

News from Copenhagen

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration conducts fact-finding mission to Greece



Members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration are in Greece this week to assess first-hand how the country is coping with the migration crisis and evaluating the impacts of European Union policies, including the implementation of the March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement and the December 2016 Joint Action Plan.

Today, 12 committee members, led by Ad Hoc Committee Chair Filippo Lombardi (MP, Switzerland), completed a field visit to the Greek island of Lesbos. The mission is hosted by Head of the Hellenic Delegation to the OSCE PA, Georgios Varenos (MP, Greece), and included visits to two refugee camps in Athens and two in Lesbos, as well as a number of meetings with relevant officials. In Lesbos, the delegation met with the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Amb. Madina Jarbussynova. The visit will wrap up tomorrow with a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee in Athens.

Lombardi noted that Greece should be commended for its efforts to speed up asylum procedures and improve conditions in the camps, as well as ensure access to education, but that there is a clear sense of desperation as some people have

been in camps for over a year waiting for a decision on their asylum application or relocation prospects. There is also a lack of adequate shelter space for unaccompanied minors in specialized smaller facilities.

Committee members noted the significant efforts made by the Greek government, especially local and regional authorities as well as local populations, in response to the significant numbers of migrants and refugees. They stressed that the EU also needs to live up to its commitments, especially with respect to relocations.

This week's visit is the third field mission conducted by members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, who visited Calais and Grande Synthe in May 2016, and Sicily in September 2016. In its field visits, committee members pay particular attention to situation of vulnerable refugees, especially women and children, as well as unaccompanied minors. Committee members also travelled to Brussels and Geneva in January 2017 to meet with key officials from the EU and the main international organizations actively involved in managing the migration crisis.

A follow-up visit to Turkey is also being organized for the coming weeks, and the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration intends to present a report and resolution on the topic at the OSCE PA's 26th Annual Session taking place in Minsk, Belarus, on 5-9 July 2017. This week's visit to Greece is supported by OSCE PA Programme Officer Farimah Daftary and includes committee members from France, Turkey, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Cyprus, and Belgium.

Santos and Sena speak about Portugal's participation in OSCE at Lisbon colloquium



OSCE PA Vice-President Isabel Santos and Second Committee Chair Nilza Sena addressed a 12 April colloquium in Lisbon on "Portugal's participation in OSCE: Achievements and Challenges." The event included the participation of Portuguese

Speaker of Parliament Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, former Speaker Jaime Gama, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Teresa Ribeiro, Portugal's Ambassador to the OSCE, Graça Mira Gomes, and Amb. Christian Strohal, Special Representative of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship.

Santos addressed the many challenges that the OSCE faces today, noting its value in shaping a comprehensive security model, while Sena highlighted in particular the role of the OSCE in the economic and environmental dimension.

Upcoming activities and deadlines

Next week, on **5-8 May**, a seminar in *Leinsweiler*, Germany, will focus on the renewed geopolitical struggle for spheres of influences and the impacts this is having on the OSCE area. OSCE PA Treasurer and Head of the OSCE PA's German Delegation Doris Barnett will host the meeting, which will include the participation of President Christine Muttonen. Following this event, Muttonen will hold a series of high-level meetings in Tashkent, *Uzbekistan*, and the next week, will visit *Ukraine*.

Election observation missions are being organized for *Albanian parliamentary elections* on **18 June** (registration deadline: **19 May**) and the **26 June presidential election in Mongolia** (registration deadline: **26 May**).

Delegations are requested to register for the *26th Annual Session* by **30 May**. Supplementary items must be received by **31 May**. Amendments to the three General Committee Draft Resolutions must be received no later than **21 June**, and amendments to supplementary items by **28 June**.