



## FAROE Annual Conference 2016

### The 2015 wave of Afghan Refugees and the Crisis in the European Asylum System

September 17, 2016

Statens museer för världskultur (Museum of World Culture)

Södra Vägen 54, 402 27 Göteborg, Sweden

**Introduction:** The Federation of Afghan Refugee Organizations in Europe (FAROE) is planning to hold its 2016 annual conference on September 17, 2016 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The focus of this year's conference will be the 2015 wave of Afghan refugees and crisis in the European asylum system. FAROE cares about the refugee situation taking shape in Europe because 35% of the refugees coming to Sweden have been Afghans. As a federation of Afghan organizations, FAROE is concerned about the way Afghan refugees have been received and their asylum cases have been handled. As a European entity, FAROE is alarmed by the problems emanating from the current crisis in the European asylum system. Thus, The conference will discuss and analyze the issue of Afghan refugees and explore opportunities for a way out of current crisis in the European asylum system.

**Conference Rationale:** Since the end of the 2014, Europe has faced a new wave of refugees coming from Middle East, South Africa and South Asia. These include thousands of Afghan refugees who primarily choose the route through Greece or Russia to reach Europe. This is while the European Asylum System lacks the capacity to offer an efficient and effective response to address this situation. By October of 2015, the European Asylum System went into deep crisis, while the numbers of refugees illegally crossing into Europe continued to grow.

According to the statements of the German Ministry of Interior, 1/3 of the refugees comprised of Afghans asylum seekers, who were categorized as economic migrants and thus were did not considered deserving of the right to seek asylum in Europe. While the reality of the situation is that tends of thousands of Afghan refugees are stranded in Germany, Sweden and other European countries and whose conditions are in need of urgent attention.

So far, unfortunately, the European response to this situation has not rendered any positive results because it is based on a one sided analysis of the situation, and an utter ignorance of the needs and requirements of Afghan refugees.

What we need at this stage is a comprehensive understanding of the situation, which takes cognizance of the perspectives of Afghan refugees and their rights and needs as well as the perspective of the European nations and people, and their valid concerns. For this understanding to develop, we need to have Afghan-European platforms for exchange of views, consultation and dialogue on the refugee crisis. FAROE proposes to facilitate one such platform for dialogue and with the aim of building a comprehensive understanding of the situation at its 2016 annual conference, scheduled for Sep 17, 2016 at Gothenburg, Sweden.

**Conference Goal:** To contribute towards a fair, systematic and humanitarian resolution of the refugee crisis in Europe by offering a platform for improved understanding of the situation of Afghan refugee and the challenges faced by the European asylum system

**Conference Objectives:** 1) To build clarity on the conditions, role, rights and problems of Afghan refugees, 2) Building clarity on the key drivers of migration in Afghanistan and the incentives and deterrents involved, 3) To review the existing capacity and response of the European Asylum System with the aim to identify opportunities for improvement, 4) To counter prevalent negative perception



of Afghan refugees, and 5) To build consensus on the most effective and constructive mobilization and utilization of resources of the Afghan diaspora towards a solution

**Conference Participants:** In addition to Afghan government officials and members of the European Parliament, representatives of FAROE's member organizations from across Europe, US and Canada, civil society and research organizations from Afghanistan and senior journalists and analysts will participate at the event.

**Conference Format (Tentative Agenda):** To allow for a rich but focused discussion, the conference will have two panels, as described below:

09:30 -10:00	Arrival of participants and registration
10:00-10:20	<b>Inaugural Session</b> Introduktion of program-Mr. Dr. Wais Djallazada.Representative of FAROE,SWEDEN Opening Remarks – Mrs Najla Wassie, Chairperson, FAROE
10:20-12:30	<b>First Panel – The Afghan Refugees Situation: Driving Factors, Incentives and Deterrents</b>  <b>Panelists:</b> - Mr. Ing. Aziz Rafiee, Director Afghanistan Civil Society Forum (Afghanistan) - Mr. Dr. Daud Ali Najafi. Chairperson of Afghanistan Organisation for Human Rights and Peace (AOHRP), former Chief Election Officer of the IEC and Former Afghan Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation (Afghanistan) - Mrs. Dr. Soraya Sobhrang. Commissioner, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (Afghanistan) - Mr. Dr. Bengt Kristiansson. Vice Chairman of the Swedish Committee forAfghanistan - Mr.Professor Thordy Besmalahi Maimanagi. Chairman of the Solidarity with the National Front Alliance (Denmark)  <b>Moderator/Chair:</b> Ms. Dr. Orzala Nemat. Expert i political ethnography, Senier Teaching Fellow at SOAS i London (UK) <i>Followed by interactive discussion with participants</i>
Break : (11:20-11:30)	
12:30-13:30	Lunch Break - Informal discussions and network building
13:30-15:45	<b>Second Panel – The European Response: a) The Dynamics of the European Asylum System Crisis, b) The Social Response and the Role of Afghan Diaspora, c) The Political Position and d) The Economic Pressure</b>  <b>Panelists:</b> - Mr. Kristian Berg Harpviken, Director PRIO-Norway - Mr. Hans Linde, Member of the Swedish Parliament, Member National Board of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan - Ms. Professor Elisabeth Eide. Vice President at Norwegian Pen, professor at Oslo And Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (NORWAY) - Ms. Madelaine Seidlits or another Representative of Amnesty International in Sweden (TBC)  <b>Moderator/Chair:</b> Mrs. Lotta Hedström, Former Parliamentarian and party leader/ spokesperson for the Swedish Green Party, Former member and Chairperson of Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, <i>Followed by interactive discussion with participants</i>
Break: (14:30-14:45)	
16:00-17:00	<b>Concluding Session</b> -Ms Dr. Orzala, Presentation of the key conclusions and recommendations of first panel



