

## WEEKLY UPDATE

21 - 25 March 2016

Week 13



**Neil Campbell** @ncjcampbell · Mar 22

@CostHermanin @osfEUpolicy @marta2twitt all OSEPI are OK.

### General

We would like to thank all our colleagues for the heartfelt messages we received after the attacks in Brussels on 22 March. It is wonderful to know that we have a whole network of support. It is odd to return to business as usual, but then again, our business is to ensure that open society values are at the heart of EU action. Therefore, to cite Neil: “As we return to work we will be more committed than ever to the promotion and protection of our open societies.”

### Updates (21 - 25 March)

#### • Internal Policy

21-22 March: Villy travelled to Bulgaria to meet with Daniela Mihailova, the consultant we commissioned to produce a report and legal analysis to support a possible infringement procedure of the EU anti-discrimination law in the area of housing of Roma in Bulgaria. Villy also met with representatives from the American embassy and a number of NGOs recommended by RIO who are supportive of the launch of an infringement procedure against Bulgaria.

23-25 March: Villy went to Italy to understand the context of Roma camps and meet NGOs working on Roma. Villy was accompanied by colleagues from OSIFE, RIO and OSJI. After the trip we will organise a follow-up debrief call to decide on next steps for OSF in terms of litigation, grants and advocacy in Italy.

#### • External Policy

21 March: Srdjan and Loica participated in the EU Global Strategy 2016 Outreach and Consultation Event on “Migration and Human Security” in Ljubljana, which we co-organised with EUISS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Bled Strategic Forum and the Centre for European Perspective. Nikola Dimitrov from The Hague Institute for Global Justice and Srdjan presented a draft policy brief on the refugee crisis in the Western Balkans they co-authored with Natasha Wunsch.

The same day Pamela attended two committee meetings of the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly:

- EuroNest Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy - The discussion focused on issues of migration, mobility and visas. The European Commission continues to assess Ukraine's implementation of its outstanding commitments under the visa-free dialogue with the EU and expects to issue its recommendation to the Council in April. Migration to Russia in 2015 remained higher than migration to the EU for all Eastern Partnership countries except Moldova. Armenian MPs urged the European Commission to launch an EU-Armenia visa dialogue by the end of the year and offer Yerevan a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan in 2017.

- EuroNest Committee on Energy Security - the Directorate-General for Energy presented a proposal for a new regulation on security of gas supply, introducing a solidarity principle and a shift from a national to a regional approach when designing security of supply measures. The new law provides for reinforced cooperation in the energy community through risk assessments, and prevention and emergency response plans in cases of supply crises.

- **Organisational activities**

21-23 March: Pearly went to Budapest to meet colleagues from the finance team and to attend a workshop on accounting and audit preparation together with colleagues from OSISA, OSIWA, OSIEA and Ukraine. The training mainly included refresher sessions and practical workshops on OSF's accounting and reporting policies, budget and finance.

23 March: Neil organised a network call to share information on the security situation in Brussels and get reactions from OSF colleagues. It was great to interact with OSIFE, HRI, OSPC DC, Mary Cadagin and other colleagues. We discussed communication within the network in moments of crises and OSF and grantee security. Follow-up will include OSF's broader response to the Brussels attacks and how our counterterrorism approach after the Paris attacks could be adjusted.

## Media Update

Neil managed to capture how we all feel about the Brussel's attacks on March 22 in the blog: [Brussel's Response to Attacks Under Scrutiny](#).

Our former colleague, Israel Butler (currently advocacy consultant to the European Liberties Platform) was quoted in an article in Politico on March 23: [Maybe the Time has Come to Change](#), which reflects on the Brussels attacks and how they force Europeans to consider a new consensus on stronger joint counterterrorism efforts.

*As always we encourage you to share your feedback with [ellen.mulder@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:ellen.mulder@opensocietyfoundations.org).*