

## High-level visit to Italy highlights need to support migration management efforts



Members of the OSCE PA delegation in Rome, 6 March 2024



Pia Kauma and Lorenzo Fontana in Rome, 6 March 2024

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland), OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Chair Daniela De Ridder (Germany) and Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime Eugenio Zoffili (Italy) are leading a delegation on a visit to Italy this week. In addition to Kauma, De Ridder and Zoffili, members of the delegation include Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Vice-Chairs Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), Farah Karimi (Netherlands), and Gudrun Kugler (Austria), as well as committee members Alessandro Alfieri (Italy), Kristian Klinck (Germany), Malik Ben Achour (Belgium), Kemal Çelik (Türkiye), and Fabrizio Comba (Italy).

Today the delegation is in Rome and tomorrow it will visit the island of Lampedusa, which accounts for about 70 per cent of all arrivals on Italian soil last year due to its proximity to North Africa. The purpose of the visit is to witness first-hand the challenges faced by Italy in dealing with irregular migration, with the Central Mediterranean route once again the most active route for migrants entering the European Union. One of the main focuses of the visit is understanding how organized crim-

inal networks exploit mixed-migrations flows to traffic human beings and smuggle migrants across borders. Members have also discussed drivers of migration such as war and climate change.

The delegation held meetings today at the Ministry of Interior, where they were briefed by governmental representatives, including officials working on terrorism, border control, and organized crime. In discussions, it was emphasized that migration is a global phenomenon that needs to be managed jointly. Efforts of Italy and the EU to address irregular migration are beginning to bear fruit, interlocutors said, with irregular arrivals so far from Tunisia and Libya down this year. Meeting with law enforcement officials, the OSCE PA delegation learned about the techniques that criminal networks use to evade detection, as well as the internal operations of these networks.

While in Rome, President Kauma held a bilateral meeting with Lorenzo Fontana, President of the Chamber of Deputies, in which the sides discussed a range of issues, including the prospects of Italy hosting the 2026 Annual Session.

## Following up on Winter Meeting, President Kauma offers ideas for strengthening PA's toolbox

In a letter distributed to Members of the OSCE PA Standing Committee on Tuesday, OSCE PA President Pia Kauma expressed gratitude for parliamentarians' contributions to the 23rd Winter Meeting held in Vienna last month and outlined a number of proposals to ensure the Assembly's financial and organizational health going forward. She welcomed the positive outcomes of the Integrated-Financial-Professional-Business-Audit that was presented to the Standing Committee in Vienna, and confirmed that the Assembly's toolbox – including its Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives – should be preserved and strengthened.

She offered a number of ideas toward this end, including ways to further increase efficiencies and provide more clarity on which

thematic and regional dossiers to prioritize. Preserving election observation as a flagship activity of the Assembly is essential, she said, as is upholding co-operation with the PA's partners in election observation.

Also important, she said, is to introduce more effective contingency and strategic planning, and empowering the Secretary General to increase fundraising activities and explore voluntary contributions from member parliaments. It is equally important, she said, to support the prerogative of the Secretary General to efficiently manage the International Secretariat, considering responsibilities of duty of care towards staff.

The letter to Standing Committee members is available on the OSCE PA's website: <https://bit.ly/3V6AZXk>

## OSCE PA Second Committee team meets with counterparts from the OSCE Chairpersonship



Marco Bonabello, Giulia Buhagiar, Andreas Grötschnig, Daria Boyarskaya and Marita Lagidze in Vienna, 1 March

On 1 March, staff members from the OSCE PA's Second Committee met in Vienna with the Maltese OSCE Chairpersonship's economic and environmental dimension team to exchange information regarding future goals and upcoming activities and explore synergies in the co-ordination to achieve common goals.

The Chairpersonship team shared the agenda and plans regarding upcoming events, notably the three meetings of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, and the High-Level Conference on Climate Change taking place in Malta in June.

Reflecting on the previous year's participation by President Kauma, there was a warm welcome for the OSCE PA to join once again.

The OSCE PA team provided an overview of its organizational structure and mission, and expressed readiness to actively participate in Chairpersonship activities. The Chairpersonship was informed about the upcoming visit of Second Committee Chair Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) to Vienna on 18 March and the CiO expressed willingness to meet him and exchange ideas. The OSCE PA demonstrated interest in COP29 and the High-Level Conference on Climate Change, and expressed eagerness to actively engage and contribute to it through its Special Representative on Climate Change, Pere Joan Pons (Spain).

Both teams affirmed their dedication to collaborative efforts, emphasizing active participation and engagement in the OSCE PA's in the Chairpersonship's initiatives.