

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 21/22, 2007

During these weeks, meetings of the Permanent Council, the Preparatory Committee, the Advisory Committee for Management and Finance, and of the three informal committees, took place, as well as a Conference on Public-Private Partnership in Combating Terrorism, in which the PA was represented by Vice President Kammenos. I spent half of the first week at the PA Economic Seminar in Andorra.

The Permanent Council took the decision to approve the OSCE Training Strategy for 2008 until 2010. The highlights, however, were two **Special PCs with addresses by the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Lavrov, and of the USA, Rice**. Both were in Vienna for other reasons, but made use of the opportunity to speak to the PC. While Minister Lavrov went at length into all controversial security issues that are currently being discussed between Russia and the West, dedicating about two-thirds of his speech to the future of disarmament and arms control - also in the light of the ongoing discussion about missile-defense -, and addressing Russian requests for OSCE reform in the rest of his speech, Minister Rice reduced her address to two fundamental messages: there is a future for the OSCE, and the USA want to overcome the differences of opinion they have with "their Russian friends" cooperatively. Minister Lavrov repeated what President Putin had said about the impact of the current US plans on the CFE Treaty, and renewed his request that this should be discussed by the OSCE and that the discussion about politico-military issues should be revived altogether. He also repeated the Russian criticism of ODIHR's election observation, rejecting what he called the emergence of supra-national bodies in the OSCE, announcing a Russian paper on guidelines for Election Observation, and urging for a Charter of the Organization. At the same time, he also underlined the good cooperation his country enjoyed with the USA and other participating States on other issues on the OSCE agenda. Minister Rice, in her replies to the questions put forward by members of the Permanent Council, made clear that the US firmly rejected anything that might put in question existing commitments, but that at the same time her country was ready to discuss anything that respected these essentials. She also reiterated her support for the Ahtissari Plan on Kosovo, while strongly emphasizing that the USA saw Serbia as a friend and partner who they wanted to support in any way possible, and that they would do everything to ensure that minorities in Kosovo would get the strongest protection possible.

The other main points on the Permanent Council agenda were **reports by the Heads of the OSCE Center in Bishkek, Amb. Mueller, and the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan, Amb. Jenca** (both mentioned the successful visit by President Lennmarker to the countries), as well as the introduction, by the Secretary General, of the "**Program Outline**", which is supposed to be the political guidance paper for the upcoming preparations of the 2007 draft budget. Although this document is meant to guide the different administrative structures of the OSCE in their work, it makes almost no mention of what had been the vision of the Charter of Paris, namely a close and growing involvement of the Parliamentary Assembly into the work of the OSCE.

The **Russian proposal for an OSCE Charter**, as well as the proposed **rules for Election Observation**, have been circulated. The Charter contains an article on the Parliamentary Assembly in the Chapter on OSCE structures, but does not list it as one of its components, thus lacking clarity. The proposed rules would limit election observation to a maximum of 50 participants and give full control of the exercise to the host country. They do not go into detail on election observation methodology.

In a briefing by an ODIHR Team in the Human Dimension Committee it turned out that the team was on its way to Turkey for a needs assessment mission, admitting that it had not given advance notification to the Parliamentary Assembly and invited it to participate, which is contrary to paragraph 2 of the 1997 Cooperation Agreement.

In the race for the succession of the High Commissioner on National Minorities Ekeus, the best received candidate seems to be Amb. Vollebaek, although two of the other candidates have also received a lot of support.



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Ambassador
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