

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 45-47, 2009

During these weeks, the PC has been hectically trying to finalize the preparations for the Athens Ministerial Council (MC) Meeting. While focusing on three drafts for a MC Declaration, for a Ministerial Declaration on a continuation of the Corfu Process and of a Ministerial Decision on how to organize this process in future, there are 15 more texts that have been formally tabled and several others that are still under discussion between interested delegations. Most of these drafts contain to a large degree language taken from older OSCE texts. In order to be able to deal with all drafts, more often than not five drafting sessions are taking place simultaneously, making it impossible for the many smaller delegations to be engaged in all discussions. So far, there has been little progress on most of the texts, which is similar to past years. Many doubt that this year there will be a MC Declaration, after having failed consensus on such a text in six consecutive years (last was Porto 2002).

Other issues are being held hostage of progress in the MC preparations. This includes the annual extension of the mandates of certain OSCE field operations (Ashgabat, Baku, BiH, Bishkek, Kosovo, Minsk, Uzbekistan, Zagreb) and the draft Unified Budget proposal for next year. This week saw a Reinforced (=with representatives from the capitals) Permanent Council Meeting, and on Thursday the delegations will move to Athens in order to continue their work there. Ireland has announced its candidacy for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2012.

The PA President's address to the PC last Thursday offered a welcome interruption of the pre-MC routine. His visit and that of the PA Secretary General was generally considered as a success and a possibility to enter into a frank and open debate about the usefulness of the annual rituals in the run-up to the Ministerial Meeting, which do not result in decisions that would take the organization forward. The President's call for a Summit in 2010, which would have the potential to inject new blood into the process and to remind relevant actors in the governments as well as the general public of the objectives and the value of the OSCE, was well received and later echoed by many, while other delegations, in particular that of the U.S.A. and the UK, but also Switzerland, remain skeptical.

The current proposal in the draft MC Declaration relating to the OSCE PA reads "We welcome the continued active engagement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, enhancing inter-parliamentary dialogue and advancing the OSCE objectives." According to the Rules of Procedures, the PA cannot make formal drafting proposals. My suggestion to include key words like "transparency and accountability" and also to commend the PA's work in election monitoring has so far not been taken up by delegations. The same applies to my suggestion that a tasking of the ODHR (in a draft decision on Democratic Lawmaking) to develop its assistance to participating States on the matter further should include consultations with the PA, or to the request to include references to our respective Vilnius resolutions and to our conferences on Energy Security into a draft decision on "Strengthening Dialogue and Co-operation on Energy Security".



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Ambassador
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