

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 13 and 14, 2011

Over the past two weeks, meetings of the PC, the FSC, the Contact Groups, as well as of several subsidiary bodies of the PC took place. Sponsored by extra-budgetary donations to the OSCE, the "International Peace Institute" (IPI) held its first "Confidence Building Measures workshop" in the framework of a partly outsourced follow-up to the Astana Summit. Roberto Montella was in Kazakhstan, staffing the EOM, and Marc Carillet participated in an ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the second week of the reporting period, many ambassadors were absent from Vienna as they participated in an ambassadorial trip to Central Asia.

The PC made decisions regarding an "OSCE Conference on a Comprehensive Approach to Cyber Security: Exploring the future OSCE Role", on the agenda, timetable and organizational modalities for the 2011 "OSCE-Mongolia Conference on Enhancing OSCE Co-operation with the Asian Partners in Addressing Common Challenges through a Comprehensive Approach to Security", for the "OSCE Conference on a Comprehensive Approach to Cyber Security: Exploring the Future OSCE Role", for the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, and for the 2011 Human Dimension Seminar, as a package of conferences in all three dimensions.

Canada, on behalf of 42 of the 56 participating States criticized the closure of the OSCE's Minsk Office as a "mistake", accusing Belarus of violating commitments. Belarus, with the support of some CIS countries, strongly refuted this, emphasizing its sovereign right to decide whether or not it saw an OSCE mission's task as fulfilled. I referred to PA resolutions on the value of OSCE missions and to the President's January statement on the closure of the mission. In the last PC, Belarus, followed by several CIS countries, criticized the request by 14 countries for an expert investigation under the so-called "Moscow Mechanism", saying that the closure of a mission has never justified such a step before and that it created an unnecessary divide in the light of the country's repeated offers to continue project-oriented work with OSCE institutions, as already was the case with the ODIHR trial monitoring. It also referred to the quick adoption of this year's OSCE Human Rights agenda as an example of its own constructive approach.

During the discussion about the elections in Kazakhstan, that country complained about what they saw as a one-sided and unfair statement full of contradictions and inconsistencies. Other CIS countries, including Russia, were much more outspoken in their criticism. I expect that these countries will make their consent to any future decision or document in the Human Rights dimension dependent on a reform of OSCE election observation. The PC also discussed the burning of the Koran by a U.S. American individual, upon the initiative by a number of participating States.

The PA was invited to observe parliamentary elections in Canada (May 2) and in Turkey (June 12) as well as the referendum on voting methods in the UK (May 5).

The first IPI workshop, apart from the presence of the Moldovan deputy Foreign Minister side by side with the Transnistrian negotiator, did not add anything worth mentioning to the follow-up on the Astana Summit. I will report more in detail on this matter to the Bureau.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
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