

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 25, 2005

The week in Vienna again was a very busy one, with the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC), regular meetings of the Permanent Council and its subsidiary bodies, the farewell to OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis and an informal briefing offered by PA Secretary General R. Spencer Oliver for the delegations in Vienna on the upcoming Annual Session in Washington. The latter coincided with the presentation of the report on the work of the PA's expert group on reform to the Chairman-in-Office and the Chair of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Lenarcic. The office also participated in an International Expert Seminar on Women in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management offered by the Swedish Delegation.

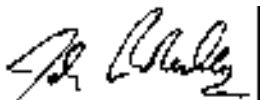
During the **ASRC**, the German delegation proposed a three-stage procedure for the time after the panel of Eminent Persons has come out with its recommendations. The proposal was met with interest, but several delegations complained that it put too much emphasis on the capitals and left too little room for input from Vienna. This was countered by one ambassador, who said that the Eminent Persons did not act independently at all, but was more or less processing input from key delegations. Some also criticized the German keynote speaker for his clear words of criticism about what he had called a self-inflicted loss of reputation during the last 1 1/2 years. The US Delegation totally rejected the idea of the OSCE being in a crisis. In the general debate, I briefly took the floor and reminded the conference of the crucial role Parliamentarians and the PA play in implementing security strategies, calling for a better involvement, to which the Chair agreed.

In the **Permanent Council**, no decisions were taken, but long discussions on several items took place. The main point on the agenda was the presentation of the reports of the three special representatives on Tolerance Issues. The presentation again led to a discussion whether in future in would still make sense to have three representatives as opposed to having only one. Those against argue that having three different representatives might create the impression of a hierarchy of tolerance issues, whereas those in favour of maintaining the three say that the issues have different backgrounds and appearances and therefore need different approaches. The Russian delegation complained that the Representative on Anti-Semitism, PA Vice President Prof. Gert Weisskirchen, had taken independent action which this delegation saw as not covered by his mandate. Under Current Issues, another discussion on the events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, took place, referring to the preliminary findings by an ODIHR operation. The ODIHR team had not been able to enter the country and had therefore based its findings on the questioning of refugees. Whereas many delegations welcomed the action taken by ODIHR and again called for an international investigation, without this time calling for the "Moscow Mechanism", others, and in particular Uzbekistan, insisted that ODIHR had by far exceeded its mandate by taking this action without express authorization by the Permanent Council, and by making political assessments. The findings were also criticized as being unfair because they relied on witnesses among whom there might have been many of the insurgents who had started the illegal actions in the country. Also, another debate on the efficiency of the work of the Economic Coordinator took place, as well as farewell bid-

ding to Secretary General Kubis.

The **Preparatory Committee** continued to debate the Program Outline, and in the ACMF there was a short discussion on the scales of contributions, showing no change in the positions.

The **informal briefing offered by PA Secretary General Oliver** to the delegations in Vienna took place on Friday, with Chairman Ambassador Lenarcic presiding and a very high number of delegations present, many of them represented by their ambassadors. The delegations displayed their considerable interest in the upcoming Annual Session that many of them are attending. Secretary General Oliver again drew their attention to the high number of draft resolutions and of amendments, which are all available on the PA's website. Several Ambassadors expressed their interest in deepening the cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly and in particular in coming to a closer linkage between the issues discussed in Vienna and those being at the base of the draft resolutions under discussion in the PA. The interest of the delegations also focused on the report about the Washington Colloquy. PA Secretary General Oliver explained the proceedings and the general outline of the report, naming the 11 main recommendations it contains, with ambassadors asking a number of questions. In the lengthy discussion, some participants conceded that the careful way in which the experts had asked for a change in the consensus requirement on a number of issues was something that should and could be discussed, in spite of the general disagreement between the PA and the delegations about the value of the traditional consensus principle. Some also underlined how much they considered the Vienna Office to be instrumental in the cooperation, and that briefings like the one offered by the PA Secretary General also helped very much to come to a closer and more fruitful cooperation.



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