

Meeting focuses on prosecution of trafficking of migrants in BiH

In the final meeting of last week's series of online discussions with officials and NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, OSCE PA Vice-President and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey met virtually on 25 March with Gordana Tadic, Chief Prosecutor at the Prosecutor's Office of BiH and the Head of the Strike Force for Combating THB and Illegal Migrations.

Focused on prosecution, the meeting served as an opportunity to hear about the strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in combating trafficking in human beings. Cederfelt noted that the PA has been engaged on migration issues in BiH including human trafficking for the past several months, highlighting the Assembly's readiness to continue to support authorities in strengthening criminal justice systems in relation to human trafficking. Delivering justice for victims starts with prosecuting traffickers, Richey said, which is true in all OSCE countries. Discussion also focused on ensuring that sentences are commensurate with the severity of the crime. Another key topic discussed

was how to improve identification of victims of trafficking amongst the migrant population.

Earlier in the week, Cederfelt and Richey met with interlocutors in Sarajevo including the National anti-trafficking Coordinator and members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Human Rights, as well as representatives of international governmental organizations including the Council of Europe, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, and non-governmental organizations engaged in migration issues.

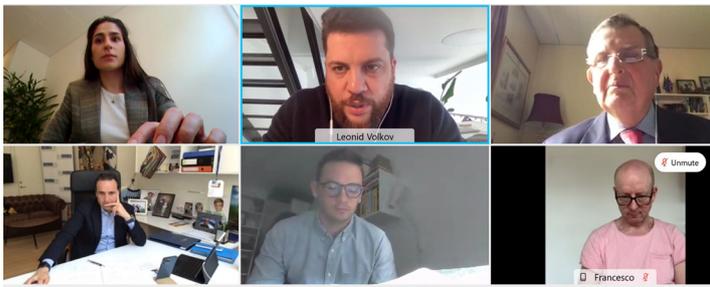
Vice-President Cederfelt discussed the many challenges associated with irregular migration, noting that civil society actors can play a key role in ensuring effective independent monitoring mechanisms to safeguard the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, as well as provide vital assistance to victims of trafficking and other migrants in vulnerable situations. Cederfelt called for special attention to be paid to unaccompanied minors who are at particular risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

The meetings last week were facilitated by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and were intended as preparation for an upcoming field visit.

OSCE PA President sends letter to Foreign Ministers in support of Ukraine SMM

OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) sent a letter Wednesday morning to the Foreign Ministers of OSCE participating States regarding ongoing consultations over the mandate of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Expressing support for the SMM, Bowness urged all OSCE participating States to allow the SMM to carry on with its crucial work. The mandate was subsequently extended.

President and Secretary General meet with Navalny's Chief of Staff



OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness and Secretary General Roberto Montella met online with Leonid Volkov, Chief of Staff of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, on Wednesday. Volkov provided an

update on Navalny's situation, pointing out that he is currently serving in a colony that is known for its harsh conditions. He reported that Navalny's health conditions are deteriorating and speculated that he might be suffering from sleep deprivation. Volkov also reported that preparations are underway for Duma elections in September.

President Bowness thanked Volkov for the update, noting that the PA hopes to observe the Duma elections in September. Secretary General Roberto Montella suggested that discussions continue, including with other leaders of OSCE PA. The SG also stated that PA is ready to provide a platform for dialogue with engagement of the Russian PA Delegation.

OSCE parliamentarians to observe 4 April elections in Bulgaria

Some 45 parliamentarians and staff from 12 OSCE countries will observe the parliamentary elections in Bulgaria on 4 April. Deploying in Sofia and other regions, the OSCE PA observers will work closely with colleagues from the OSCE/ODIHR and PACE. Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) is serving as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers, and Pascal Allizard (France) heads the OSCE PA's team.

On 5 April, observers will deliver their assessment at a press conference in Sofia, which will stream live at www.oscepa.org. The OSCE PA has sent observers to Bulgaria in 1997 and 2013.



Artur Gerasymov



Pascal Allizard