

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

OSCE Annual Report 2007

The draft OSCE Annual Report is not a consensus document, but a paper issued under the responsibility of the Secretary General by the Press Section. Some participating States, especially from East of Vienna, dislike the way the missions' work is reflected, saying that some of them, instead of describing what they have done, give a political overview of their host country. This is why the autonomy of the Secretariat in the production of the report is defended by pS from the West.

The Parliamentary Assembly has also been invited to deliver a chapter, and it has done so. The chapter is quite comprehensive. This seems to be more than necessary: In his foreword, the Secretary General does not mention the Parliamentary Assembly at all. In the first chapter "The OSCE at a glance", the Parliamentary Assembly is only mentioned once. At the end of a paragraph on the work of the institutions, the Parliamentary Assembly is described as a distinct body created in 1991 (the same paragraph starts with the Office for Free Elections created in 1990) and active in Parliamentary Dialogue and Election Monitoring. Paris and Istanbul are not mentioned in this context.

Our text on the Parliamentary Assembly is contained in the Chapter "Other Bodies", which appears before the Chapter "Institutions", and it lists the Parliamentary Assembly after the FSC, which has led to protests from some delegations that would like the FSC to get a more prominent place. The final version might lead to a change here.

While the PA text describes Election Observation as a joint endeavour by both the PA and ODIHR, ODIHR, in its chapter, does not mention the PA or the Cooperation Agreement at all.

However, what strikes me more than the latter (, which is what we usually expect to see from ODIHR,) is the diligent way in which the report disregards (and in fact does not mention) that the 1990 Paris Summit had called not only for some limited parliamentary activities, but for a whole "Parliamentary Dimension" of the OSCE. A Parliamentary Dimension obviously means far more than the creation of just another body active in limited areas of OSCE work. The report in its structure and in its introductory parts however breathes a rejection of the universal approach of the PA, which includes a critical participation of the Assembly and its members in all areas of the work of the OSCE. This participation comprises enhancing the transparency of the budget, giving inputs into the reform discussion, asking for feedback on recommendations etc. The mentality underlying the report would automatically also lead to a rejection of anything that is farther reaching, like the recommendations of the Washington Colloquium or any notion of parliamentary accountability. The maximum concession that most diplomats are ready to make is that parliamentarians are allowed to act within some sort of a restricted playground. As an organization aiming at improving democratic institutions and at promoting democracy, the OSCE should rather start any description of itself by pointing out that it is effectively the largest international organization to have a parliamentary dimension and that this makes it unique, instead of - like in the report - pushing the PA to the sidelines.



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