

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Weeks 22 - 24, 2011

During these weeks, the usual meetings of the PC, the FSC and their subsidiary bodies took place, as well as several Special PCs, a two-day Chairmanship "Conference on Combating Drug Trafficking and Enhancing Border Security and Management in the OSCE Area" and a workshop on "Economic and Environmental Activities as Confidence Building Measures". I also served on the Election Observation Missions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (with Marc Carillet) and in Turkey (with Roberto Montella and Nigar Rasulova).

The most important issues remained the extension of the term of office of ODIHR Director Amb. Lenarcic (the silence procedure having expired on May 30 without being broken) and the turbulence around the selection of a new Secretary General. Austrian MP and former Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik had received an overwhelming support. Turkey, however, responded to the letter of the Chair-in-Office asking for possible objections by stating that it could not join the consensus on this candidate. This response came at the end of the deadline set by the Chairmanship and which ended one week before the general elections in Turkey. Within a few hours, the Chairmanship sent out another letter, this time proposing Amb. Zannier (Italy) to the post.

It is difficult to have a full picture, as the Chairmanship released information about the number of votes each candidate had received only to those countries who had proposed candidates (a move criticized by some participating States), and because the numbers which are circulating informally do not add up. Also, instead of basing the next step of the process on the preferences expressed by the ministers before two of the four candidates were blocked in the middle of the process, the ministers should have been requested to redistribute their preferences among the remaining two candidates. Hence, the existing figures cannot be used to determine who of those two is in the lead. But what they show is that ministers overwhelmingly supported political candidates in line with the PA's call for this type of candidate – as opposed to having another diplomat in this post.

The way the Chairmanship has now formulated the question, however, does not allow ministers to choose between these two options – a "political SG" or a "diplomat" - unless they again want to block the candidate proposed by the Chairman-in-Office. In the last PC I criticized this, without receiving any comments of substance from the ambassadors in the meeting. Informally, however, while some support our approach, others told me that it was unacceptable for the PA to comment on this matter, because of the "inter-governmental nature" of the OSCE.

The other major point of last Thursday's agenda was the report on Belarus presented by Prof. Emmanuel Decaux on behalf the 14 countries which had invoked the Moscow Mechanism. The CIS countries heavily criticized the procedures these countries had chosen, and the Chairmanship was attacked for having it put on the agenda. Russia also criticized the report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities for being one-sided.



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Ambassador
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