

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON SOUTH EAST EUROPE
MARK PRITCHARD FOR THE OSCE PA ANNUAL SESSION**

Luxembourg, July 4-8, 2019

Appointed Special Representative on South East Europe in July 2018, I am tasked with serving as the Assembly's focal point in South East Europe, promoting dialogue, and encouraging reconciliation and rehabilitation in the region. My mandate is also to:

- *Promote dialogue in all segments of society, in particular at the parliamentary level, in order to encourage reconciliation and rehabilitation in South East Europe, and in particular in the Western Balkans, and to make a contribution to the transformation and building up of democratic institutions;*
- *Maintain close contact with and serve as a focal point for the Assembly's work in the region in general and its participation in the activities of the Regional Cooperation Council in particular;*
- *Advise and report back to the President on the situation in the region, in particular the development of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and with respect to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, as well as the name issue with respect to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;*
- *Communicate with relevant actors within the OSCE as well as PA Committees dealing with migration and terrorism who work on issues related to the region.*

Since my last report at this year's Winter Meeting, I have continued to closely follow the situation in South East Europe. Despite the positive recommendations by the European Commission on starting accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, EU Members States have decided to postpone a decision to October 2019. Moreover, internal political turbulence in Albania have represented a growing challenge for Albania, particularly as it prepares to chair the OSCE in 2020.

Regrettably, Brexit related developments have prevented me from visiting the region more actively this year.

Notwithstanding, on 18 June I met with Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama in London, where we discussed the political situation in Albania and the prospects for a resolution of the Albanian political crisis. The OSCE PA had previously issued two Press releases regarding the situation in Albania. The first one, on 13 May, was issued by PA President Tsereteli and PA Secretary General Montella jointly with OSCE Chairperson in Office, Slovakian Foreign and European Affairs Minister, Miroslav Lajcak, and with the OSCE Secretary General, Thomas Greminger. They condemned the use of violence by the protesters in Tirana, as well as the threats and attempted intimidation directed at the Head of the OSCE's Presence in Albania and at the Organization in general. A month later, on 13 June, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President George Tsereteli issued a second Press Release calling on political stakeholders to engage in inclusive dialogue and to uphold the Rule of Law.

On 27-29 May Special Representative Ambassador Nothelle visited Tirana for a training workshop to the Parliament and the 2020 Task Force, where he discussed the OSCE PA and its flagship activities and exchanged views on foreseen priorities for 2019-2020 and enhanced engagement with upcoming Albanian Chairmanship. Ambassador Nothelle also used the occasion to meet with representatives of the Government and of the Assembly as well as former PA members from the country.

On 8 May the Vienna Liaison Office met with the Task Force of the Albanian incoming Chairmanship. The Head of the Task Force, Ms. Inid Milo updated on the preparations for the upcoming Chairmanship and informed the PA on the priorities of the Albanian incoming OSCE Chairmanship.

I have also followed anti-government demonstrations in Serbia and Montenegro as well as attempts to resume the EU-led Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. The protracted lack of a resumption of the dialogue is deeply concerning. I would like to reiterate there is no alternative to good-faith dialogue, and would like to encourage all channels of communication, including parliamentary diplomacy to support and improve reconciliation and cooperation in the region.

I will continue to follow the situation in the region and will keep you informed about further developments.