

OSCE PA Migration Committee members visit Lesbos and Samos



Meeting with mayor of Eastern Samos, the coast guard, police, Frontex, UNHCR and NGOs, 21 March



Visit to Samos new Closed Control Access Centre currently hosting about 300 refugees, 22 March

A delegation of several leaders of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration today completed a three-day visit to Lesbos, Samos and Athens. The mission was intended to assess the current progress in migration and asylum policies on the Aegean Islands, seven years after the onset of the migration crisis.

The delegation, led by Committee Chair and OSCE PA Vice-President Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria), included four Committee Vice-Chairs: Luigi Augussori (Italy), Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), Farah Karimi (The Netherlands), Gudrun Kugler (Austria). Committee member Dimitrios Markopoulos (Greece) also participated in the delegation, which was hosted by the Hellenic Delegation to the OSCE PA led by Theodoros Karaglou.

The delegation met with a wide range of interlocutors including the mayors of Mytilene Stratis Kytelis, and of East Samos Georgios Stantzios, representatives of the coast guard, police, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), UNHCR as well as a number of non-governmental organizations. A briefing with the Secretary General for the Reception of Asylum Seekers Emmanouil Logothetis was also organized prior to departure.

The programme centered on two facilities hosting refugees and asylum seekers. On Monday, the delegation toured the Mavrovouni Reception and Identification Centre on Lesbos. Hastily erected following the burning down of the Moria camp in September 2020 as a temporary solution to re-house the nearly 13,000 people who were living in a facility designed for 3,000, Mavrovouni still stands today due to delays in building a permanent camp.

The delegation also visited a number of NGOs working with vulnerable categories of refugees and asylum seekers, highlighting their important contribution in filling gaps in the area of provision of legal aid, education, medical and psychosocial support and the promotion of good community relations. Several interlocutors remarked upon the impact of the national registry of NGOs working with refugees and migrants on their operations, which has limited their official capacity to offer services within the camps.

Members of the delegation noted the importance of preventing asylum seekers from spending prolonged periods in a legal limbo, while their cases either undergo successive, lengthy reviews or eventually end with no possibility of deportation. Discussions also focused on the assistance provided to recognized refugees.

LIVESTREAM: Role of the OSCE in addressing the conflict in Ukraine

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will hold a meeting in the framework of its Call for Action Initiative focused on the role of the OSCE in addressing the conflict in Ukraine and its consequences, on Wednesday, 23 March 2022, 14:30 – 17:00 CET, via Zoom. The meeting will be addressed by the HCNM, Director of the CPC, and will be moderated by OSCE PA High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier. Tune in to the livestream here: <https://bit.ly/3DcYJOs>

PA's conference team visits Bulgaria to begin preparations for Autumn Meeting

OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and the conference team visited Bulgaria, Sofia, on 14-17 March for an assessment visit in preparation for the Autumn Meeting to be held on 14-16 October 2022.

The International Secretariat held meetings with Head of Bulgarian Delegation Iskren Medev, Deputy Head of Delegation, Vice-President of the OSCE PA, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Kristian Vigenin, Secretary of Delegation, Dessislava Nakova, and discussed modalities of the Autumn Meeting.

The OSCE PA team, host country's team and the conference facilities team visited the National Palace of Culture,



PA team on an assessment visit in preparation for the Autumn Meeting in Bulgaria

walked through the different halls, meeting rooms, facilities, and visited possible hotels for the conference.