



Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting its participation at the Autumn Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

**Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)**

**Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
September 29 to October 3, 2016**

Report

From 29 September to 3 October 2016, a delegation of five Canadian parliamentarians attended the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA) Autumn Meeting in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. led the delegation. Dr. Fry is also the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Gender Issues, a position she has held since 2010. The Canadian delegation also included, from the Senate, the Honourable Senators Donald Plett and Vernon White and, from the House of Commons, Mr. Luc Berthold, M.P., and Ms. Christine Moore, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Melissa Radford, Advisor, and Ms. Josée Thérien, Delegation Secretary.

2016 Autumn Meeting

Over four days, parliamentarians from across the OSCE area, together with representatives of the "Partners for Cooperation" states met in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for the 2016 Autumn Meeting. The program began with a meeting of the Mediterranean Forum which debates specific issues affecting the Mediterranean region and includes an opportunity for the Heads of the Parliamentary Delegations from the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia) and the Palestinian Legislative Council to address the OSCE PA.

Over the next three days, the OSCE PA held a Parliamentary conference on the topic of "Strengthening Confidence-Building Measures and Good Governance in the OSCE Region." However, the discussion was largely dominated by the refugee and migrant crisis – an enduring and grave concern for the majority of countries within the OSCE region.

Finally, the Head of the Canadian Delegation, the Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., attended both a working lunch meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration as well as a meeting of the OSCE PA Standing Committee.¹

A. Mediterranean Forum

The Mediterranean Forum addressed the promotion of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region. The meeting was opened by OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs Michel Voisin, M.P. (France), who expressed his concerns regarding the effects of regional instability, particularly in Libya, Gaza, Iraq and Syria, which has made the situation unbearable not only for victims of the conflict but also for neighbouring countries that bear the brunt of the resulting refugee crisis such as Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. He also reminded participants that the conflict in Syria poses a direct security threat to the OSCE region and committed to continue raising this issue at

¹ The Standing Committee is made up of all heads of delegation, as well as Bureau members (similar to a board of directors).

future OSCE meetings in addition to regularly updating the OSCE on the discussions and debates held by the OSCE PA on this topic.

The next presentation was given by Ambassador Clemens Koja (Austria), the Chairman of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Austria has chosen to use its chairmanship of the Contact Group to promote dialogue and inclusivity to combat radicalization with a particular focus on youth. He gave delegates an update on the work and activities of the Contact Group.

Next, Mr. Antonijo Miloshoski, Vice-President of the host parliament and Chair of its Foreign Affairs Committee, addressed the delegates. He discussed the challenges encountered by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a transit country for Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi refugees on route to the European Union (EU). He expressed frustration at the EU's inability or lack of political will to address the refugee/migrant crisis coherently and with a single voice. In his opinion, this has resulted in mixed advice towards his government on how to manage the refugee flows. He reminded delegates that his country hosted 330,000 Kosovar refugees during the war in 1999. At the time, this amounted to 18% of the country's population. Given that the Balkan corridor will remain a popular route for refugees and migrants heading to Europe, Mr. Mihoshoski urged affected countries to develop a mutual strategy through the EU and OSCE to address the challenge.

The final presentation was given by Ms. Malin Larsson-Grave from the EU's European Asylum Support Office (EASO). She explained that EASO is part of the effort to cultivate a single EU voice on the refugee issue. For instance, it is assisting the EU in reforming its legislation to develop a common European asylum system. Set up in 2010, EASO has also been supporting EU member states to fulfill their obligations in providing protection to refugees and migrants, such as through practical, technical and operational support. At the moment, much of this support is going to Greece and Italy, with a particular focus on implementing relocation schemes in close cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). She urged more EU states to resettle refugees.

During the discussion period, parliamentarians offered comments and asked questions regarding the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis, conflicts in the Mediterranean region, and the threat of violent extremism and radicalization.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

The Mediterranean Forum was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., addressed additional root causes of migration such as poverty and climate change. She argued that economic development is a crucial tool in countering instability, food insecurity and civil war, which, if left unaddressed, will only exacerbate refugee/migrant flows and result in heightened security concerns. With respect to the current refugee/migrant crisis, she echoed the views of other delegates in stating that it is time to take action, arguing that it is often easy for parliamentarians to go home after these discussions and become preoccupied with national issues. She noted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's role in co-chairing the round table on the international response to the Syrian refugee crisis at the United

Nations and that Canada stands ready to assist other countries in learning about Canada's resettlement process, particularly its private sponsorship programme.

