

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 51, 2012

This was the last official week of sessions in Vienna, and also the last one under the Irish Chairmanship. It saw a one-day Workshop on Reconciliation, a PC meeting and meetings of committees and other bodies, in particular the ACMF. The Winter Recess began on Friday at noon. The first PC next year under the new Ukrainian chairmanship will take place on January 17, 2013. There might however be another meeting of the PC before the end of the year, if agreement can be reached on the budget. The deadline for doing so has already passed. ODIHR's budget is the most contentious remaining issue.

The PC agreed to extend the mandates of the last two OSCE missions (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and on the OSCE-Australia Conference (March 18/19, 2013). OSCE Secretary General Zannier awarded the OSCE medal to four different OSCE persons who had formerly played a role in the OSCE, among them former PA President Bruce George. When awarding the medal, the Secretary General alluded to the President's criticism in the shift of budget from the field to the administration in Vienna and his call for more transparency, accountability and oversight, saying that George had always supported the OSCE Secretariat's budget proposals.

In his reply, George conceded at first that MPs bring added legitimacy to election observation. He then criticized the PA for requesting a leadership role in election observation. He ended by saying that the "precipitated decision by whoever is in charge of the PA in this moment" to separate the PA from the ODIHR was "the best news he had heard in a long time" and that the PC should "consider it a Christmas gift", because this gave them the opportunity to choose more cooperative MPs than those of the PA to work with. When he finished, his statement was met with ecstatic applause from the most diplomats. All-in-all, this appeared as a staged attack on the PA.

The Human Dimension Committee focused its last session on the work of the ODIHR. The EU complained again about President Migliori's statement made at the Ministerial Council meeting. Slovenia added that it loved the 1997 Cooperation Agreement and that it was "first and foremost the task of experts" to assess elections. In reply, I corrected the wrong impression Slovenia's statement conveyed that we were critical of the Agreement. I repeated what I had said so often in the past - that we had always cherished the Agreement. Despite almost forty interventions at the Permanent Council, letters of PA Presidents and from CiO-appointed Special Coordinators, etc. that had pointed at ODIHR's refusal to fully implement the Agreement, Permanent Representatives in Vienna had never been supportive of our efforts to enforce the Agreement.

I outlined that monitoring of the performance of the executive branch – including elections -- is "first and foremost" the task of parliaments and their elected members, not of "international experts". I also deplored the very limited effectiveness of the OSCE's work in the Human Dimension and said that more transparency, accountability and oversight might help reduce the gap between international organizations and our citizens. In his reply, ODIHR Director Lenarcic (Slovenia), while stating that he was ready to continue cooperation with the PA "on the basis of the Agreement", gave a prime example of diplomatic language which says the opposite of what it pretends to say: He added that such cooperation was possible only on the basis of "partnership". In ODIHR terminology "partnership" is the term which they – and many Permanent Representatives – use to declare all those parts of the Agreement invalid that attribute a leadership function to the Special Coordinator, although that parliamentarian is appointed by the CiO to "lead the short term OSCE observer mission".



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Ambassador
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