

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 49/50, 2013

The first of these weeks was devoted to the Kiev Ministerial Council (MC) meeting, during which – in addition to the MC – a high number of meetings of the PC, the FSC and the PC committees took place. The second week saw the usual meetings of these bodies, and another ambassadorial retreat on Helsinki+40, focusing on conflict resolution.

Apart from decisions relevant for forwarding documents to the MC, the PC also approved a set of initial confidence building measures on Cyber Security. While the FSC discussed the outcome of the MC, the PC did not do so. Instead, there was a sharp controversy because of a Russian statement at the occasion of Human Rights Day accusing the US and other Western countries of numerous human rights violations. A similar exchange of arguments took place during a brief discussion about the demonstrations in Kiev. In this context, the Belarusian ambassador asked the question, which remained unanswered, what would happen in Western countries if demonstrators committed acts of a similar nature as in Kiev, for instance occupying public buildings and blocking public institutions and traffic. In addition, the High Commissioner on National Minorities presented her routine report (not mentioning her appearance at the Autumn Session in Budva), and the Special Envoy of the Chairmanship on Gender reported about her activities, announcing that she will cooperate more actively with the OSCE PA, which was supported by the US ambassador.

The general view among ambassadors is that the results of the MC constitute a slight improvement over the two previous MCs. The arguments presented are: There is a “balanced” set of documents in all three dimensions, the Cyber Security decision is a novelty, the MC approved a Declaration on Helsinki+40 and there was agreement, after two years of failure to come to such an agreement, on two documents in the Human Dimension and an addendum to the Action Plan on Human Trafficking. Some of them attribute this to a more conciliatory position of Russia, who – in the perception of some Western ambassadors – wanted Ukraine to have a successful chairmanship. However, at least some also refer to the obvious failures: Again there was no political declaration, and the MC failed to agree on a Declaration on Afghanistan, a decision for the protection of journalists and one on women, peace and security, as well as on a decision on matters relevant to the FSC, mainly because of differing viewpoints about how to further deal with the modernization of the Vienna Document. More importantly, most decisions adopted were more about procedures than substance and where there was substance, it was often very weak.

The discussion during the retreat resulted in a number of interesting considerations and ideas, but not in any debate on concrete measures to come closer to solutions of these conflicts. I referred to the activities and recommendations of the OSCE PA and conflict resolution in general and suggested to include the PA and its members more in conflict resolution activities. The present Ukrainian and the incoming Swiss chairmanships supported this, while most ambassadors of the 23 that spoke, including the new Coordinator on Protracted Conflicts, the Finnish ambassador, did not include the PA in the considerations they voiced at this meeting.



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