

**Special Representative**

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

*Permanent Council Brief Week 26, 2007*

This week, meetings of the Permanent Council, the FSC, the Preparatory Committee, the Advisory Committee for Management and Finance, the Human Dimension Committee, an Informal Briefing by ODIHR on Tolerance Issues, and an Expert Conference on Fighting the Threat of Illicit Drugs, took place.

The PC decided to open the "Silence Procedure" by which Ministers are to approve a Decision to appoint former CiO and Norwegian FM Amb. Knut Vollebaek as successor to Amb. Rolf Ekeus as High Commissioner for National Minorities. Amb. Ekeus made his last report to the PC. In his report, he also emphasized the good cooperation with the PA, referred to the successful project on "new minorities" undertaken by him upon recommendation by the PA, and thanked the PA Leadership and in particular SG Oliver for the "good and always smooth cooperation". The agenda also contained reports by the Head of the Mission in Baku and by ODIHR Director Amb. Strohal, on which I have reported in a Spot Report. The week before, the PC had also approved the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Center in Astana (Mission to Kazakhstan). The report by the Representative on the Freedom of the Media had been delivered the week before.

Kazakhstan had invited the OSCE, including the PA, and participating States, to observe the parliamentary elections on August 18, 2007.

An important issue currently under discussion is the envisaged running costs for the new OSCE premises in Vienna ("Wallnerstraße"). Last week, the OSCE SG reported to the PC that they will be an estimated 900 000 Euros more than the costs of the current premises (800 000 Euros), although in 2003 the Secretariat had estimated that costs would even be lower than at present. This led to a sharp confrontation between the delegations of the U.S.A. and of the host country Austria, which puts the premises at the disposal of the OSCE rent-free. The U.S. is not ready to sign the proposed user agreement with Austria and instead proposed to look for alternatives.

The Preparatory Committee continued the discussions of the 2008 Program Outline, the political guideline for the 2008 Draft Budget Proposal.

Liaison Officer Andres Blasco Cortés has left the office and will be replaced by Marc Carillet.



Andreas Nothelle  
Ambassador  
July 3, 2007