

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 21, 2012

This week, there were meetings of the PC and its subsidiary bodies. Marc Carillet reported to the Economic and Environmental Committee about the PA's Batumi Meeting. The highlight of the week was the two-day "Meeting to Review the OSCE Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)", which was followed by an expert meeting. I also participated in the 42nd IPI Vienna Seminar on "The Future of North Africa and the Middle East". Roberto Montella was in Serbia observing the second round of the presidential elections.

The PC's main agenda item was the Secretary General's introduction of the "Program Outline" for the 2013 Unified Budget. This voluminous paper is meant to give the delegations a possibility to comment on their political preferences for next year's budget. Over the last years this discussion has developed into something like a preliminary budget discussion and a de-facto duplication, without achieving its aim of giving clear guidance to the OSCE's fund managers. Therefore, this year, each of them provided delegations with a one-page overview over trends and ideas for the 2013. The Chairmanship expressed its hope that this would lead to an earlier involvement of ambassadors. At first glance, the outline follows the trend of the last years: in absolute terms, the highest growth rate will be for the budget of the Secretariat in Vienna, mainly due to the creation of the new Department on Transnational Threats, and for the ODIHR; the highest growth in relative terms is in the budget for the field presence in Tajikistan. All this is financed mainly through a 10 percent decrease in the budgets of the missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. The Secretary General stated that "the amount of resources allocated to the OSCE by its participating States is declining from year to year despite the continuous growth in the number and complexity of tasks ...", requesting delegates "to match ... expectations with an adequate level of means for the Organization to be able to perform ...".

Since delegations favor strengthening the Secretariat's activities on Transnational Threats, and even Russia is asking for additional taskings for the ODIHR, it can be expected that this trend will be maintained until the budget is approved. The discussions on the Program Outline will continue until July 10, to be followed by the budget negotiations, which will hopefully be finalized before the end of the year. Incidentally, since EU member States again could not agree on delivering a statement on behalf of the Union, the French delegation delivered a statement on behalf of all the member States. When he read out the long list of country names, this led to quite some amusement on the part of non-EU countries.

The Netherlands invited the OSCE to observe its September 12, 2012 parliamentary elections.

The SALW review meeting revealed a substantial number of shortcomings in the monitoring of the flow of SALW, which is a task performed by the UN and by the OSCE, constituting relatively uncontroversial core OSCE business. Russia requested additional efforts to prevent the production of unlicensed or counterfeit weapons, to check storage conditions, to limit re-exportations, to ban the transfer of SALW to the institutions which are not controlled by the State, and to reduce the overall amount of exported SALW, problems that were also discussed at the Vienna Seminar in conjunction with the impact of the Libyan civil war on the availability of arms in the Sahel Zone.

Together with their Special Advisor on Strengthening the Legal Framework former Danish ambassador John Bernhard, the Chairmanship is looking for ways out of the controversy about a possible constituent document for the organization. Although it is unlikely that the USA will accept any such document, there is some willingness to discuss possible texts. In a meeting with Amb. Bernhard, I outlined the importance of any such text adequately reflecting the PA's place in the organization. I also had an exchange of views with the Chairman of the PC's Human Dimension Committee, Swiss ambassador Gremlinger, about the current efforts to reform the Human Dimension events and a possible role for the PA, provided that a true reform renders these events more attractive for PA members.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador, May 25, 2012