Mr. Luc Berthold, M.P., intervened to speak about combatting intolerance and religious tension through inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue. He highlighted the efforts of religious leaders in his community who meet regularly to discuss the root causes of intolerance with a view to breaking down barriers, dispelling stereotypes and promoting religious liberty.

The Honourable Senator Vernon White, also intervened during the debate to stress the importance of parliamentary cooperation to address violent extremism and radicalisation, particularly as it pertains to youth.

B. Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., represents the Canadian delegation on the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. At the meeting, Mr. Claude Wild, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE and Chair of the OSCE Informal Working Group on Migration and Refugee Flows, presented his "Reference Document" to the delegates for discussion. The aim of the document is to provide the OSCE with political, institutional and technical recommendations on how it can - and perhaps should - address the governance of migrant and refugee flows with greater priority and efficiency.

Along with other like-minded nations, Canada has a standing policy of zero nominal growth for the OSCE budget which prevents the OSCE from undertaking new initiatives and activities. This issue was raised as an impediment to the OSCE's ability to create a task force or special representative position to address the refugee and migrant challenge. The Government of Canada took this position to encourage the OSCE to enable its member-states to prioritize its programmes. This would include terminating obsolete programmes and reallocating that funding to new projects before injecting more money into the organization.

The Committee also discussed the cancellation of planned field visits to refugee camps in Greece due to security concerns. Despite this setback, the Committee remains committed to submitting a draft report to the OSCE PA at the Vienna meeting in February 2017 on its key findings from its field visits to Italy and Turkey, and its upcoming meetings with international actors in Geneva and/or Brussels. In a letter submitted to the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland), prior to the Autumn Meeting, **the Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.**, stressed the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into the report. She received assurances from the Chair that gender perspectives will be addressed in the report.

C. Session 1: Good Governance as a Basis for Fostering Economic Development in the OSCE Region

Following welcoming remarks from Mr. Trajko Veljanoski and Ms. Renata Deskoska, President and Vice-President of the Assembly of the Former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia, and from Ms. Christine Muttonen (Austria), President of the OSCE PA, delegates heard from two speakers.

The OSCE Economic and Environmental Coordinator, Mr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden, provided the delegates with an update on the work of his office to foster good governance. For instance, one of his priorities includes combatting corruption, money-laundering and terrorist financing. To that effect, his office created an OSCE handbook on combatting corruption which can be used for capacity building and as a tool for practitioners in the OSCE area. With respect to the refugee/migrant issue, he argued for enhanced “migration governance” within Europe. This would include a coherent and long-term response for refugee and migrant flows, as well as programmes to facilitate integration and a strategy to use migration as a resource for the labour market.

The next speaker was Mr. Vladimir Gligorov, Professor with the Vienna Institute for International Economics Studies. He agreed with the previous speaker’s argument stating that evidence has shown how migration is conducive to economic development. He lamented that unfortunately, this fact is not resonating with policy-makers. He further argued that policy-makers in Europe have failed to respond to labour market conditions, which has also left many countries in the region struggling with high unemployment. With respect to good governance, he argued that it is not just an issue of combatting corruption and ensuring accountability but also of legitimacy and the fundamental acceptance of government by the citizenry. He argued that many European governments, and the European Union itself, are going through crises of legitimacy.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

This session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., spoke of the Canadian tradition of peace, order and good government. She described good government as one that is legitimate and democratic, through free and fair elections. Transparency and accountability through efficient and effective use of public funds, with strong regulation and legislation that ensures accountability, are also all foundations of good government. She emphasised that a good government fosters human potential domestically and internationally by ensuring the human rights of its entire people, not just its citizens, and by being a good global citizen and sharing responsibility for helping the world’s most vulnerable people.

Ms. Christine Moore, M.P., outlined the economic consequences of gender inequality and explained many of the difficult choices women have to make when it comes to personal and professional decisions. She then highlighted the economic benefits that arise when governments invest in their full human potential. She urged parliamentarians to hold their governments to account and push for greater gender equality by scrutinizing legislation through a gendered lens and through community outreach.

D. Session 2: Developing Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in South East Europe

This session provided a forum for the Heads and Representatives of the OSCE Field Missions in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina,

Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia to update delegates on their work, including the challenges they have encountered and successes achieved.

Delegates also heard from Mr. Nikola Poposki, Foreign Minister of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who noted that developing and promoting democracy and human rights is a continuous process with frequent challenges. He urged for persistence in continuing down this path for both his country and the region. He explained that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has greatly benefitted from the best practices and recommendations provided by OSCE instruments in developing democratic institutions and human rights.

Following the presentations, the delegates were invited to comment and ask questions.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

This session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., asked each of the speakers to elaborate on how they are mainstreaming UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security throughout the programming and activities conducted by their field missions.

