

News from Copenhagen

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration members on fact-finding mission to Turkey

Members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration are on a fact-finding mission to Turkey this week, holding a range of meetings with Turkish authorities and representatives of the international community, and visiting two refugee camps in southeast Turkey to observe first-hand how the country is handling efforts in hosting more than three million refugees. In particular focus is how the country is working on granting access to education, health care and employment.

Holding meetings with representatives from relevant ministries, OSCE PA members have been fully briefed on Turkey's response to the influx of refugees. Meetings have also been held with representatives of the World Food Programme, the UN Refugee Agency, UNICEF, and the IOM.

The delegation to Turkey this week is led by OSCE PA



Committee members at Nizip refugee camp, 17 May 2017.

Vice-President Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) and includes parliamentarians from France, Cyprus, Italy, Greece, and Turkey. It is hosted by the Turkish Delegation headed by Vedat Bilgin, and is supported by OSCE PA Programme Officer Farimah Daftary. It is the fourth field mission conducted by members of the Ad Hoc Committee. Earlier this month, committee members visited the Greek island of Lesbos.

OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe holds high-level talks in region



Special Rep. Roberto Battelli and Speaker of Parliament Ilir Meta in Tirana, 15 May. (Photo: Albanian Parliament)

OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia) is on an official visit to South East Europe this week which includes stops in Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Battelli is accompanied by the OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna, Amb. Andreas Nothelle. In Albania, the PA delegation met with the Prime Minister,

Speaker of Parliament, and other political leaders as well as representatives of local institutions, civil society, religious communities, the OSCE field operations and the resident international community. Discussions in Tirana focused mainly on next month's parliamentary elections.

In Montenegro, Battelli and Nothelle have continued their series of high-level meetings and also participated in and addressed a Conference on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Currently in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the delegation will conclude their visit on Friday in Banja Luka.

OSCE field operations in Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina have provided valuable support to the PA's visit to the region.

Harstedt discusses Belarus at European Parliament in Brussels

OSCE PA Vice-President and Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus Kent Harstedt (MP, Sweden) visited the European Parliament in Brussels on 11 May where he addressed the Delegation for relations with Belarus. The sides discussed the upcoming Annual Session in Minsk, with Harstedt expressing the Assembly's gratitude to the Belarusian Parliament for hosting the meeting.

Harstedt noted the good co-operation that he has enjoyed with Minsk, having met with President Alexander Lukashenko twice over the past year, but expressed concern over recent developments including mass arrests of demonstrators. Harstedt said that hosting PA meetings can serve to bring extra scrutiny to a country, and recalled that the European Parliament has observer status in the OSCE PA and a delegation from the EP is welcome to attend the Annual Session.

Annual Session preparations in Minsk



OSCE PA staff (right) meet with Boleslav Pirshutuk and parliament staff in Minsk, 5 May 2017.

OSCE PA staff visited Minsk earlier this month in preparation for the 26th Annual Session being held 5-9 July in the Belarusian capital. The OSCE PA's five-member preparatory team held discussions with Belarusian Head of Delegation Boleslav Pirshutuk and counterparts at the Belarusian Parliament on a range of practical, technical and logistical matters and reported that preparations are proceeding well.

Reports and draft resolutions for the three committees are posted at www.oscepa.org. Documents in all six official OSCE languages will be posted as they become available.