Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 49, 2007

During this week, meetings of the Permanent Council, the Preparatory Committee and the ACMF, took place.

Throughout the week I have received congratulations from delegates on the Parliamentary Assembly's preliminary post-election statement in Russia, including from some delegates who have in the past tried to diminish the Parliamentary Assembly's role. The issue was raised under "Current Issues" in this week's Permanent Council. Parliamentary Assembly SG Spencer Oliver participated in the meeting, which was welcomed by several delegations. In his statement, he explained what the Parliamentary Assembly Election Observation Mission had based its statement on, elaborating on the extensive preparations that have taken place since September. This was necessary because some delegates, based on their bias against the Parliamentary Assembly, continue to doubt the expertise of parliamentarians. The CIS countries once more derived their assessment from their observers' statement, rating the elections as excellent, whereas all other delegations that spoke took up the criticism contained in the Post-Election Statement, in part adding additional observations. Russia's criticism of the Parliamentary Assembly's statement was held in a diplomatic tone. After the meeting, a number of delegates thanked the Parliamentary Assembly SG for having come to Vienna and for his valuable contribution.

As I reported last week, the MC in Madrid has left many issues unresolved. In addition, a number of issues that need to be settled before the end of the year have been postponed until after the MC. Among them are the extension of the mandates of the OSCE missions, the Scales of Contribution (amount of money each participating State has to pay into the budget) and the 2008 budget as such. Consensus could be reached on the extensions of the mandates of the Centre in Astana, the mission to Serbia, the Office in Baku, the mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the presence in Albania, the Centre in Bishkek, the mission to Montenegro, the Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the Project Co-coordinator in Uzbekistan. The mandate of all other missions will run out, if no decision to extend their mandates is taken before the end of the year. The main controversy is linked to the Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE's largest field presence, with huge implications for the budget of the OSCE. But there are also others, for instance on the mission in Georgia. This evidently directly affects the budget process. So does the lack of consensus on the Scales of Contribution. Like in previous years, several States have asked to change the present system to one exclusively based on the capacity to pay, modeled after the UN Scales, which would mean quite substantial changes for some States. Most countries agreed, however, to continue for some time on the present (provisional) arrangement. Russia sternly opposes this.

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