

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

### *Permanent Council Spot Report Week 26, 2007*

This week, ODIHR Director Ambassador Strohal presented his regular report on ODIHR's activities. Attached to the nine-page activity report is a six page Annex reporting on ODIHR's implementation of the 2006 MC Decision 19 about strengthening the Work of the Organization in which ODIHR has been tasked, among other things, with carrying out a number of improvements in its election related activities. The decision also contains the much quoted provisions stating that OSCE Election Observation is a joint undertaking by the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR, who have to cooperate on the basis of the 1997 Cooperation Agreement.

The way the cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly is characterized in the report again forced me to defend the position of the PA in a statement to the Permanent Council and to criticize the misleading, almost provocative way in which the report depicts the work of parliamentarians.

The activity report makes no reference to the Parliamentary Assembly, not even in the Chapter on elections, in which it also mentions the EOMs in Serbia and in Armenia. In the Annex, the cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly figures in one paragraph on the last page. It does make a reference to the Cooperation Agreement, but sees the "established framework" (meaning the 17 points which PA Bureau had unanimously rejected) as the actual basis for cooperation. Instead of reaffirming that Election Observation is a joint undertaking by the two institutions, as stipulated by the MC Decision, it reduces cooperation to the idea that "parliamentarians" "can" make a valuable contribution "to complement" ODIHR's election observation. Instead of a partnership, the text offers that the ODIHR continues "to reach out to the OSCE PA".

The most remarkable element of the paragraph is contained in its first sentence, which Amb. Strohal did not repeat in his oral presentation. It states that "Parliamentarians have an important role to play in their respective national electoral processes". This is not only an incredible understatement, considering that national elections are about electing parliamentarians, but it is also particularly ironic that the governmental side would generously concede that parliamentarians have "a role to play" in elections!

In my statement, I also underlined our readiness to cooperate as well as the steps that have been taken to improve cooperation.



Andreas Nothelle  
Ambassador  
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