghans are in the midst of an economic collapse, Sletten said, and emphasis should be placed on protection of civilians, with a prioritization of financial aid. Collett said that IOM is focusing on maintaining livelihoods for civilians and shoring up access to essential services. It is also critical to support neighboring countries that will bear the brunt of increased regional migration, Collett underlined.

In the discussion, OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee members stressed the need for simultaneously addressing humanitarian needs and improving migration management, with a focus on responsibility sharing. Concerns were also raised about the status of women parliamentarians in Afghanistan.

Committee Vice-Chair Gudrun Kugler (Austria) also reported on her visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 11-14 July with OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey. The visit was very productive, she said, consisting of several days of meetings and talking to migrants about their difficult living conditions. Chair Vigenin also discussed with committee members possible upcoming activities of the committee.

Dates announced for 2021 OSCE PA Autumn Meeting

The 19th Autumn Meeting will take place in an online format on 3-4 November 2021. Consisting of a meeting of the Standing Committee, the Mediterranean Forum and a Parliamentary Conference, OSCE PA members will participate on Zoom and the meeting will stream on Facebook and YouTube. The schedule is available here: <https://bit.ly/2ZFxFro>

OSCE PA Helsinki +50 event focuses on youth participation in politics

Introduced by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier, the OSCE PA held a virtual event Tuesday on empowering young political actors in policymaking to address current and future challenges. In her opening remarks, President Cederfelt said that it is important to follow up on ideas for empowering youth, and toward this end, she appointed Farah Karimi (The Netherlands) as Special Representative on Youth Engagement.

In her remarks, Special Representative Karimi noted that never before have younger generations been facing such an insecure future, and noted that the threat of climate change is one of many challenges. Meeting these crises can only be achieved with youth engagement, she said.

Roger Padreny (Andorra) said that youth need a real voice in actual decision-making processes and in order to make this a reality, capacity building is needed to ensure that young people are heard. Matters of responsibility should be given to young people, he argued, sharing relevant experiences from the Andorran parliament, which has worked to institutionalize youth participation in decision-making.

Shannon Simrell, United States Helsinki Commission Representative to the OSCE, emphasized the need for adequate



funding to make youth advocacy and participation a sustainable reality. ODIHR's Augusta Featherston shared lessons drawn from various ODIHR initiatives, stressing the importance of supporting democratic institutions with youth-focused research. Much of the discussion focused on the founding of a network of young parliamentarians within the OSCE PA.

Secretary General Roberto Montella noted that the International Secretariat can assist in building this informal network, which he stressed should plug into existing OSCE efforts and avoid duplication. Ambassador Zannier emphasized the importance of mainstreaming a youth perspective in the OSCE's work.

Third Committee Rapporteur visits International Secretariat in Copenhagen

Johan Buser, Rapporteur of the OSCE PA's Third Committee, visited the International Secretariat Monday in Copenhagen. Meeting with Secretary General Roberto Montella, Head of Elections Andreas Baker and Senior Advisor Farimah Daftary, Buser discussed ongoing PA work and his priorities as Rapporteur.

Buser was elected Rapporteur at the OSCE PA's Remote Session last summer.

