

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 48, 2008

During this week, which was the last week before the Ministerial Council Meeting (MC) in Helsinki, meetings of the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF) and of other informal bodies took place.

The PC extended the mandates for the majority of the OSCE field presences, with the exception of those in Kosovo, Zagreb, Baku, Georgia, Yerevan and in Ashgabat. If the MC does not help to find a solution, Georgia might be the biggest problem.

Apart from that, all three thematic committees and the PrepCom were busy drafting texts for the Helsinki MC. Negotiations about a possible Ministerial Declaration will only start in Helsinki; the Chairmanship has proposed a very short draft. Most texts are based on "agreed language", meaning they are composites of quotations from UN, CoE and OSCE documents etc. Problematic issues lie in particular – apart from the divergences about regional conflicts – in the drafts on a Declaration on 60 years of Human Rights, on the Rule of Law and on Climate change – all three subject areas that the Astana Annual Session has also dealt with.

According to the Rules of Procedure, I cannot propose text for the drafts, I need to have national delegations accept suggestions from me and present them as their amendments. I urged to include at least some text in the Rule of Law draft, arguing that MPs are the principal lawmakers and at the same time the ones that governments are accountable to. Some delegations are ready to take this on board, others are rather reluctant. For some, mentioning the PA is dependent on a simultaneous positive mention of the ODIHR. In the OSCE as a consensus-based organization, this very quickly leads to deadlocks.

In the ACMF, the ODIHR has asked for additional money in order to be able to pay the December salaries. The strengthened Polish Zloty is creating a budgetary difficulty. It is estimated that at the end of the year, ODIHR will have paid 6.36% more in salaries for its international contracted staff, and 22.78% more for its local staff, compared to the provisions of the 2008 Unified Budget. In order to correct this situation and in order to be able to pay their staff in December, it will need between 150 000 and 200 000 € more by the end of the year.



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Ambassador
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