

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 6, 2013

This week, five Sessions of the First Preparatory Meeting of the 21st Environmental and Economic Forum: "Increasing Stability and Security: Improving the environmental footprint of energy-related activities in the OSCE region" took place in Vienna. There were also meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), the Preparatory Committee and the ACMF.

As the result of a "high-level political agreement", one day after last week's report was out, participating States achieved consensus on the 2013 Unified Budget on the basis of the draft from December 21, 2012. As I pointed out last week, the ODIHR has created an extra-budgetary project at the request of the Chairmanship entitled "Review of Electoral Legislation and Practice of OSCE participating States", a long-standing request by Russia. The 100 000 Euro project, the outcome of which is meant to be publicly available, has now been partly financed by Kazakhstan, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. In the meeting of the Permanent Council, Norway, also on behalf of Switzerland, criticized that they had to finance a project that they did not find "of particular importance", putting the blame on Russia, but also deploring lack of a more "cooperative and pragmatic approach" on the side of its Western partners.

The budget is slightly lower (3.2 million Euros) than it was last year, meaning another significant decrease in real terms. The financial resources of the organization steadily continue to dry out, from 185 million in 2003 to less than 145 million Euros this year. At the same time, the Secretariat in Vienna was strengthened by six additional staff; five of them seconded by participating States. The ODIHR remains on the same level as last year. Many participating States deplored that the next steps that need to be taken in order to implement the Vilnius Ministerial Decision on the Conflict Cycle, in particular those related to rapid reaction, did not receive the necessary financial support. The same is true for enhanced efforts of the field presences in Central Asia. The PC also adopted the Scales of Contribution for 2013 to 2015 which remain the same as in the last years.

I reported again about the status of the ongoing OSCE PA election observation in Armenia, including the meetings PA staff held with ODIHR staff on the ground (details are contained in the News from Copenhagen). I concluded by saying that we are confident that the OSCE PA election observation mission will be as successful as previous ones, for instance last December in Romania. With the ODIHR running out of money (like it did before the Romanian elections that it did not formally observe – despite an election observation budget of more than 6.5 million Euros -) and ODIHR's failure to get sufficient Long Term Observers from participating States like in Italy, the PA might have to make an additional extra effort in order to ensure continuity in election observation.



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Ambassador
February 11, 2013