

**AWEPA International Parliamentary Seminar  
on  
“Peace Security and Sustainable Development”  
Belgian Senate  
8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.**



**Mr. Theodossis Georgiou**, President of the Greek Association for Atlantic and European Cooperation and Member of the Governing Council of AWEPA from Greece attended the AWEPA International Parliamentary Seminar on “Peace Security and Sustainable Development” in the Belgian Senate , on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

Mr. Theodossis Georgiou is one of the longest-standing Members of AWEPA, since 1988. Mr Georgiou became a Member since the first visit of the Leadership of AWEPA in 1988. He has participated in most of the Conferences of AWEPA in Africa and Europe, under various roles, mainly as Speaker, as Coordinator of the Hellenic Delegations and as Participant, starting from the historic conference in Zambia and Zimbabwe 1988.

The theme for the high level seminar was chosen in light of growing international attention to the role of peace and security in the post-2015 development agenda.

Parliamentarians have a key role to play in developing policy and legal frameworks that tackle both the complex root causes and the multiple consequences of violent extremism. International dialogue and cooperation is needed to reach this goal, particularly at the regional and global level, as the threat of terrorism is rarely local. While the best prevention of terrorism in Africa may be sustainable and equitable development, through their core functions of legislation, oversight and representation, parliamentarians are central to the development, review and amendment of anti-terrorism and anti-radicalisation legislation.



The seminar specifically explored the on-going African and European national and regional parliamentary initiatives and strategies to combat violent extremism and terrorism. Examples included parliamentary initiatives that focus on what teachers and religious schools can do to prevent young people from being radicalised; initiatives that deal with the particular impact of violent extremism on women

as well as initiatives to increase dialogue and information exchange between States at the regional or continental level.

Participants discussed best practices in Europe and Africa, including regional responses and cooperation with a special emphasis on initiatives taken by Regional Parliamentary Bodies in Africa, with the objectives to:

- inform African and European MPs on the latest trends in parliamentary initiatives in both Africa and Europe on violent extremism and terrorism;
- raise awareness among MPs of the nexus between security and sustainable development as we transition from the [MDGs](#) to the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#);
- build knowledge on of current policy initiatives on violent extremism in Africa and Europe at the national, regional and continental levels;
- stimulate debate and reflection on how national, regional and continental parliaments in Africa and Europe can strengthen their role in achieving lasting peace and security.

The International Parliamentary Seminar brought together African MPs from national parliaments, from Regional Parliamentary Bodies and the PAP, MPs of several European parliaments as well as the European Parliament, members of AWEPA, African parliamentary staff, representatives of the European Commission, international organizations, NGOs, academics, and other participants.

A number of side-meetings took place around the same time in Brussels. These included:

- AWEPA's Executive Committee meeting
- AWEPA's Partnership Council meeting
- The MDG Programme Steering Committee meeting
- AWEPA's Governing Council meeting

**Mr. Theodossis Georgiou's** intervention was on the major migration issues Greece and Europe are facing at the moment. Mr. Georgiou underlined the importance in pursuing foreign policy that will help resolve conflicts in the countries creating massive flows of refugees. In this context, he stressed, the United Nations and the global community must intensify their efforts to help resolve the conflicts in Syria and Libya and face radical Islam, using diplomatic solutions to include all major parties in the area. The UN Commissioner for Refugees must be supported and a generous and strong mechanism of resettlement for refugees from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan must be founded. Finally, neighbours of Syria should be supported to accept more migrants, in order to help break up human trafficking rings, among other things.



Furthermore, Mr Georgiou talked about the economic challenges that we face that cannot be addressed simply by setting goals. He pointed out that we need a global financial and economic system oriented to fostering national growth strategies and our post 2015 development agenda. Finally, he emphasised the need to discuss the issue of debt restructuring in all competent forums in connection to developing growth and not austerity.

At the end of the seminar all participants adopted the final declaration that puts forward the shared expectations and a series of recommendations that parliamentarians can pursue in their respective countries and regions to tackle the root causes and consequences of terrorism and violent extremism in order to support the attainment of peace, security, and sustainable development.