

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

### *Permanent Council Brief Weeks 12-14, 2009*

I was absent on election observation for most of this time. During these weeks, the Permanent Council debated the 2009 Unified Budget, which it finally approved in its last meeting before the Easter Recess, and the regular ODIHR report, the latter one in the presence of Parliamentary Assembly SG Spencer Oliver (it has been reported separately). Other meetings included the Forum for Security Cooperation, the PrepCom, the ACMF and other committees.

The 2009 Budget includes an increase of 6,9% in ODIHR's overall budget, with an increase for the Election Department of 7%, bringing it to 6,5 Million Euros, which is 42.5% of ODIHR's total budget. This is financed by substantial reductions in the budgets of several field missions, especially in the Western Balkans and in Georgia.

The Mission to Georgia is still in the process of dissolution, after its "technical closure". Russia has reiterated its proposal for two separate missions in Tbilisi and in Tskhinvali, and the Chairmanship referred to its ideas of putting in place two units under one umbrella. Russia is also offering two Monitoring Missions, one composed of eight Observers on the South Ossetian side of the conflict line, and the other one composed of 20 observers on the Tbilisi side. The situation is made more difficult by the different allegations raised by Georgia and by Russia. The discussion on the regular report by the Representative on the Freedom of the Media also demonstrated the negative climate ruling in the Permanent Council.

The Permanent Council also adopted some managerial decisions (on the final Revision of the 2008 Budget, and on the timetable and organizational modalities of the 2009 OSCE-Japan Conference and the 2009 Human Dimension Seminar). An agreement was also reached to send an election support team to Afghanistan.

Extremely worrisome is the refusal to allow the Parliamentary Assembly Representative to participate in another "ambassadorial retreat", which serves as a forum for debating issues that normally should be debated in the Permanent Council, the three Committees or in the PrepCom (see my Spot Report on this issue). It creates a dangerous precedent which could undermine further Parliamentary Assembly-Permanent Council cooperation.

The Easter Recess will last from today until April 21, when the OSCE will resume its work.



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Ambassador  
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