

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

April 10, 2017

PC Brief Week 14, 2017

Last week there have been meetings by the Permanent Council (PC) and the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), including a Special PC on Ukraine. A number of committees and other informal bodies and gatherings have also held meetings. There also was a full-day capital-level politico-military retreat on the "Structured Dialogue" on current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area. This process is based on the core Hamburg Ministerial Council decision on the OSCE framework for arms control (the so-called Steinmeier initiative).

The PC approved the establishment of an "OSCE Information Security Enhancement Fund", which is a separate fund to finance measures that strengthen the security of OSCE information and communication technology (IT). This is a consequence of a severe security breach of the OSCE IT system. The PC also approved the agenda, timetable and organizational modalities of the 2017 OSCE Asian Conference, which will be held in Germany (at present Chair of the Contact Group with the Asian Partners, on 19 and 20 June 2017). Finally, it extended the deployment of OSCE observers to two Russian checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border until 31 July 2017., Western countries registered interpretative statements on that decision that draw attention to the limitations of monitoring of the border and call for its extension.

Director Link delivered his last report to the PC. I used this opportunity to underline once more his exemplary contribution to the enhancement of PA-ODIHR cooperation, noting that in that respect he had set a standard which his successors will have to meet.

The retreat, which was very well attended by high-level officials from the capitals, focused on "Converging and Diverging Threat Perceptions in the OSCE Area". It was negatively impacted by the US attack on the Syrian Armed Forces, which led to a strong Russian statement of condemnation, replacing the more topic-related one Russia would have otherwise made. There was some inter-active dialogue on threat perceptions, although most speakers have again read prepared statements. The German Chair of the Informal Working Group on the "Structured Dialogue" had invited the PA, but not provided a seat around the table.

The German Friedrich Ebert-Foundation recently opened an Office in Vienna, which is mainly focused on giving support to the OSCE's work in the Politico-Military Dimension. They helped to organize a Security Day last year and is assisting in the preparation of the next. I have had an extensive meeting with the Head of the Office and senior staff, where they expressed their readiness to also assist the PA in its work.

Between now and the end of the Easter week the OSCE will have its Spring Recess.



Andreas Nothelle, Ambassador