

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 7, 2009

This week, we participated in meetings of the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Cooperation, the PrepCom and other committees. The most important result achieved in the Permanent Council – after a less than fruitful discussion in the Forum for Security Cooperation - was slight progress on the situation of the OSCE activities in Georgia. Consensus was reached on a decision to extend the mandate of the 20 (out of originally 100) military observers who are deployed in the area adjacent to South Ossetia until the end of June 2009. Connected to this (seen by Russia as a “good-will-gesture” to allow for more time for the ongoing negotiations) is toleration of the mission’s presence which should normally be in the process of closing, but not without with the unmistakable request from Russia that – if no agreement can be reached before that date – the mission’s presence in the country will be fully terminated by the end of June. In this context, Russia reiterated that it would like to have a presence in Tblisi and another one in South Ossetia as two “independent and equal” missions. Whether this is of any help to the budget process remains to be seen.

I informed the Permanent Council about the final preparations for the Winter Meeting, including the expected high turnout and its consequences, as well as about the President’s visit to Moldova and the ongoing preparations for the observation of the elections in the country. More in-depth information about the Parliamentary Assembly’s work was the subject of a working lunch I hosted for the new ambassadors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Italy and Montenegro.

Russia has requested that another seminar on Election Observation similar to last year’s be organized before the Summer Recess. At the same time, Mr. Bruce George MP (UK PA Delegation) has distributed a letter commenting on my reply to the UK Mission in Vienna, which had circulated his “Non-Paper” on Election Observation last July. The core element of my reply was an overview over the different roles of the Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR in different phases of the observation process, and the types of observers and the qualifications they contributed. We found it necessary to contrast, in accordance with several Parliamentary Assembly resolutions, the unfounded allegations contained in Mr. George’s paper as well as in his oral statements at the seminar with a fact-based analysis. At the beginning of August, my reply refuting Mr. George’s paper was distributed to all members of the Standing Committee.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
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