

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 26, 2015

This week, there was no meeting of the Permanent Council (PC) or the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), because of the three-day Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC). In addition, there were meetings of the Preparatory Committee and other informal bodies and gatherings, as well as a one day event "Vienna Cyber Diplomacy Day" and Power Breakfast on Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

The ASRC dealt with the implementation of commitments in the non-military security dimension. Whereas in former times the ASRC's main focus was on challenges such as transnational threats, the events related to the crisis in and around Ukraine have shifted the focus more to issues related to crisis prevention, management and resolution. I reminded delegations again of the need to take possible contributions by the PA and its members into account when addressing crisis situations. There was an in-depth discussion about some of the protracted conflicts and about terrorism and foreign fighters. In the context of the latter, participating States were urged to share more information between their intelligence services. There was also a discussion with the Partners for Cooperation, which was dominated by a dispute between the ambassador of Egypt and the representative of the US on what Egypt considers to be double-standards in the application of international and humanitarian law, especially with regard to Europe's reaction to migration.

However, while a lot of statements from delegations were triggered by and related to the current pan-European crisis, resembling the statements made at meetings of the PC, other parts of the conference were more self-reflective regarding the OSCE's role and efficiency. In particular, there was a half-day discussion on the failure of the OSCE to deal effectively with the protracted conflicts and another on European Security and the role of the OSCE. The latter discussion had all keynote speakers and several ambassadors, including last year's PC Chair, Swiss Amb. Greminger, and Turkish Amb. Ildem, criticize the debate culture in the PC. Remarks were made to the extent that PC statements are only meant to register the positions of the participating States, instead of showing signs of an active dialogue and an intensive search for solutions to crisis situations. Norway contested this by stating that this criticism was valid only for "the big issues" and, together with Sweden, added that they were ready for dialogue only under the condition that the statements of their interlocutors were made in good faith. There was also criticism of the persistent lack of high level interest in the work of the OSCE.

On June 22, 2015, the Chair-in-Office appointed Amb. Martin Sajdik from Austria as his new Special Representative in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, succeeding Heidi Tagliavini.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
June 26, 2015