

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

July 13, 2015

*PC Brief Weeks 27/28, 2015*

During these two weeks, there were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC) or the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), one joint meeting between the two, meetings of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF), the groups of friends of Mediation and of Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSG/R), as well as a two-day OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Expert Conference: Countering the Incitement and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fostering Mutual Respect and Understanding, the 4th Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code on Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and 15th OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference "People at risk: combating human trafficking along migration routes" (6-7 July). At the end of the second week, the PC moved to Helsinki, for the planned High-Level event, which was more like a PC with participation from the capitals, and without Russian participation. During this week, all permanent staff from the Vienna Office attended the PA's Annual Session in Helsinki.

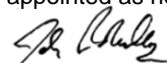
The PC took a managerial decision on the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, which will take place on 19-20 October 2015 in Vienna. Belarus announced that it has invited the ODIHR and will invite the OSCE PA to observe the country's upcoming presidential elections in Belarus (October 11, 2015). The PC was addressed by the incoming Chairman-in-Office, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The address was well received, but did not indicate any policy changes as regards previous chairmanships. However, in his reply to the comments, Steinmeier also underlined his impression that the PC was used mainly to put national positions on record, as opposed to an effective and fruitful dialogue about how to solve the many problems the organization and Europe are facing. The "High-Level" event should have given a possibility for real interaction, but there was very little of it. Most remarkably, although the PA had just presented its very elaborate report on its Helsinki+40 Project, and despite the pertinent PA resolution, delegates did not mention the PA's contribution at all, even after I had presented it at the Working Lunch of Heads of Delegations.

Under Current Issues, there was a repetition of the usual discussions about the crisis in and around Ukraine. In addition, Russia raised the point of the Finnish decision to deny several Russian PA members entry into the country for the purpose of exercising their membership rights in the OSCE PA Annual Session. I underlined the international practice that meetings of parliamentary assemblies can take place only if the host country ensures that all PA members can participate and criticized that the extensive list of exceptions made from the EU sanctions that only mention diplomatic OSCE meetings, but not the OSCE PA, meaning that members banned from participating in the PA meeting are perfectly able to participate in events of the governmental side in the same country, if listed as members of their national delegations. While underlining that I could not comment on political issues regarding the sanctions, I therefore urged that OSCE PA Annual Sessions, as the central decision-making events of the PA, should fall under the same exception as the corresponding Ministerial Council Meeting as the main decision-making event on the governmental side, and that other statutory PA events should receive the same treatment as Chairmanship events. Otherwise, it would constitute a discrimination against the PA and an infringement of the PA's autonomy.

The Anti-Terrorism Conference drew a lot of attention and saw many statements, but other than a repetition of well-known facts and concerns it was difficult to see in which way it has contributed in practical terms to a development of effective measures by the OSCE. The ambassador of Egypt criticized that the West, when talking about terrorism, usually focused its efforts on those organizations active in their own countries, neglecting to a large extent what is going on in the Partner Countries. On the other hand, the Partners were largely not present at the joint PC-FSC meeting on issues of Arms Trade in the Mediterranean region.

The SHDM was poorly attended. Marc Carillet made a statement listing the relevant PA recommendations.

The present Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, Amb. Marcel Pesko, Slovakia, has been appointed as new Director of the Conflict Prevention Center, replacing Amb. Kobieracki in September.



Andreas Nothelle, Ambassador