

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration members visit Moldova, praise welcoming of Ukrainian refugees



Migration committee members in front of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in Chisinau, 9 March 2023

Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration concluded a two-day field visit to Moldova on 10 March, meeting ministers, legislators, stakeholders and policy advocates to learn more about the country's significant efforts in hosting more than 100,000 individuals fleeing the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine.

The OSCE PA delegation welcomed Moldova's positive achievements in welcoming refugees and facilitating the safe transit of more than 600,000 people towards Europe and highlighted areas where the Parliamentary Assembly and OSCE participating States can provide assistance. Main topics addressed included vulnerable categories of refugees, such as unaccompanied and separated children, children with special needs, Roma children, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities, as well as measures to counter risks of trafficking in human beings and gender-based violence.

"Moldova deserves a good deal of credit for following many

best practices when it comes to hosting refugees," said Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Chair Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom) today. "Not only has the country enabled access to employment, with nearly 1,000 Ukrainian nationals currently employed in Moldova, but its implementation of a new temporary protection scheme for Ukrainian refugees until March 2024 will provide them with a more secure legal status, further enhancing access to accommodation, education, employment, primary health care and social assistance."

Other participants in the visit to Moldova included Ad Hoc Committee Vice-Chairs Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) and Gudrun Kugler (Austria), as well as committee members Daniela De Ridder (Germany), Mehmet Sait Kirazoğlu (Türkiye), and David Stögmüller (Austria).

The delegation met with government representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Bureau of Migration and Asylum, as well as a number of NGOs and inter-governmental organizations, including the OSCE Mission to Moldova, headed by Ambassador Kelly Keiderling. Meetings were also held with Members of Moldova's OSCE PA Delegation, and Lilian Carp, Chair of the Parliament's Committee on National Security, Defense and Public Order. In addition, the delegation visited a reception centre hosting primarily women and children as well as disabled persons from Ukraine.

Last week's visit to Moldova was the second field visit of the committee focusing on the Ukraine refugee situation.

Charalambides and Lopatka to lead some 80 OSCE PA election observers in Kazakhstan



Irene Charalambides and Reinhold Lopatka

Some 80 election observers from the OSCE PA are deploying this week along with a core team of 11 experts, 32 long-term observers and some 250 short-term observers from the OSCE/ODIHR for the international election observation mission to Kazakhstan for the 19 March early parliamentary elections. The mission will mark the twelfth time the PA has observed elections in Kazakhstan since 1994.

OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) has been appointed to lead the OSCE short-term observer mission and deliver the

statement of preliminary findings and conclusions at a press conference in Astana on 20 March. Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka, who also serves as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism and as Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine, will lead the OSCE PA mission, which includes 60 members of parliament from 24 countries. They will work closely with ODIHR's Head of Mission, Eoghan Murphy (Ireland), and its team of experts.

Observers will be briefed by election administrators, experts, political party representatives, and civil society representatives for two days prior to election day, and will deploy to several different regions of Kazakhstan. The elections will be assessed against democratic commitments contained in the OSCE's 1990 Copenhagen Document. Key provisions include: free voting procedures, a fair and free campaign atmosphere, access to media, and honest and accurate reporting of results.

The preliminary assessment of the elections will be presented at a press conference in Astana on 20 March, which will stream live at www.oscepa.org.

President Cederfelt visits Copenhagen for talks at the Secretariat



Margareta Cederfelt meets with International Secretariat, 10 March

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) visited the International Secretariat in Copenhagen on 10 March for

meetings with Secretary General Roberto Montella, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and staff. The main purpose of the visit was to follow up on last month's Winter Meeting in Vienna and to prepare for the upcoming OSCE PA Bureau meeting in Copenhagen, scheduled for 24 April.

The President, Secretary General and staff shared their general assessments of the Winter Meeting, which it was agreed was successful despite being held under difficult circumstances, and discussed details of the Bureau meeting's agenda. Other topics of discussion included a review of upcoming activities.