E. OSCE PA Standing Committee

The Standing Committee began with opening remarks from Ms. Christine Muttonen (Austria), President of the OSCE PA.

Next, the Secretary General of the OSCE PA, Mr. Roberto Montella (Italy), presented his report to the Standing Committee. He outlined the progress made on a number of his priorities including internal reform within the Secretariat, as well as external outreach to the OSCE and its agencies as well as other parliamentary assemblies. Mr. Montella also updated the Standing Committee on his activities and those of the OSCE PA's leadership since July 2016, and discussed upcoming events.

Delegates next received an update from the OSCE PA's Treasurer, Ms. Doris Barnett (Germany), regarding the work she is doing with Mr. Montella on the modernization of the OSCE PA's financial management and budget structure.

Finally, the Standing Committee heard from the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, Mr. Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland) who updated delegates on his Committee's activities, as described earlier in this report.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., represented the Canadian delegation at the Standing Committee meeting. She informed the other members of the Standing Committee that she had sent a letter to the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration stressing that gender perspectives must be incorporated into their upcoming Committee report.

F. Session 3: Improving Human Rights Based Governance of International Migration

Delegates heard from Mr. Oliver Spasovski, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who offered insights on how his country is handling the refugee/migrant crisis. The so-called “Balkan route” is one of the major transit routes for refugees and migrants heading to Europe. He argued that the OSCE has an extremely important role to play in developing a coordinated approach to address this crisis both at the operational and legislative level.

Delegates then heard from Mr. Gianluca Rocco, Western Balkans Coordinator at the International Organization for Migration. He addressed three challenges related to the refugee/migrant crisis: the current toxic migration narrative and the need to ensure that discussions remain balanced and historically accurate; the need for governments to focus on integration; and lastly, the challenge of coping with the humanitarian disaster. He noted that the number of international migrants rose over 40% in the last 15 years and underscored that migration is a human reality that needs to be managed. He praised the UN’s recent New York Declaration for Refugee and Migrants which showed that the world can unite to address global challenges. Lastly, he urged parliamentarians to change the tone and content of the debate and to promote dialogue and greater cooperation.

Finally, delegates heard from the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, Mr. Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland) who updated them on his Committee’s activities. He noted that gender perspectives will be addressed in the upcoming Committee’s report and thanked **the Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.**, for highlighting to him the importance of including the experiences of women and girls caught in this crisis as part of the Committee’s research, conclusions and possible recommendations.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., took the opportunity to thank the host parliament and Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for their warm welcome. She also thanked Mr. Lombardi, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, for acknowledging the need to include the specific vulnerabilities of woman and girl refugees and migrants in the Committee’s study and subsequent report. She then focussed her remarks on Canada’s own experience with refugees, notably the Vietnamese “boat people” who fled to Canada’s shores during the Vietnam War. In response, the Canadian government at the time created legislation to take in these refugees and also developed Canada’s private sponsorship programme for refugees. The programme was a popular tool in the recent resettlement of 26,000 Syrian refugees to Canada in 2015-2016 and remains key to ensuring the full integration of refugees into Canadian society. She noted that research has shown that the Vietnamese refugees and their descendants have, through their achievements, made Canada a better place. Finally, she noted that Canada’s ongoing commitment to sharing the global responsibility for the migrant crisis was also demonstrated through Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s role in co-chairing the round table on the international response to the Syrian refugee crisis at the United Nations in September 2016.

Mr. Luc Berthold, M.P., took the opportunity to thank the staff of the OSCE PA for all their work in organizing the Autumn Meeting and also thanked the host parliament of the

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for its hospitality. His remarks then focussed on combatting intolerance particular towards refugees and migrants whose goal is to create a better life for themselves and their families. He urged parliamentarians to not fall into what he described as the “populist trap” which only serves to isolate and increases the risk of radicalization and extremism. He further underlined that parliamentarians must address poverty, corruption, frustration, and discrimination in all its forms by making contributions within their legislatures and in their communities. He pressed his fellow parliamentarians to contribute to the debate in multiple forums, and use their voices to promote tolerance and inclusiveness to prevent marginalisation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.

Director

Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation
in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
(OSCE PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
ACTIVITY	Autumn Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
DESTINATION	Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
DATES	September 29 to October 3, 2016
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Donald Plett, Senator Hon. Vernon White, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. Mr. Luc Berthold, M.P. Ms. Christine Moore, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Josée Thérien, Secretary to the delegation Ms. Melissa Radford, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 48,732.06
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 8,572.20
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00

PER DIEMS \$ 1,960.90

MISCELLANEOUS \$ 0.00

TOTAL \$ 59,265.16