

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

Permanent Council Brief Week 24, 2012

This week, there were meetings of the PC, the FSC, the committees and other subsidiary bodies, as well as of informal working groups. The Chairman of the PA's Human Dimension Committee Matteo Mecacci addressed the PC's Human Dimension Committee, as reported in the News from Copenhagen (NfC). Roberto Montella represented the PA in the ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission for the upcoming elections in Georgia. Marc Carillet participated in a one-day retreat of the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance.

The PC debated the priorities of Albanian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's (CoE's) Committee of Ministers on the basis of a presentation by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania Edmond Haxhinasto. I seized the opportunity in order to draw the attention of the PC to the PA's cooperation with the CoE Parliamentary Assembly and with Albania, including the upcoming Fall Session in Tirana. Under "Any other business" the Chairmanship referred to complaints from some unnamed delegations about the presence of groups of visitors during the PC meeting which, according to the Rules of Procedure, is a closed meeting. As a reminder: The PA has always criticized this and urged the PC to open up to the public and the media. Apparently, the compromise that the Chairmanship found is that there will be no more groups of visitors during the discussion of "Current Issues", which is the agenda item under which delegations raise issues of the non-implementation of commitments in individual countries.

In addition to what has been reported in the NfC, Matteo Mecacci went into details of the discussions during the last PA Winter Meeting and of the supplementary items that will be debated in Monaco. Ukraine expressed doubts if draft resolutions regarding the situation in one specific country can make a positive contribution to inter-parliamentary dialogue. According to them, the sponsors of such drafts should at least take into account also the position of the government of the country concerned, in order not to appear politically one-sided. Russia supported this view. The ambassador of Ukraine discussed it in detail with Mecacci also in a bilateral meeting. Poland and Norway have rejected ideas of moving the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) from Warsaw to Vienna.

I had the opportunity to contribute some ideas for an improvement of the OSCE Human Dimension events calendar to a meeting of the respective informal working group. With the exception of the point on the venue of the HDIM, I did not hear any comments on these ideas. Still related, the agenda for the 12/13 July Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Elections and Election Observation has come out. The part on Election Observation is labeled "Election observation and the electoral cycle", limited to two hours and, according to the agenda, also limited to specific issues on gender, campaign finance, legal framework and media. This is significantly at odds with the CIS expectation that it would offer an opportunity to discuss election observation methodology, which might increase difficulties for finding consensus on other Human Dimension events and issues.

The Chairmanship has presented a discussion paper on a draft of a constituent document for the OSCE. Not surprisingly, the text does not reflect our calls for giving the PA an appropriate place in line with its protocol ranking as a parliamentary body. Nor does its language reflect the PA's status as the parliamentary institution of the OSCE, or its function of providing transparency and accountability (thereby bringing enhanced democratic legitimacy) to the Organization. In the section of the draft entitled "Organs", chapter 3 lists the "Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE" and the "OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration" as sub-bodies. (The latter is a structure that has been *de facto* inoperable. Many diplomats would like to abolish it.) The point on the PA reads as follows: "The Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (OSCE PA) is composed of members of parliament from the OSCE participating States. The modalities for the participation of the OSCE PA in the work of the OSCE decision-making and subsidiary bodies and in OSCE meetings are set out in the OSCE Rules of Procedure." The Chairmanship has asked for written comments on the text before July 20, 2012, after the PA's Annual Session. A discussion in the working group is planned for September.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador, June 15, 2012