

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 16, 2015

This week, which was the first working week after the two-week Spring Recess, there were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF), the Security Committee, the informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE and other informal meetings, as well as a two-day Supplementary Human Dimension Committee Meeting (SHDM) on “Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association with Emphasis on Freedom of Association”.

The PC did not take decisions. It was devoted mainly to current issues with an emphasis on the conflict in and around Ukraine and on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The debates (on separate topics under the agenda item “Current Issues”) again resulted in a confrontation between the different narratives about the conflict – this time focusing on who started which breach of the ceasefire. I referred to the latest press release by PA President Kanerva on the intimidation of OSCE monitors, briefed delegations about the Franco-German PA Retreat, which took place before Easter, with the participation of members from the Russian and Ukrainian delegations. I also expressed regret about another publication, this time signed by the OSCE Secretary General Amb Zannier, which - when listing which institutions from “within the OSCE framework” had been active and cooperating with the Special Monitoring Mission – omitted the PA, which might create the impression that the PA is not part of the OSCE framework.

The Serbian Chairmanship and their Special Representative on the legal Personality of the OSCE, former Danish Amb. John Bernhard, have amended their original proposals for different options that could address the negative consequences of the fact that the OSCE is still lacking a legal status and that its staff is therefore unprotected, especially in crisis situations like now in Ukraine. In the respective working group, I announced the PA’s next Helsinki+40 Seminar which will take place after the Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen and deal with the issue. The amended proposals have taken care of a number of concerns I expressed in the last meeting of the working group. However, the draft constituent document suffers from the diverging views between the PA and the governmental side of the OSCE about status and role of the PA. I therefore stated that the present reference it makes to the OSCE Rules of Procedure will not be sufficient. Also, the proposal for a “Convention+ lists all governmental structures in a paragraph under the headline “Structure of the OSCE” while the PA figures in a separate paragraph in the draft, creating the impression that it is not part of the OSCE structures. I therefore urged to either include the PA under the paragraph on the OSCE structure, or to change the headline of the paragraph.

The SDHM was attended by the usual human rights experts from the delegations and representatives from NGOs dealing with human rights in certain countries East of Vienna, resulting in very general discussions about the human rights situation in the OSCE.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
April 20, 2015