

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 8/9, 2009

In addition to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting, we participated in meetings of the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Cooperation, the two Contact Groups with the Partners, and the PrepCom, as well as other committees. A first meeting of the ACMF took place, discussing issues of the draft 2009 Unified Budget, which still has not been approved, in spite of a very strong appeal by the OSCE Secretary General.

The agreement on the extension of the 20 Military Monitoring Officers to Georgia until the end of June (see my last report) has not yielded in a rapprochement on the future of an OSCE presence in the area. On the positive side, not only was the Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting considered to be a great success, the OSCE Executive Bodies even benefited from it very directly: The Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation made use of the presence of Dep. Foreign Minister Grushko (Russia) and organized a debate on a similar topic to that of the Parliamentary Assembly on the eve of the Meeting. Greece is considering a follow-up in the form of a high-level meeting, and there have been suggestions to use the format of the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC, most probably on June 23/24) for further discussions.

In the PrepCom, many representatives of participating States commented on the draft of the OSCE's Annual Report for 2008. This paper is worked out under the SG's responsibility and is not a consensus document open to drafting. Nevertheless, there is an opportunity for delegates to comment on the draft. It contains a chapter on the Parliamentary Assembly, which was drafted by the PA. Unfortunately, this chapter is somehow isolated, because the authors from the OSCE Press Section have not mentioned the PA's activities in the timeline about the OSCE's work. I requested clarifying that the PA's activities are an integral part of the OSCE process.

In this context, twelve delegates (from France, Czech Republic, Germany, USA, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Lithuania) criticized the chapter on the PA. In this chapter, the PA is described as also having provided "leadership" to seven Election Observation Missions and as having deployed a full EOM to the U.S. The usage of the word "leadership" was criticized and portrayed as not being in line with the 1997 Cooperation Agreement and MC Decision 19/06. This is unjustified criticism because the Cooperation Agreement and the Chairman-in-Office task the Special Coordinator from the PA to lead (all of) the OSCE Short Term Observers and to deliver what is usually regarded the most important element of an EOM, namely the Preliminary Statement. In spite of this and in a manner that confuses the general public, many OSCE and ODIHR texts speak of the ODIHR-contracted leader of the ODIHR's long-term observers as "the Head of the Election Mission", in spite of the fact that the Agreement only uses the term "On-Site Coordinator". It would be very unfortunate and a step into the wrong direction should the Press Section revise – for the first time ever – the PA's text, in favor of an incorrect interpretation of the Agreement, especially after last week's "censorship debate", which was caused by the refusal to publish PA Press Releases citing "non-consensual language".

The Contact Group for the Mediterranean Partners is now chaired by the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship, while Finland chairs the Contact Group with the Asian Partners. The Chairman-in-Office will appoint Personal Representatives for each Contact Group. The Asian Partners devoted much of their discussion on the future OSCE engagement in Afghanistan, and in particular on the prospects for an involvement of the OSCE in the upcoming elections. I briefed both groups about the outcome of the Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting.

The EU has informed – "in conformity with the commitment of its members to invite election observers from the ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly and the participating States" – about the upcoming EP elections. Luxembourg has extended an invitation to observe both the EP elections and the national elections in the country.



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Ambassador
February 27, 2009