

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 5, 2008

During the first weeks of the Finnish Chairmanship, several meetings of the Permanent Council, the PrepCom and the Committees took place, as well as the Annual Heads of Missions Meeting and the first part of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum under the heading "Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment".

One could describe these three weeks as "business as usual", weren't it for the continuing uncertainty about the budget and the mission in Kosovo, which constitutes a substantial part of the budget. In addition, the restrictions imposed by Russia on the OSCE election observers show equally that the OSCE continues where it had stood at the end of the Spanish Chairmanship. In fact, the organization is looking for a new director of ODIHR. Nominations by governments of the participating States, with *curriculum vitae*, should reach the Chairmanship within the deadline of 8 February 2008, noon CET. No candidates will be accepted after this deadline. After this, a group of "Friends of the Chair" will start the first round of consultations on the candidates.

The PC has only taken decisions of purely organizational character. One of those on the table – on the dates of the next Human Dimension Implementation Meeting - could not even get consensus, which is another indication of the serious difficulties the organization is facing.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
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