

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

### *Permanent Council Brief Week 25 - 28, 2006*

The past weeks of the Office's work were marked by the Annual Session in Brussels and two visits to South East Europe, one to Pristina and Mitrovica, and another one to Sofia. They have been dealt with in the report of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative of South East Europe, Roberto Battelli, to the Annual Session. In Vienna, meetings of the Permanent Council, the FSC, the Mediterranean Contact Group, the Preparatory Committee, the Advisory Committee for Management and Finance, and several working groups were held. Also, a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SDIM) on the freedom of the media took place. During the week when the Annual Session took place, ODIHR Director Amb. Strohal briefed the participating States on the questionnaires that they had handed in in preparation for ODIHR's report on its election related activities and possible improvements thereof to the upcoming Ministerial Council Meeting in Brussels in December.

The Permanent Council adopted the following decisions:

- through a silence procedure, on combating trafficking in human beings
- on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Spill over Monitor Mission to Skopje
- on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Moldova
- on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
- on the 2006 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
- on the Capacity-Building Programme for the Georgian Border Police
- on the establishment of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro
- on renaming the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro
- on the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan
- on the theme, format and organizational modalities for the Fifteenth Economic Forum
- on the agenda and organizational modalities of the 2006 Mediterranean Seminar
- on the Financial Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2005 and the Report of the External Auditor

Under current Issues, it discussed the following points:

- Situation in South Ossetia, Georgia (several times)
- Meeting of Abkhazian, South Ossetian and Transdnestrian representatives, held in Sukhumi, Georgia, 14th of June 2006
- 10th Anniversary of Florence Agreement
- Detention of five Moldovan police officers
- Release of the Moldovan police officer detained in Tiraspol, Moldova
- Initiative against racism during the FIFA World Cup 2006, Germany
- 33rd ministerial session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in Baku, from 19th to 21st June 2006
- Amendments to the media law in Kazakhstan (twice)
- The case of the Union of Journalists in Tajikistan
- Abolition of the Death Penalty in Uzbekistan
- Fact-finding mission on the wildfires in Nagorno-Karabakh

- Final report of ODIHR on the presidential election in Belarus
- Parliamentary elections in the F.Y.R. of Macedonia
- Central Asia plus Japan dialogue and Japan's policy towards Central Asia
- Return of Uzbek refugees from Kyrgyzstan.

In a relatively emotional personal statement the Kyrgyz ambassador deplored that the point of four out of the over 350 refugees from Uzbekistan who had fled to Kyrgyzstan and in the vast majority of cases had not been turned back was repeatedly put on the agenda. It was quite clear that she felt that this was out of proportion compared to the many other issues, even related ones, that were rarely discussed under this item, when related to bigger countries.

The U.S. ambassador invited the OSCE to the Congressional elections in the USA, to be held on 7th of November 2006. I briefed the Permanent Council and the Mediterranean Contact Group about the Annual Session.

In the Preparatory Committee, the discussions of the 2007 Program Outline ended with the presentation of the Chairman's Perception paper (which has been sent to the Parliamentary Assembly's Budget Group) and its discussion. The Chairman criticized that many delegations still lack the understanding of the exercise as one that should give Fund Managers political guidelines for their preparations of the Budget Proposal.

In the briefing by ODIHR, the participating States presented a broad spectrum of opinions on the need for reform of election observation. The opinions ranged from the U.S. that did not see any urgent need for reform and stressed that the exercise was mainly meant to assist new democracies, to Russia that heavily criticized what it perceives as lack of balance, the selection mechanisms and ODIHR's methodology. Most other States acknowledged that there was room for improvement, but also commended ODIHR for what they see as a good performance. Only a few delegations addressed the cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR. While some asked for clarifications of the cooperation agreement, others thought it was necessary to renegotiate it and to take a closer look at the participation of other Parliamentary Assemblies. Russia criticized that the Parliamentary Assembly had not been formally invited to present its position in the meeting.

In the Reform Group, discussions took place about three papers on the usage of extra-budgetary funds, on enhancing the professionalism of OSCE staff, and on thematic missions. The more technical second point received much support, whereas the other points are still very much under discussion.



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