

# News from Copenhagen

## PA delegation brings attention to migrant crisis in visit to southern Italy



At the close of a four-day visit to Rome, Lampedusa, Catania and Mineo on 21 June, OSCE PA Third Committee Chair Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) noted that Italy is doing a commendable job of responding to the Mediterranean migrant crisis, but that without greater support from the wider European community, it may soon be past its capacity to handle the influx on its own. She urged policymakers not to lose sight of the human face of the crisis.

“Who are these migrants?” she asked. “They are people fleeing from death, war, violence and misery. They are asking us for only one thing – an opportunity for life, life with dignity.” Santos said she was impressed by the commitment, professionalism and passion of the numerous humanitarian organizations, addressing the crisis, including the Red Cross, Misericordia, Caritas, and Medici per i diritti umani.

She also spoke about the Dublin Regulation, a European Union rule that determines which Member State is responsible for processing asylum claims.

“The Dublin system needs to be reformed in order to promote a more humane approach to the crisis. Although we must be careful not to reduce these refugees and migrants to mere numbers, the proposal for a quota system seems like a good way to provide a responsible and humane solution by the European Union,” she said.

Santos was joined on her visit by Italian OSCE

parliamentarians Marietta Tidei, the Rapporteur of the Second Committee, and Cristina De Pietro. The delegation conducted a series of meetings – with government officials, migrants, refugees, employees at reception facilities, civil society leaders and representatives of international organizations – intended to sensitize Italy and other countries to the crisis.

“These are dramatic days in terms of migration,” said Tidei at the close of the visit. “We are seeing an exodus of epic proportions and precisely those countries that should feel a sense of responsibility are showing the worst face of Europe, protecting their own interests.”

De Pietro said, “The burden of responsibility should not fall on those countries whose borders are most exposed. Focusing on the issues of migration and refugees, we should at the same time remember our own poor in Europe.”

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will debate a resolution calling for urgent solutions to the Mediterranean migrant crisis proposed by Tidei at the 24th Annual Session in Helsinki on 5-9 July 2015. The resolution reaffirms the right of all people fleeing persecution and conflict to asylum, and calls for reform of EU regulations on migrant reception quotas, as well as a more effective search and rescue initiative in the Mediterranean Sea.

The PA’s visit was supported by Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

## Preparations continue for OSCE PA’s 24th Annual Session in Helsinki



The OSCE PA’s 24th Annual Session will be held in Helsinki, Finland on 5-9 July 2015 under the theme “Recalling the Spirit of Helsinki.” The Session

will include presentation of final results of the PA’s Helsinki +40 Project, which has marked the milestone anniversary of the Final Act with seminars throughout 2014 and 2015.

In addition to the three principle resolutions of the Assembly’s general committees, 15 supplementary items will be considered at the Session. More than 140 amendments

have been submitted to the three principle resolutions, which are currently being processed by the OSCE PA International Secretariat.

The Assembly will hold elections during the Helsinki meeting for the posts of President, several Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Committee Officers. The Standing Committee will vote on the Bureau’s recommended candidate for the post of Secretary General, with a term beginning in 2016.

### Annual Session deadline reminder

- **28 June:** Copenhagen Deadline for Amendments to Supplementary Items