

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 41/42, 2006

After a week without meetings during the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw, meetings of the Permanent Council, the Preparatory Committee, the ACMF, and of several working groups as well as an expert conference, took place in the following week.

The Permanent Council decided to rename the Economic Forum by making it the Economic and Environmental Forum. It also heard reports by the newly formed Audit Committee and the Economic Coordinator. The Audit Committee regretted that there was still too little political monitoring of the spending, and recommended more emphasis be put on results oriented management and evaluation. Under "Current Issues", it debated the following items: "Murder of Anna Politkovskaya", "Recent Elections observed by the OSCE", "Elections in Austria", "Nuclear Test Case North Korea", "Recent measures of Russia against Georgia", and a "Turkmen amnesty decree" Under the first item, I expressed the shock and the condolences of the Parliamentary Assembly that had awarded Ms. Politkovskaya its Journalism Prize. The Parliamentary Assembly had been represented at the funeral by Secretary General Oliver. Belarus commended Austria for the elections that it judged to be in conformity with OSCE Commitments, and especially for of the open manner in which it had given diplomats access to information, in order to make up for the fact that its legislation does not allow for international observers. However, Belarus also listed a number of deficiencies that ODIHR would certainly have criticized, had it observed the elections.

In the Preparatory Committee, the Chair announced that Finnish Parliamentarian Eva Biaudet had been appointed new Representative on Anti-Trafficking. While all delegations made clear that they supported the substance of the decision, several, including Austria, the Netherlands, and Russia, severely criticized the lack of transparency that they had witnessed in the context of the decision..

The ACMF started its discussions of the 2007 Unified Budget proposal and held discussions with the Audit Committee. One member of the Audit Committee underlined that it would be common practice at national level for the audit to be reported to the parliamentary assembly.

This week's focus was on the two extensive meetings of the Reform Group, which met at ambassadorial level to discuss the draft of a report that the Chair (or the Permanent Council, if consensus can be reached about it) will have to deliver to the Ministerial Council on the progress of the reform discussions. As I have previously reported, these discussions were restricted to the subjects mentioned in the 2005 Ljubljana "Roadmap". This means that many of the points that the Parliamentary Assembly would have liked to see included, in particular a strengthening of its formal involvement in the work of the OSCE, were not discussed nor do they figure in the report.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador OSCE PA