

Special Representative

To:

PA President

and

PA Secretary General

PC Brief Week 28, 2016

This week, there were meetings of the PC, the FSC, the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF), and the topical committees, as well as several other informal meetings. There was also a Conflict Cycle Roundtable Discussion on Building Confidence – Dealing with the Past: Long Term Strategies for Sustainable Peace, and I participated in a Conference sponsored by the German Chairmanship “Between Aspirations and Realities: Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE” of the Max Planck Society in Berlin.

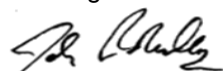
The PC adopted the agenda and modalities of the 2016 Mediterranean Conference in Vienna (October 5/6) and the Dates and Agenda of the 2016 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting (October 17/18). The FSC decided on the date of the 2016 Meeting of the Heads of Verification Centers (December 13).

Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz presented the Austrian intentions for their OSCE Chairmanship in 2017. Although it did not contain any surprising novelties, it was followed by a long debate, which in parts was a duplication of the debate on the crisis in and around Ukraine which followed under Current Issues, but also showed that the strong focus of the presentation on combating terrorism was appreciated by several delegations. The address was followed by a report of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, at the occasion of which Amb. Suomalainen also mentioned the upcoming OSCE PA Session there and the good cooperation of the mission with us.

The conference in Berlin surprised with two presentations by academics that called for a strengthening of democratic representation in the OSCE. They analyzed the OSCE's practice of "informal norm setting" leading to the creation of "soft law" and the lack of transparency and accountability. Belgian Prof. Jan Wouters deplored the lack of oversight competencies of the OSCE PA, suggesting compensating this deficiency by a close and formalized cooperation of national parliaments. A senior official of the OSCE Secretariat described the situation as "the PA operating in a small grey zone of a bigger grey zone called OSCE". In my statement I concurred - among other points - with the opinion expressed by the President of the OSCE Court of Arbitration and Reconciliation that, although a statutory instrument might be desirable in order to remove the grey zones, such a legal document would have to ensure that it does not prevent a future strengthening of the Court's - and the PA's roles.

The comprehensive presentations on the contributions of the OSCE to preventing and overcoming conflicts during the Roundtable Discussion (with – among others, former Finnish Foreign Minister Tuomioja and former Amb. William Hill) gave another opportunity to refer to the PA's capacities and the potential contribution of its members in that regard.

Francesco Pagani briefed the Secretariat about the outcome of the Tbilisi Annual Session during a meeting of the Policy Group.



Andreas Nothelle
Ambassador
July 15, 2016