

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 5 - 7, 2011

During these three weeks, which I partly spent accompanying VP Grossruck on a post-election visit to Azerbaijan, and assisting Special Representative on South East Europe Battelli on a fact-finding mission to Albania, a number of meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the FSC and of their subsidiary bodies took place, as well as the first preparatory meeting (on energy security) of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum.

The only decision taken by the PC during these three weeks was the year-end budget revision for 2010. As an explanation: the PC constantly adapts the budget to the expenditures, and then at the end of the year budget and all expenditures are brought into line with each other. According to this decision, the final budget for 2010 amounts to 151,524,400 Euros. In comparison, in the peak year 2003, the budget was around 185 million Euros. Salary increases and inflation have of course contributed to a much larger decrease in real terms. Since extra-budgetary contributions and secondments have also gone down, while there have been new taskings, the quality of the OSCE work has been significantly impacted.

Issues discussed in the PC under "Current Issues" included the situation in Belarus, in the Caucasus and media freedom in several countries. The race for a new Secretary General has officially started with the deadline for candidate nominations having expired. The four candidates (in alphabetical order: Erçin/Turkey, Plassnik/Austria, Soares/Portugal and Zannier/Italy) will present themselves in Vienna in the coming weeks. During informal consultations, the Chairmanship will be supported by the two other Troika members (Kazakhstan and Ireland) and the ambassadors of Liechtenstein, Luxemburg and Serbia.

The post of ODIHR Director (the term of the current director expires at the same time as that of the Secretary General) has still not been advertised.

I informed the PC about the upcoming Winter Meeting. The interest on the part of delegations, especially those of the Mediterranean Partners, is considerable.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
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