

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 50, 2014

During this week there were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF) as well as their subsidiary bodies and informal gatherings. I also attended a conference in the Austrian Nationalrat (Parliament) entitled "Parliamentary Actions for a nuclear-weapon-free world event", which was chaired by PA Vice President Muttonen, a side event during a two-day conference on the same topic.

The Permanent Council heard the reports by Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, and on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also Focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions. Under Current Issues, the PC had the usual exchange on the situation in Ukraine, with all sides calling for a swift implementation of the Minsk agreements. It was announced that the strength of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) has reached 320 monitors and is expected to attain its full agreed upon strength of 500 monitors by mid-February 2015. Discussions about financial issues and the next three-month extension of the border monitoring mission are still ongoing.

US Ambassador Baer raised the issue of the US Senate report on CIA torture. Except for Azerbaijan, which used the opportunity to elaborate on the US human rights record, delegations are apparently planning to come back to the issue at a later stage. Under "Any Other Business", I spoke about the annoying fact that the OSCE Magazine ("Security Community"), in its article about the OSCE activities in Ukraine in its latest issue, depicted the recent election observation mission in Ukraine led by PA Vice President Härstedt as a purely ODIHR exercise, not even mentioning the PA, the cooperation we had, or the role of the Special Representative. In his reply, Secretary General Zannier agreed that this was unacceptable, at the same time claiming that the journalists writing the articles in the magazine enjoy editorial freedom. However, it is the responsibility of the Secretary General to have a corrective mechanism in place when a publication published by the OSCE Secretariat, written by OSCE staff, using the OSCE logo and paid by the OSCE participating States spreads information about the work of the OSCE that is factually wrong.

The deadline for the budget expires on December 20, 2014. There is still no consensus on the budget. The latest compromise proposal provides for an increase of a total of 142.5 million Euros, which is 200.000 Euros above the 2014 Approved Budget, so this year's budget is getting close to zero nominal growth again. The reduction is mainly caused by a reduction of the increase requested by the ODIHR (9.9 percent) to 3.3 percent (including one million Euros less for elections). Discussions about the status of the field presence in Kazakhstan are equally ongoing.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
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