

OSCE PA migration committee members discuss resettlement and assisted voluntary returns



Parliamentarians from the OSCE and Council of Europe participated in an online discussion on 5 March organized by the British House of Lords entitled “Refugees and migrants: Humanitarian emergencies, voluntary resettlement and assisted voluntary returns.” The webinar was co-chaired by Alexander Henry Scrymgeour, the Earl of Dundee and Chair of the PACE Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Children and Young People, and Lord Alf Dubs, Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. Featuring a keynote address by Isabel Santos, a former Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and current Member of the EU Parliament, the event aimed to identify best practices for humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants in emergency situations.

OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness participated in the event, which was also addressed by Laura Lungarotti, Chief of Mission and Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Western Balkans, IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Gianluca Rocco, Chief of Mission and Regional Response Coordinator, IOM Greece, who provided detailed information on regional developments. Rein Paulsen, Director for the Coordination Division at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, stressed that nation-

al governments must include refugees and migrants in COVID response plans.

Santos noted that Europe has become home to half of the world’s resettled refugees since 2007 and stressed that the continent has the opportunity in 2021 to start building resettlement programmes. Significant political commitment and strong public messaging are key to promoting resettlement programmes, Santos said, which also require co-operation between national and local governments and the involvement of civil society.

OSCE PA Vice-President and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) said that the situation is desperate in many refugee camps in European countries. She noted that smuggling and cross-border trafficking had flourished during the pandemic and urged a renewed commitment to multilateral approaches to meeting these challenges, including by addressing the drivers of migration. As long as there is conflict and hunger, she said, people will seek a better future for themselves and for their families.

Hedy Fry, a member of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and Head of the Canadian Delegation to the PA, discussed Canada’s approach to voluntary resettlement of refugees. She described Canada’s different tracts for resettlement, including its privately sponsored programme in which families are assisted with finding housing and employment.

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration member Mehmet Sait Kirazoglu spoke about Turkey’s assisted voluntary returns of migrants. As the host of the most refugees and migrants in the world, Turkey is trying to meet the related challenges, he said, including providing education and accommodation. He emphasized that the international community must co-operate to address the issue of irregular migration.

Livestreams this week to focus on OSCE consensus rule and humanitarian impacts of conflicts

The second meeting of the OSCE PA “Call for Action – Helsinki +50 Process” will take place Wednesday at 14:30 (CET) with a discussion on the OSCE’s consensus-based decision-making procedure. On Friday the OSCE PA webinar on “Humanitarian Protection and Human Rights in Conflict Zones” will take place at 15:00-17:00 (CET). Both will be streaming at www.oscepa.org.

ODIHR Director Mecacci meets with OSCE PA’s Swedish Delegation

On Tuesday, the Head of the OSCE PA’s Swedish Delegation, Johan Buser, and Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt, met with ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci. They shared views on the importance of good co-operation between ODIHR and the PA, especially in regards to election observation and strengthening democratic institutions, and the need to continue the work of the two institutions despite the pandemic. Mecacci was accompanied by Meagan Fitzgerald and Peter Mossop from ODIHR, and Therese Svensson from the Swedish Foreign Ministry.



Margareta Cederfelt, Matteo Mecacci and Johan Buser in Stockholm, 9 March

Featured tweets @oscepa

Several OSCE PA women leaders issued video statements to mark International Women’s Day on Monday, including Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada), Vice-President and Rapporteur of the Third Committee Kari Henriksen (Norway), Second Committee Rapporteur Elona Gjebrea Hoxha (Albania), and Special Representative on Eastern Europe Daniela De Ridder (Germany).

The videos are available on the OSCE PA’s YouTube and Twitter pages.



kari henriksen @karhenr · Mar 8

An International Women's Day message from Kari Henriksen youtu.be/9SYea5QrQUY via @YouTube



An International Women's Day message from Kari ...
Kari Henriksen, OSCE PA Vice-President and Rapporteur of the Human Rights Committee, offers...
[youtube.com](https://youtu.com)