

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

*Permanent Council Brief Weeks 19 - 21, 2011*

The Vienna Liaison Office staff spent much of these three weeks on OSCE PA missions abroad, covering the Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw on the Role of Political Parties, the Bozen/Bolzano meeting on national minorities, the Regional Heads of Missions Meeting in Tirana, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the OSCE Mission in Belgrade, as well as accompanying Special Representative on South East Europe Battelli to Belgrade, Pristina and Skopje and Special Representative on the OSCE Budget Blöndal to Kiev. The News from Copenhagen have reported about several of these events. In Vienna, in addition to the regular meetings of the PC, the FSC and their subsidiary bodies, including a special session on Election Observation of the Human Dimension Committee, there was a High Level Military Doctrine Seminar, an OSCE Conference on a "Comprehensive Approach to Cyber Security: Exploring the future OSCE role", a two-day Workshop on field missions, an Informal Ambassadorial Meeting – "V to V Dialogue on challenges posed by natural and man-made disasters", an IPI workshop on the same issue, a Special Thematic Event on IDPs and Refugees, a meeting of the Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE, an ODIHR Consultation Meeting: "Guidelines for Educators on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims" and the visit of the OSCE PA Transparency Committee.

The PC took one important decision, opening the silence procedure (due to expire May 30) for the "re-appointment" of Director Amb. Lenarcic's term of office for three more years. Although the Charter of Paris provides for a non-renewable term, this decision was approved by consensus without any prior advertisement of the post or a selection procedure in line with the staff rules. The Chairmanship did not give out any more information on the selection process for a new Secretary General. There are indications that the process is more difficult than the Chairmanship had thought it to be a week ago. The positions of participating States on an OSCE legal personality remain basically unchanged.

The many conferences and seminars, although sometimes producing lively discussions, did not add new concrete elements needed to increase the OSCE's relevance. It is still unclear what the concrete contributions coming out of the "post-Astana"-process will be. The holding of the Political Doctrine Seminar in itself could be seen as a confidence-building measure. However, much of the discussions only reflected debates well known from leading newspapers. Certain concepts sound like a mere extension of "psychological warfare" by expanding the use of such instruments as embedded journalists in times of asymmetrical threats. This was not discussed critically under aspects of media freedom and other democratic principles to which participating States have committed. The Warsaw Seminar on Political Parties once more showed a tendency within the "International Community" to see political parties and politicians as an imminent threat requiring complex regulations and "independent" monitors and supervisors, while acknowledging the need for pluralism and effective political parties in transitional countries. In addition, several speakers lamented frequent reluctance of parliaments and their members to accept the wisdom of their many international advisors. I made some appropriate remarks on the issue. On the positive side, PA representatives were invited to all meetings.



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