

Website message

## **Vienna visit of Dr. Najeb Yosufi, Adviser on the situation of Afghan refugees in Europe to the Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah**

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The Embassy of Afghanistan in Vienna has intensified its cooperation with Austrian government bodies in addressing a broad range of issues related to the situation of Afghan citizens in Austria. As it constitutes a main function of diplomatic and other foreign representations to protect the rights and interests of its citizens abroad, the Embassy treats this matter as a priority. In doing so, the Embassy provides information to its citizens and raises awareness concerning Austrian laws and customs. Furthermore, the Embassy proactively engages with Austrian counterparts, with representatives from Afghan associations in Austria and similar stakeholders in an attempt to significantly improve the current situation.

In this context, The Embassy hosted last week a reception for Dr. Najeb Yosufi, Adviser to Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah on the situation of Afghan refugees in Europe, providing an opportunity for him to exchange views and engage in fruitful deliberations with around 20 representatives from different Afghan associations in Austria. Ambassador Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel emphasized in her speech, addressing her guests at the Embassy, the fact that the situation of Afghan refugees in Austria remains a priority on the Embassy's agenda and that the Embassy's responsibility towards all Afghan citizens in Austria is anchored on top of the list of key issues on the Embassy's Strategic Action Plan for the coming years.

Ambassador Ebrahimkhel also underscored the necessity of heeding humanitarian aspects in discussions on migrants and refugees, in line with existing international conventions. Here, she made a reference to the respective cooperation between the Embassy and Austrian government bodies, also against the background of the Joint Way Forward agreement, inked between Afghanistan and the European Union in October 2016. "The Embassy also intensified its cooperation with representatives of the Afghan community in Austria with a view to

launching awareness-raising and integration programs”, the Ambassador said. Such activities may include assistance in vocational training, providing cultural and sports activities, offering language courses and initiatives where Afghan citizens can contribute to social and welfare activities in Austria. Consultations with Austrian authorities on these matters have been launched and are ongoing.

For those who wish to return voluntarily to Afghanistan, IOM Austria provides financial assistance and the Embassy is in consultations with IOM to discuss options to provide similar support for those who have been forcefully repatriated.

During his Vienna visit, Dr. Yosufi held productive meetings with Ms. Karoline Edtstadler, State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, as well as with Ambassador Dr. Petra Schneebauer, Director-General of the Foreign Ministry’s Directorate IV, tasked with matters related to migrants and refugees.

The Afghan Unity Government, under the leadership of President Mohammed Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah, is continuously seeking to deepen and broaden Afghanistan’s relationships with third countries and in particular with those partners that have actively contributed to ongoing stabilization and development efforts in Afghanistan, including Austria.

The Embassy will make every effort to engage with Austrian authorities and civil society organizations in improving the current situation and to overcome persisting challenges, including the unacceptable number of cases of violent disorder involving Afghan citizens in Austria.

