

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

### *Permanent Council Brief Week 47, 2008*

In the past weeks, the Vienna Executive Structures have resumed their activities after a long interruption caused by the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting that took place in Warsaw for two weeks in October. The upcoming Ministerial Council has resulted in the delegations now being engaged in drafting exercises. At the same time, they completed the first round of budget discussions.

1) The PA was also present in Vienna. The visit by President Soares to address to the Permanent Council was preceded by the participation of Walburga Habsburg-Douglas, Vice Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly's Third Committee and leader of the Swedish delegation, in a seminar on Democratic Lawmaking. Both events have been covered in the News from Copenhagen. Other events the Parliamentary Assembly participated in included a Holocaust Memorial.

2) As a follow-up to the observation of the US elections, the EU and the US expressed their hope that future observation missions will again be conducted jointly by the PA and the ODIHR. In his reply, President Soares stressed the efficiency and the cost effectiveness of the PA's election observation, which is spending less than 10% of the funds that the ODIHR uses for one election mission. A comparison of size and qualification of the ODIHR team deployed in the US with the size and qualification of the PA delegation, he said, were evidence of this. He also underlined that the Cooperation Agreement of 1997 and the usual tasking by the Chairman-in-Office called for an OSCE statement to be worked out and delivered by the PA Special Coordinator, and not, as some delegations wrongly put it, a joint statement of two different OSCE institutions. In light of the very clear stipulations of the agreement, he said, the elected and CiO-appointed Special Coordinator could not be seen as being on the same level as the ODIHR contracted team leader. The PA would never give up this leading role, he added. In this context, he deplored that the ODIHR had chosen to schedule a surprise press conference in Washington a day prior to the pronouncement of the Parliamentary Assembly's long-announced delivery of the Preliminary Statement, in spite of the poor performance of the ODIHR Mission. He asked the Vienna delegations to take a closer look at the spending of ODIHR's election observation missions and in particular at which groups of consultants benefit most from these funds. He also urged for more transparency of the usage of these funds and of related Audit Reports.

3) Another subject of discussion is the Medvedev/Sarkozy proposals for an OSCE summit that should address the future security "architecture" between Anchorage and Vladivostok. While the majority of delegations seem to favor the idea in principle, some - in particular the incoming Czech EU presidency - are rather doubtful. In this context, the question was raised what role the PA could play in discussing the issue.

4) Georgia has become the big stumbling block for the ongoing work of the OSCE. In particular, the budget and the future of the OSCE Mission in Georgia are under threat, because Russia is not ready to agree on the mission's continuation without a change in its mandate. According to them, this change should reflect what Russia considers the irreversible emergence of two new states. Other budget issues are caused by requests from the United States on many items, and by Russia in the case of ODIHR for substantial cuts in the budget.



Andreas Nothelle, Ambassador  
November 25, 2008