

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 38, 2014

This week, there were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, the three committees, several side events and other informal briefings and discussions.

FSC and the PC again focused on the crisis in Ukraine. Notwithstanding the usual unproductive polemics related to the current confrontation between Russia and the West (six out of ten items under "Current Issues"), the discussion after the presentation by the head of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan, and in particular his in-depth informal briefing, demonstrated both the potential of the OSCE in conflict management and the obstacles the organization is facing. To meet the challenges of cease-fire monitoring, the OSCE is trying to reinforce the SMM up to the 500 member limit agreed upon previously.

For cease-fire monitoring, as well as the monitoring of borders, lines of fire, and retaken cities, the SMM needs specialists, most of them coming from the military. Also, some of the staff deployed needs to be replaced. However, at the time of Amb. Apakan's briefing, they had received only 55 nominations by participating States. Altogether, the additional observers will cost another 30 million Euros for the next six months. Also, in order to ensure a minimum of protection, the mission needs a high number of additional armored vehicles, the procurement of which seems to be extremely difficult. Safety concerns will persist, as the altogether 12 different armed groups are "not always coordinated" (Apakan). Within the EU, there seems to be disagreement about whether monitoring should also occur outside of the areas of direct conflict. Since observers need training, their effective deployment will not take place before the October parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

Apart from Ukraine, the PC dealt mainly with the routine report of the Head of the Mission in Albania, Amb. Florian Raunig. On the sidelines, the Albanian Ambassador and the Chargé d'Affaires of Kosovo to Austria again communicated to me the wish to have representatives of the Kosovo Assembly represented at PA meetings. I briefed the PC about the PA's upcoming Autumn Session, as did Roberto Montella in the Mediterranean Contact Group. The Contact Group discussed the severe threats posed by the "Islamic State" organization and the situation in Libya. Due to the absence of large-scale cooperation between the OSCE and the Partners in recent years, however, there seems to be less and less interest the work of the group. The next OSCE Mediterranean Conference is scheduled to take place in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on October 27 and 28, 2014. So far, no speakers from the Partner side have been identified.

The Chairmanship has tabled the first two draft decisions for the Ministerial Council, one on torture (with language referring to the work of the PA) and a declaration on the involvement of Civil Society in the OSCE. The US delegation stated that it would oppose drafts in the Human Dimension so long as there is no agreement on a package that includes some long-standing other issues. Because of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw, activities in Vienna will be reduced during the upcoming two weeks. The next regular PC meeting will take place on October 9, while there is no FSC meeting this week.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador, September 22, 2014