

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

May 8, 2015

### *PC Brief Weeks 17-19, 2015*

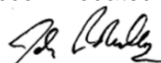
During these weeks, there were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), the Contact Groups with the Mediterranean and the Asian Partners for Co-operation, the Preparatory Committee (PrepComm), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF), the PC Committees, as well as retreats of the Human Dimension Committee and the Gender Focal Points and other informal meetings. In addition, the Chair of the PA's Human Dimension Committee, Isabel Santos, spent two days in Vienna in order to – among other things - address the PC's Human Dimension Committee. The News from Copenhagen has reported in detail about this visit, which was met with considerable interest. Roberto Montella and I participated in the PA Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen.

The PC took decisions regarding the 2015 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM – Warsaw from 21 September to 2 October 2015), the Human Dimension Seminar (June 1-3, 2015, in Warsaw) and the Mediterranean Conference (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 20 and 21 October 2015). The decision on the HDIM came earlier than in previous years, although it was again preceded by lengthy debates. OSCE Secretary General Amb., Zannier introduced the 2016 draft Program Outline, which serves as political guidance for this year's budget discussions. It will be discussed in detail in the coming weeks. I informed the PC about the PA's latest Helsinki+40 Seminar that took place in Copenhagen in conjunction with the Bureau Meeting. Otherwise, the PC once again dealt mainly with the crisis in and around Ukraine and with the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as related polemics. No new decisions were taken with regard to these issues. There were, however, many references made to the inaugural meetings of the Working Groups (WGs) established in accordance with the Minsk II agreements. Reportedly, the parties have agreed that the WG on Security Issues will meet on May 19 to discuss a disengagement plan for Shyrokyne, the WG on Political issues will meet on May 22 to discuss modalities/conditions for Local Elections, the WG on humanitarian issues will meet on 19 May to discuss illegally detained persons/ prisoners, and the WG on Economic Issues will meet on May 14. Except for the WG on Security Issues which will meet in Eastern Ukraine, all other meetings will be held in Minsk.

The last of the three PC meetings devoted considerable time to statements on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. While the statements of several delegations expressed dismay "that this takes place at times when there is military aggression and interference in internal affairs by Russia", Russia warned "against attempts to rewrite history and diminish the heroic role of the peoples of the Soviet Union in liberating Europe from Nazism and Fascism". One week earlier, there was also an extensive debate about whether or not the forced replacement of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire and the massive loss of Armenian lives a hundred years ago should be addressed as "genocide" – the latter being the position of most participating States.

The informal Working Group on Helsinki+40 discussed a possible informal High Level – perhaps Ministerial - Meeting in July that should commemorate 40 years of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and also deal with current challenges. Possible dates under discussion are July 3 and 10. I reminded delegates that it would be very odd to have an informal meeting of this kind before the celebration in Finlandia Hall that the PA has been planning for a number of years, and before the PA will be able to contribute its finalized report about its Helsinki+40 Project. Such a meeting, if it comes about, should be held after the PA's Annual Session.

I also had an informal follow-up meeting on the PA's Helsinki+40 seminar with the legal advisor of the OSCE Secretariat, Lisa Tabassi, in order to discuss more in detail how the concerns expressed by the PA could be accommodated in the different documents under discussion.



Andreas Nothelle, Ambassador