

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration discusses coronavirus-related challenges in online meeting



Ten members of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration participated in an online meeting Wednesday to develop common approaches to migration in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee was joined by former OSCE PA leader Isabel Santos, who now serves as a Member of the European Parliament, as well as by OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Secretary General Roberto Montella. The President stressed the importance of the committee's work in these challenging times. SG Montella noted that the Secretariat is working to ensure that the PA can continue to

remain engaged on pressing issues and urged committee members to develop long-term migration strategies based on principles of international co-operation.

In her opening remarks, the committee's Acting Chair, Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), noted that the conditions in detention centers and camps for refugees and migrants do not allow for preventing the spread of the disease. The pandemic has underlined the urgency of addressing the situation of asylum seekers, she said, noting that it is unacceptable that a few countries are hosting the vast majority of them.

Santos stressed the need to revive the spirit of Helsinki, underlining that more multilateralism is needed in these times. No single country can address the coronavirus or migration alone, she said. She highlighted the situations in Syria and Libya as priorities. In the discussion, members raised issues including how border closures have affected migratory flows and the urgency of developing common responses to the crisis and pursuing sustainable solutions.

The online meeting was moderated by Farimah Daftary from the International Secretariat.

Special Representative Smith addresses webinar on sexual exploitation and trafficking

In an ODIHR-organized webinar on Monday, OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues Chris Smith (United States) discussed the risks of sexual exploitation online during the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has increased vulnerabilities, he said, with web-based sexual abuse on the rise, and victims less likely to be rescued.

The webinar, "Cross-Linkages of Human Trafficking and Pornography: Myth or Reality?", offered a forum to examine the issue of trafficking for the purpose of production of pornographic material in the context of the pandemic. Participants included Per-Anders Sunesson, Swedish Ambassador at Large for Combating Trafficking in Persons; Frank Heinrich, Rapporteur for Human Trafficking and Slavery of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid at the German Bundestag; Anastasiya Dzyakava, Adviser on child safety online at the office of the Vice-Prime-Minister and Minister for Digital Transformation of Ukraine; and Shandra Woworuntu, Founder of Mentari.



Special Representative Smith focused in his remarks on the need to educate parents and children on the rising risks of sexual exploitation online during the COVID-19 crisis. He noted that the resolution he authored which was adopted at the Luxembourg Annual Session offered timely recommendations on the topic.

OSCE parliamentarians to discuss COVID-19 states of emergency in a webinar Friday



An OSCE PA Web Dialogue on Friday 8 May will provide an opportunity for parliamentarians from across the OSCE area to discuss how coronavirus-related emergency measures are being implemented, drawing upon their own experiences from their national parliaments. Parliamentari-

ans will explore ways to ensure that restrictions are proportionate, non-discriminatory, temporary, and consistent with other legal obligations.

The event will feature expert contributions from Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and Michael Abramowitz, President of Freedom House. Broad participation is expected from the OSCE PA, including the leaders of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Committee Chair Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) will deliver opening remarks.

The webinar will be livestreamed on the OSCE PA's Facebook page and at www.oscepa.org.