

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 29, 2013

This week, meetings of the PC, the FSC, the joint contact groups with the Partners for Cooperation and the Preparatory Committee took place, as well as an ambassadorial retreat on specific issues of the Helsinki+40 discussion, a Human Dimension Committee retreat on the reform of the human dimension events and a two-day drafting session of the Informal Working Group on Cyber Security.

By noon of July 17, 2013, no country had “broken the silence” on the Ministerial Council decision to appoint Astrid Thors (Finland) as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, thereby forcing the decision into effect. The PC also decided the Dates and Agenda of the 2013 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting.

The PC meeting was addressed by the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Council and heard the periodic report by the Head of the Office in Yerevan. Under Current Issues, Azerbaijan’s ambassador heavily criticized alleged uncorrected mistakes in ODIHR’s Needs Assessment report on the upcoming Presidential Elections in the country. This apparently aroused concerns among Western ambassadors that ODIHR’s observation might face restrictions, which the Azerbaijani representative tried to assuage.

During the PC, I made another statement on the outcome of the Istanbul Annual Session. This was a follow up to a more extensive informal briefing I had offered the day before, upon invitation by the Ukrainian chairmanship. The level of attendance at this briefing did not indicate a strong interest of Permanent Representatives in the many recommendations put forward by the PA. This fact was harshly criticized by one of the Permanent Representatives present, the ambassador of Spain. In the question and answer session, seven representatives took the floor.

I did another briefing for the joint Contact Groups of the Partners for Cooperation, with a particular focus on points of direct relevance for the partners. Unfortunately, in this case as well, the point on the PA recommendations had been put at the end of the long agenda, meaning that almost all ambassadors had left the room before the presentation began.

During the ambassadorial retreat ambassadors discussed about how debates in the PC and other meetings could become more productive. The proposals made by ambassadors did not indicate an emerging consensus. I recalled the Washington Colloquium results and PA recommendations on the consensus principle, and I urged for a stronger involvement of the PA, supporting those who advocated reducing the weekly rituals, opening up the PC to the public, and formalizing NGO participation, among other things. On the draft convention on legal status, which was the second issue discussed, I outlined the relevant PA recommendations and pointed at the need to define and upgrade the role and status of the PA in accordance with PA recommendations. The U.S. is still opposed to any kind of link between the approval of the draft convention and the elaboration of a constituent document.

There was hardly any progress in the Informal Working Group on Cyber Security, which is trying to put a number of Confidence Building measures on paper.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador, July 22, 2013