

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 26 and 27, 2014

During these two weeks, the OSCE PA held its Annual Session in Baku, leading to the absence of most of the permanent PA Liaison Office staff from Vienna. The office nevertheless covered meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), their subsidiary bodies and a number of other informal meetings. In addition, there was the three-day Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC), a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SDHM) on Freedom of Expression and the launching of the Group of Friends for Security Sector Reform (SSR).

Delegations made several references to the PA's Annual Session during various agenda items of the PC. Marc Carillet made a brief statement about its outcome, highlighting the election of the former Chairman-in-Office and Finnish Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva, a personality well known to the diplomats, as the new PA President. The resolution on Russia's interference in Ukraine drew a lot of comments. I will provide a more expansive summary of the Annual Session to delegations in two weeks' time. The PC also heard the reports from the auditors and the Audit Committee in the context of the Financial Report and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2013, and approved the decision on the Financial Report and the Financial Statements.

The ASRC was more interesting than in years past due to its strong focus on the crisis in and around Ukraine. There were substantial discussions around the OSCE's potential to address the crisis and serve in a mediation capacity. Although not explicitly mentioned on the agenda, participating States discussed the need to resolve the protracted conflicts in quite some detail. Intensive debates between the delegations of Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as Moldova and the Russian Federation testified to the continued relevance of these protracted conflicts.

References to the PA's actual and possible further contributions were limited to its Ukraine Election Observation Mission, so I was compelled to give a more detailed insight into the PA's activities and the instruments it offers to participating States. In Session IV of the ASRC, Ms. Shukria Barakzai, Member of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, described the aspirations of Afghanistan, emphasizing the importance of Afghan ownership of the transition process and discussing the persisting challenges in the security sector.

The SHDM served as yet another battleground for the Ukrainian and Russian delegations; they accused each other of limiting democratic space and, in particular, the activity of journalists. Partly due to this sparring, the outcome of the – most of the time badly attended - meeting was limited to general statements of support for protecting the freedom of expression. The workshop on the Helsinki +40 parliamentary network, by contrast, produced some interesting ideas with the aim of making the field presences more effective and efficient.

Slovakia chaired the first meeting of the Group of Friends for SSR. A joint UN-OSCE conference on the subject will be held in Vienna on 7 July.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
July 7, 2014