

Migration committee and Greek Minister of migration discuss the government's migration policies

Following its visit to Greece last month, the OSCE PA Migration Committee met online on 6 April with Notis Mitarakis, Greek Minister of Migration and Asylum, to discuss the government's migration policies.

Chair Kristian Vigenin opened the meeting by stressing the useful and informative nature of the Committee's fact-finding visit to Lesbos and Samos on 20-23 March. Emphasis was placed on the evident progress achieved and some shortcomings.

Mitarakis briefed the members about the current policies on reception, accommodation and integration of migrants. He said that Greece pursues strict but fair migration policy in compliance with European standards. He highlighted that safe and dignified reception centers are a priority of the government, which is providing better safety standards and has stopped the policy of protective custody. He praised the HELIOS programme, funded by the European Union and operated by the International Organization for Migration, that supports and promotes the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

Questions were raised by the members of the Committee regarding alleged pushbacks, delays in national registry of NGOs working with refugees, and the prolonged limbo in which rejected



asylum seekers may find themselves in, due to the suspension of returns to Turkey since March 2020.

Mitarakis underlined that the Greek National Transparency Authority found no evidence of pushbacks, and that the EU-Turkey Statement is in place exactly to stop the flow of irregular migration via Turkey to Europe. He specified that lengthy registration processes for NGOs is due to slow bureaucracy. He finally added that while working on bilateral repatriation agreements, the European Union needs to have stronger stance in aligning its commercial policies with increased co-operation regarding the return of irregular migrants.

President Cederfelt visits Kyrgyzstan, hosted by UNDP

Together with a delegation from the Swedish Parliament, President Cederfelt is on an official visit to Kyrgyzstan organized by the United Nation Development Programme. Through meetings with national stakeholders, including government and civil society, the visit is intended for the participants to gain deeper understanding of development challenges in Central Asia, national needs and concerns and to learn about UNDP responses. Member of the Swedish delegation to the OSCE PA Yasmine Posio is also part of the delegation.

Special Representative on Digital Agenda Mihail holds meetings in Copenhagen



On 5 April, Special Representative on Digital Agenda Radu-Mihail Mihail held several meetings in Copenhagen, intended to explore Denmark's digital, cyber and information security strategies and action plans.

At the Danish Parliament, he met with Kasper Roug, Vice-Chair of the Business Committee; Malte Larsen, Deputy Head of the Delegation of Denmark to the OSCE PA; and MPs Orla Hav and Lisbeth Bech-Nielsen. He also held meetings at the Danish Agency for Digitisation with Deputy Director Mette Lind-

strøm Lage and the international team.

The interlocutors highlighted the strategies implemented by the government, local administration and the private sector that have led Denmark to become the most digital country in the EU, according to the European Commission.

Mihail learned about the current challenges for the country related to digital and cyber security, and shared Romania's experience in these fields. Exchanges also touched upon how the COVID-19 has accelerated digitalization and the implications of the pandemic for the future of the digitalization process.

"Denmark's digital transformation continues to be an example for other countries," said Mihail. "The digital solutions and strategies implemented during the pandemic became for Denmark another opportunity to show us the potential of a digitally transformed world." He added: "Digitalization is unavoidable. However, threats brought by a more digital world should not be underestimated. I am looking forward to continuing co-operating with the PA delegations to increase information exchange and awareness in the field of cybersecurity in OSCE participating States."

Upcoming conference on combating corruption on 27-28 May in Cyprus

Preparations are ongoing for the OSCE PA Conference themed "Combating Corruption, Defending Democracy: The Role of National Parliaments", hosted by the House of Representatives of Cyprus on 27-28 May 2022 in Nicosia.

The conference will be opened by Annita Demetriou, The President of the Cyprus House of Representatives; Margareta Cederfelt, OSCE PA President; Ioannis Kasoulides, The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus; Irene Charalambides, OSCE PA Vice-President, Special Representative of the OSCE PA on Combating Corruption; and Ambassador Artur Dmochowski, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

The sessions of the conference will focus on the role of nation-

al parliaments in preventing and fighting corruption, key policies to foster transparency and accountability, and the contribution of media and independent institutions against corruption.

The sessions will feature high-level speakers, including Anita Ramasastry, OSCE, CiO Special Representative for Combating Corruption; Hanne Juncher, GRECO Executive Secretary; Brigitte Strobel-Shaw, UNODC, Chief of the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch; Roby Senderowitsch, World Bank; Drew Sullivan, OCCRP; Franz Wild, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism's Enablers Project; and Jon Vrushi, Transparency International.

The deadline for the registration of OSCE PA Members is Wednesday, 20 April 2022.