

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

April 25, 2014

PC Brief Week 16 - 17, 2014

During these two weeks before and after Easter, the OSCE had its Spring Recess with no regular meetings scheduled. However, due to the Ukrainian crisis, there were three special meetings of the Permanent Council (PC) – one in conjunction with the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC).

The statements during two of these meetings continued to demonstrate open hostility between Russia and Western participating States, whereas the third meeting, which took place after the Geneva talks, started with more moderate statements. However, after Russian accusations against the Ukrainian government, the PC heard another round of statements similar to those that can be read in the Press. The main agenda item of the joint PC-FSC meeting was “unusual military activities”. However, Russia, whose military moves had led to the request by several participating States to enter into consultations about this, refused to take part in the discussions under this agenda item, claiming that the request to put this on the agenda lacked factual justification.

Despite appeals by the Swiss Chairmanship, it is not possible to detect serious efforts by the delegations to reduce tensions; all sides seem to use the OSCE mainly as a forum in which they can try to prove their point by making statements that are no different from what is written in the Press. The “OSCE toolbox” is being used by the different activities undertaken by the OSCE - based on the Vienna Document (military monitors), or the Special Monitoring Mission (Amb. Apakan), the special project on enhancing internal Ukrainian dialogue (Amb. Biscevic), the OSCE election observation (short term mission led by Joao Soares, with long-term presence on the ground, and the ODIHR long-term observation), as well as other activities by the ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on the Freedom of the Media. The deployment of additional monitors for the SMM, which is under preparation by the Secretariat in order to bring it up to the targeted 500 monitors, will cost another 18,2 million Euros. The money is largely coming from extra-budgetary contributions from countries that cannot be considered non-partisan in this conflict, which is the usual OSCE way of financing projects. However, this will make it very difficult for the SMM to establish facts in a way that they impact on the behavior of the conflicting parties.

What would really be needed is serious dialogue between all sides, with the objective of creating a joint understanding about how de-escalation can be achieved. For that to happen, all sides would have to reflect which of their own past and present activities might violate the “Spirit of Helsinki” or even openly breach international law and OSCE commitments, which creates suspicions and reduces trust instead of enhancing it. Such a self-critical approach is virtually non-existent. The only time during the past weeks that it was possible to detect a conciliatory atmosphere was during the meeting between the PA delegations of Russia and Ukraine, which was hosted by the PA in Vienna.

Although there was nothing else on the agenda, some other important developments are under way as well. No participating State has objected to the Chairmanship’s proposal to put forward draft decisions on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Secretary General or on the appointment of the German candidate for ODIHR Director. The next step will be the so-called “Silence Procedure”, which will lead – if within a short deadline no minister objects - to a ministerial decision.



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