

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 25, 2015

There were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), the Contact Group with Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, a Helsinki+40 Ambassadorial Retreat with the "Panel of Eminent Persons" coordinated by Ambassador Ischinger, as well as the Committees, including one joint meeting, other informal gatherings and a conference on "Journalists' Safety, Media Freedom and Pluralism in Times of Conflict", organized by the Representative on the Freedom of the Media.

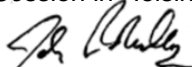
The PC finally took the decision on the agenda and organizational modalities of the 2015 Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC), which will take place this week (from June 23 to 25). It also extended the deployment of the two OSCE observer missions to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border until 30 September 2015 and of the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine until 31 December 2015. Apart from that, it debated the regular report by the Representative on the Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, and the usual Current Issues. The debate on Ukraine once again resulted in polemics and even personal attacks.

The ambassadorial retreat discussed an interim report about lessons learnt from the Ukraine conflict regarding possible need for reform. Some ambassadors referred to the proposals contained in the report, but most of them criticized what the report does not contain. Although Amb. Ischinger's foreword underlined that the reason why the report did not tell the story of the events in Ukraine was that among the experts on the panel "Western and Russian narratives ... are very different", several Western ambassadors expressed strong criticism regarding the "failure to mention the ongoing aggression by one participating State". Also, despite the obvious effort made by the panel to come to consensual recommendations for the future of the OSCE, the Russian member of the panel has made extensive use of the possibility to explain his dissenting opinion in footnotes to points of the report. In addition, the ODIHR and the Representative on the Freedom of the Media expressed their strong dissatisfaction with the report because they considered their role in Ukraine to be insufficiently reflected, to which Amb. Ischinger replied that the report had meant to address things that went wrong and that the Panel had not found anything wrong with what the institutions did. I reminded delegations of the MC decision that calls for a greater involvement of the PA and parliamentarians in addressing the conflicts. In the end, most members of the Panel seemed to be as unhappy with the discussion as were those delegates that had expressed complaints, and it was difficult to detect any progress in the work on Helsinki+40 resulting from this retreat.

The Mediterranean Contact Group saw another sharp controversy between Turkey and Egypt about the death penalty sentence for former Egyptian President Mursi.

The discussions at the conference on "Journalists' Safety, Media Freedom and Pluralism in Times of Conflict" targeted Russia and included issues of state propaganda in the media. In the PC meeting, Russia criticized the event as having been anti-Russian.

During the meeting of the Informal Working Group on Scales of Contribution, the French delegate praised the resolution proposed as a Supplementary Item on the same issue for the PA's Annual Session in Helsinki.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
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