

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 4, 2013

The second working week in Vienna was rather uneventful with meetings of the PC, the FSC (opening of the Liechtenstein FSC Chairmanship), the Security Committee and the Economic and Environmental Committee Meeting.

There was also the so-called "Hour with the Secretary General", an informal gathering of ambassadors chaired by Amb. Zannier, in which he briefs Permanent Representatives about his ideas for the work of the OSCE and the Secretariat. This time he focused on the "Security Days" that he had introduced last year and that he wants to hold three times in 2013. The next meeting in March should focus on conventional arms control, the two others (one of them preceding the Annual Security Review Conference – ASRC) on Afghanistan and on reconciliation. The meeting also included a short discussion about further efforts to include the youth in the OSCE's efforts to raise its visibility.

On the margins of the meetings, I continue to hear many remarks about the President's declaration that the Cooperation Agreement with the ODIHR is inoperable. In this context, many ambassadors demonstrate that they are uninformed - partly because ODIHR feeds them with conflicting information and they believe their colleagues rather than politicians, partly because they fail to understand how an election observation mission operates. Most of them openly reject any form of substantial leadership by PA members.

In this context, participants also spoke about last year's unfinished business: The Unified Budget for 2013 has still not been approved, putting a limit on new ideas. It has been reported that some staff in the field have already started looking for other employment possibilities, impacting negatively on the general working atmosphere. Russia is requesting a further cut in ODIHR's budget. Three planned meetings of the ACMF have already been cancelled.

The two main "Current Issues" in the Permanent Council were the 50th Anniversary of the French-German Friendship Treaty ("Elysée Treaty") and the Martin Luther King Day. The anniversary led to contemplations about the German-French reconciliation as a possible role model for others in the OSCE area. The US statement on Martin Luther King Jr. Day deplored the amount of racial hatred present throughout the OSCE area. I reminded the Permanent Representatives of the PA's Monaco resolution on discrimination of people of African origin.



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Ambassador
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