

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 27/28, 2011

During these two weeks, much of which we spent in Belgrade at the PA Annual Session, meetings of the Permanent Council, the Forum for Security Cooperation, the Contact Groups, the committees and other informal meetings took place, as well as a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting "Promotion of Pluralism in New Media" and an Expert Meeting on Mediation within the "V to V Dialogue".

The Permanent Council accepted the Financial Report and the Financial Statements for 2010, in a decision which also tasked the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance with establishing a working plan to follow up on the recommendations of the External Auditors. During the Annual Session, the relatively long Chairmanship's report to the Permanent Council contained a sentence about the Chairman-in-Office's address to the Session, somewhat hidden under the item "working visit to Podgorica, Belgrade, and Pristina". Amb. Zannier, on the other hand, devoted all of his oral report to the following Permanent Council to the Annual Session and to his conviction that our mutual cooperation needs to be strengthened. Although I was the only one who took the floor afterwards, I sensed and private comments I got later demonstrated the uneasiness many felt with this positive approach from the Secretary General. Next week, I will have an opportunity to brief interested diplomats about the Annual Session in an informal meeting to which the chairmanship has been invited. I will also speak about it in the PC and in the joint contact groups with the Partners for Cooperation from Asia and the Mediterranean.

During the Annual Session, the only mention of the Annual Session on the OSCE's homepage was contained in a press release about the Chairman-in-Office's address to the OSCE PA. It remained there during the first days of the Session. On Friday and over the weekend, the homepage showed two press releases by the Representative on the Freedom of the Media, one about a "private" ambassadorial excursion to Moldova, and one about twelve minibuses the OSCE donated to Kyrgyzstan, as well as – under "events" - an ODIHR meeting on New Media. Nothing on the homepage during this time indicated that hundreds of OSCE parliamentarians were in session to debate burning OSCE issues.

The homepage does contain a link to a "Press Centre" where the OSCE PA's many Press releases are listed without any indication of their content; however, the only visible text is a disclaimer that they do not represent the opinion of the OSCE. In Belgrade, the new OSCE Secretary General Amb. Lamberto Zannier promised to improve this situation. However, the proposal presented by the Secretariat would only make the situation worse, because it would take PA press releases entirely off the webpage of the "Press Centre" and only refer to them through a link way down the list in one of the menus on the page. The only solution which would be in keeping with the rank of the PA and its members would be to have events and the latest press releases listed on the OSCE Homepage. I will be able to further discuss this at a lunch with Amb. Zannier and the new Italian ambassador Giulio Tonini next week.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador, July 15, 2011