

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 50/2010 to 2/2011

Because of the late decision on the OSCE Budget for 2011 and some outstanding decisions on the extension of mission mandates, several meetings of subsidiary bodies and one Special PC took place during the recess. The first regular week saw one PC mainly devoted to the opening address of the new Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis, as well as the Annual Meeting of Heads of Field Operations and of Institutions (HoMM). PA President Efthymiou, PA Secretary General (SG) Spencer Oliver and Deputy SG Tina Schön participated in the events of this week, along with other staff from Copenhagen.

President Efthymiou, in all his meetings during his presence in Vienna, underlined the need for an open and transparent process in selecting a new OSCE SG and a new Director of the ODIHR, who both should be political figures. While the outgoing Chairmanship has asked participating States for proposals for the post of OSCE SG whose term expires in June, the vacancy of the post of the ODIHR Director (the current term of office of the director expires at the same time) has not yet been announced. Another important post that will be vacant is the one of the Director of the Center for Conflict Prevention, currently held by Amb. Salber. Russia insists that, of the posts of SG and of CPC Director, one must be held by a citizen of a non-EU country. The Russian ambassador also indicated that he supports an extension of the term of the current ODIHR Director or his promotion to "a higher post".

While the budget for 2011 was approved at the end of December and all other field operations were extended, the PC failed to find consensus on the extension of the mandate of the Office in Minsk. The office will now undergo procedures for its closure. Already in the opening statement of the new CiO, in the round of statements of participating States replying, and under "Current Issues", participating States criticized the rejection of the continuation of the Office's work by Belarus. Belarus reiterated that in their opinion the Office had fulfilled its mandate and that there was no reason for continuation, especially since the institutions could continue their project work in the country.

In his opening address to the PC, the new CiO emphasized that he had led the delegation of the Lithuanian Seimas to the OSCE PA and underlined the necessity to actively involve Parliamentarians in the OSCE work. Russia drew the attention of the PC to its proposal for a program for further action in the field of arms control and confidence and security building measures, saying that this had found the support of several other participating States and had to be debated thoroughly.



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Ambassador
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