-Mrs. Lotta Hedström. Presentation of the key conclusions and recommendations of the second panel
Closing Remarks - Professor Elisabeth Eide and Mr. Ratib Faqiri vice Chairman of FAROE

**Conference Content:** The topics to be covered include: 1) the driving factors, incentives and deterrents of the new wave of Afghan refugees from the Afghan perspective, 2) the dynamics of the European response as reflected in a) the dynamics –both challenges and opportunities-- of the European asylum system, b) the social response and the role of the Afghan diaspora, c) the political consensus on how to deal with the situation of refugees in Europe, d) the economic pressure created as a result of the wave of refugees and ways of addressing it.

**Conference Speakers:** Numerous Afghan and European experts will address this one-day conference. A tentative list of speakers is given in the table below:

Name	Title	Content
Mr. Aziz Rafiee	Director, Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF)	Findings of research on the Afghan refugee situation and the factors contributing to this new wave of refugees leaving Afghanistan for Europe.
Mr. Kristian Berg Harpviken,	Director PRIO-Norway	Afghanistan's Vicious Cycle of Conflict and Migration
Mr. Hans Linde,	Member of the Swedish Parliament, Member National Board of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan	How can the EU defend the right of asylum and promote Peace in Afghanistan?
Mr./Mrs ?	Member of the EU-Parliament (TBC)	
Dr. Daud Ali Najafi	Chairperson of Afghanistan Organisation for Human Rights and Peace (AOHRP), former Chief Election Officer of the IEC and Former Afghan Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation	Factors behind the youths Fleeing from Afghanistan
Dr. Suraya Subhrang	Commissioner, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission	Factors Driving the Migrant Wave from Afghanistan
Mrs. Lotta Hedström	Former Parliamentarian and party leader/spokesperson for the Swedish Green Party, Former member and Chairperson of Swedish Committee for Afghanistan	Why the Afghan youth are so important to Sweden?
Professor Thordy Besmalahi Maimanagi	Chairman of the Solidarity - National Front Alliance (Denmark)	Economic and Political Factors Driving the Migrant Wave from Afghanistan
Mr.Dr. Bengt Kristiansson	Vice Chairman of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)	Factors Driving the Migrant Wave from Afghanistan
Professor Elisabeth Eide	Vice President at Norwegian Pen, professor at Oslo And Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (NORWAY)	Media representation of Afghan refugees - from justified asylum seekers to 'baseless' migrants?
Ms. Dr. Orzala Nemat	Expert i political ethnographi, Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS i London (UK)	
Ms. Madeleine Seidlitz/ or another representative	Representative of Amnesty International in Sweden (TBC)	International standards of refugee law and application in full of the Geneva Convention on Refugees



**Expected Outcomes:** 1) Improved understanding of the issue of Afghan refugees and the crisis of the European Asylum System, 2) Improved understanding of the needs of the Afghan refugees and means of addressing them, 3) Improved understanding of the resources of the Afghan diaspora and most effective ways of utilizing them

**Expected Outputs:** 1) Online collection of conference presentations for future reference, 2) Concrete set of conclusions and recommendations offering orientation for future follow up action by public and civil society organizations in Europe and Afghanistan

**About FAROE:** Established in 1999, FAROE is the coordinating body of 53 Afghan social-cultural associations in Europe, USA and Canada. In addition to annual conferences, FAROE organizes seminars on issues of significance in the lives of the people of Afghanistan and the Afghan diaspora in Europe. For more on FAROE please see our website at: [www.afghandiaspora.org](http://www.afghandiaspora.org)

**Contact:** On behalf of Mrs. N. Wassie, chairperson of FAROE, Dr Djallalzada Wais, representative of FAROE in Sweden, Email: [djallalzada.wais@hotmail.com](mailto:djallalzada.wais@hotmail.com), Tel: +46 708453431