

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 41-43, 2009

The first week of this reporting period was a low-activity week in Vienna, since delegations were participating in the HDIM in Warsaw, and we attended our Fall Meetings in Athens. During the second two weeks, meetings of the PC, the FSC, the Contact Groups with the Partners, the Ambassadorial Working Group on the Corfu Process, the PrepCom, the ACMF, and other committees took place, as well as an Expert Workshop on "Public-Private Partnerships: Engaging with the Media in Countering Terrorism".

I briefed the PC and the Mediterranean Contact Group on our Fall Meetings. The PC decided to forward the draft agenda of the upcoming Ministerial Council (MC) in Athens. The PC has also started drafting possible texts for the MC in the appropriate committees. However, the most important debate continues to be in the area of what has been termed the "Corfu Process," which is about improving the work of the OSCE, with the possible aim of a new European Security Architecture. In the most recent meeting of the Ambassadorial Working Group, the Director of the Center for Conflict Prevention presented a very frank analysis of the OSCE's inefficiency with respect to past conflicts.

The openness with which most ambassadors dealt with this, and the very concrete attempts to put forward proposals on enhancing the role of the Organization in conflict prevention and resolution, were remarkable, in comparison to what had been labeled "reform discussion" a few years ago. For the first time, all sides seem to be ready to engage in a serious dialogue on issues of substance (instead of blocking each other), although a proposal put forward by the U.S. delegation that would give the Chairmanship a little more room to maneuver in a crisis situation was immediately countered by Russia's reference to the need for a strict adherence to the consensus principle. Azerbaijan also put some water into the wine, when several speakers referred to the need to reconcile the principles of territorial integrity and of self determination, by insisting that any future dialogue must be preceded by a full withdrawal by Armenia from the occupied territories.

The new French ambassador visited the office. He expressed a very strong interest in possible input from the PA into these discussions. I have also been invited to the ambassadorial retreat next week.

All six candidates for the post of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media (the incumbent Milosz Haraszti's mandate expires in March) made short presentations in a meeting open to all delegates. A group of "Friends of the Chair" conducted interviews with them. During these presentations, only the Russian candidate seemed to fully match the "job description," which led to interesting discussions in the corridors. The Chairmanship has now asked the participating States to name their preferences. After receiving this information, the Chairmanship will invite the three candidates who have received the highest support for a second round of presentations. During the second round of presentations, it will be possible for delegations to ask questions.

The ACMF is working hard on the 2010 Budget under the Kazakh Chairmanship, who is determined to meet the December deadline this time.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
October 27, 2009