

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 24, 2007

Since the last report, a number of meetings of the Permanent Council, the FSC, both Contact Groups, the Preparatory Committee, the Advisory Committee for Management and Finance and other committees have taken place, as well as several conferences.

The main item that the OSCE in Vienna is currently working on is the Program Outline for the 2009 budget. This time, contrary to the past when delegates immediately went into discussing detailed figures instead of the overall political priorities, which the Program Outline had been invented for, it only contains one figure – the total expenditure planned – which makes it very difficult to get an idea about cost relationships. This was harshly criticized by the U.S. Delegation.

This week, ODIHR Director Ambassador Strohal gave his last report to the Permanent Council. The most important topic of the agenda of the OSCE in Vienna remains the growing tensions in Georgia. Russia and Georgia have called for special meetings of the FSC and the Permanent Council to address the controversial events there. Those joint meetings did not lead to any progress. On the contrary, Russia concluded by announcing that further deliberations would be useless before Georgia had provided them with all the documents needed for Russia to verify Georgia's allegations.

Some progress has been made on the issue of possible projects of the OSCE for Afghanistan. The Secretary General has proposed a package of 16 proposals, two of which would have to take place within Afghanistan. The mandate of Secretary General Perrin de Brichambaut expires shortly. The Chairmanship has proposed an extension for another three years, which is an exception from the decision by the Stockholm Ministerial Council that provided for only two years of extension. An exception had already been made for the previous Secretary General. While most participating States consider it to be preferable to have a three years extension, at least two participating States expressed doubts.

On the occasion of his participation in the Supplementary OSCE Human Dimension Meeting on the "Role of National Institutions against Discrimination in Combating Racism and Xenophobia", President Emeritus Alcee Hastings also addressed a Special Meeting of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners. On two other occasions, I have briefed the Contact Groups with both partners on the upcoming Annual Session in Astana. Mongolia informed about a regional conference on the Helsinki Process that will take place in the country in December, and suggested to distribute during the OSCE PA Annual Assembly in Astana for a detailed study by OSCE parliamentarians a Declaration from a Parliamentary Forum which had been held on the occasion of the "Fifth Conference of New or Restored Democracies", since it contained a large number of recommendations on the role of parliaments that were still relevant today and constituted a basis for regional cooperation.



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Ambassador
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