

## Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

### *PC Brief Weeks 40/41, 2015*

During these weeks there were meetings of the Permanent Council (PC), Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF), a joint meeting of the three committees on migration, a meeting of the Economic and Environmental Committee, and a meeting of the Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE. In the first week, most ambassadors were still in Warsaw attending the annual Human Dimension Meeting (HDIM). During the second week, I spent three days accompanying Vice President Roberto Battelli to a conference on the OSCE Conduct in Belgrade, Serbia. Since Marc Carillet was staffing the Election Observation Mission in Belarus, Francesco Pagani and the Research Fellows again covered the Vienna activities during these two days.

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier briefed the PC about the 2016 Unified Budget Proposal, which amounts to a total of 145.4 million Euro. He drew attention of the participating States to the proposed establishment of a conflict prevention facility, the emerging challenge of attracting and retaining highly qualified staff and the need to cover the SMM by the Unified Budget (UB) instead of assessed contributions. Russia objected to the increase in financing for the ODIHR, especially its election observation activity, as well as for the other executive institutions and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU). Like some CIS countries, Turkey expressed dissatisfaction with what they regard as imbalanced allocation of resources across the dimensions. Canada spoke in favor of zero nominal growth of the UB, drawing objections from Norway and Switzerland, and regretted the lack of progress on key performance summaries.

The Special Representative of the OSCE CiO in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group Amb. Martin Sajdik stressed that the "Normandy Format" allows for all sides to talk with each other on substantive issues, in a constructive setting, and with progress made in the rebuilding of vital water and energy infrastructure. Pressing challenges are: sustaining the ceasefire, finalizing the agreement on removal of heavy weapons and artillery (this was subsequently achieved), including impartial verification by SMM without hindrance; bolstering of demining efforts; political agreements on the special status of regions, special election law, and amnesty in line with what was agreed in Minsk. Concrete progress is most needed on urgent humanitarian issues - water/energy infrastructure - before winter, as well as on freedom of movement from government to separatist held territory (especially for pensioners), and finally the freedom of access and movement of international humanitarian organizations. The local elections announced (and now postponed) by the separatists figured prominently in the critical statements by most delegations. Russia stressed that the underlying philosophy of the Minsk agreement was the facilitation of negotiations between Ukraine and Donbass authorities.

Regarding ODIHR's decision not to observe the elections in Azerbaijan, raised under "Current Issues", Azerbaijan struck a heavy and personal attack on ODIHR's Director accusing him of violating his mandate and requesting that Director Link "must be held accountable for not engaging in consultations with Azerbaijan as well as for deciding not to observe the Parliamentary Elections". Azerbaijan also asked for the establishment of a "contact group" which would address "ODIHR's accountability". In his absence, Link was supported by Western delegations.

Francesco Pagani briefed the PC on the PA's Autumn Session. Mongolia, in its response, thanked the PA. The FSC decided that the 2015 Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centers will take place December 15.



Andreas Nothelle  
Ambassador, October 9, 2015