

*REPORT OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON SOUTH EAST EUROPE
ROBERTO BATTELLI FOR THE OSCE PA ANNUAL SESSION*

Standing Committee Baku, 27 June - 2 July 2014

During the 2006 Winter Meeting in Vienna, President Alcee Hastings appointed me Special Representative on South East Europe. This appointment was renewed by President Lenmarker in 2006, President Soares in 2008, President Efthymiou in 2010, as well as by President Migliori in 2012, and President Krivokapic in 2013. In renewing my mandate, the Presidents have ensured the continuity of observing developments in South East Europe. A main objective of my functions as Special Representative is the facilitation of parliamentary dialogue in the region.

My mandate also includes:

- Promoting dialogue in all segments of society, in particular at the parliamentary level, so as to encourage reconciliation and rehabilitation in the region, most especially in the Western Balkans, and to contribute to the transformation and construction of democratic institutions.
- Maintaining close contact with, and serving as a focal point for, the Assembly's work in the region in general and with the Regional Cooperation Council.
- Advising and reporting back to the President on the situation in the region, with a focus on developments pertaining to Kosovo.
- Communicating with relevant actors within the OSCE that work on South East Europe regional issues.

On 18-20 March, together with President Ranko Krivokapic and Roberto Montella, I participated in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's 85th Rose-Roth Seminar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While in Sarajevo, I took the opportunity to meet with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as with the Chair of the Central Election Commission and the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to our Parliamentary Assembly.

On 29-30 April, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle and I represented our Parliamentary Assembly at the OSCE Regional Meeting of Heads of Field Operations of South East Europe, hosted in Montenegro. This meeting served as a valuable opportunity to take stock of recent developments and trends in South East Europe as well as to brief the broad spectrum of participants on activities and initiatives undertaken by our Parliamentary Assembly in and for the region. I also used this opportunity to inform the Heads of the OSCE Field Operations in the region about the draft resolution I have sponsored for this Annual Session on the topic of "Regional Cooperation in South East Europe".

In addition, I used the opportunity for intensive discussions with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the Western Balkans, and with PA President Ranko Krivokapic. These talks also dealt with the difficult issue of the OSCE PA's engagement with Kosovo. Due to the status neutral position of the OSCE, we continue to face the schizophrenic situation that the majority of the participating States view Kosovo as an independent country – with the effect that this country is not part of the OSCE – while others continue to see it as part of Serbia. However, since there is an important OSCE field presence in the country, it these protocol issues regrettably make activities of the PA as a high-level political body there almost more difficult than lower level technical activities of OSCE executive structures.

With respect to the election calendar for the region, our Parliamentary Assembly has again played its leadership role in the observation of the Serbian Parliamentary Elections held in March this year, as well as of the Parliamentary Elections held in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in April. In my capacity as OSCE Special Coordinator appointed by the Chairperson-in-Office, I led the short-term OSCE observer mission to Serbia. The results of the election observation are the object of separate reports.

Francesco Pagani from the PA Liaison Office in Vienna participated in the ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 24-26 June in preparation for the General Elections scheduled to occur in October. We plan to deploy a substantial observation mission to these important elections.

I also conveyed the condolences of the PA to the countries in the region that were severely affected by the recent floods. This catastrophe should not be forgotten; it was a heavy setback for the development of the affected countries.

Finally, I would like to underscore that bilateral and regional cooperation in South East Europe continued to remain at the forefront of the governments' agendas since my last report on the occasion of our Winter Meeting (13-14 February). In this context, I would like to recall that the Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process held its Inaugural Session in Bucharest on 10-11 May. This event served as an important catalyst in further enhancing parliamentary cooperation among parliaments of the South East European Cooperation Process. I would also like to recall the constructiveness displayed during the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. These are only a few of many other positive examples. It is therefore my assessment that regional cooperation continued to mark a positive trend alongside regionally owned initiatives in the fields of economic development, cross-border cooperation, arms control as well as law enforcement and risk disaster management. It is in light of such positive trends that I believe that the region deserves recognition and support in fulfilling its mainstream foreign policy ambition of further integration in the EU. In this spirit I have sponsored the Draft Resolution on "Regional Cooperation in South East Europe" for your consideration at this Annual Session. I count on your support.