

Permanent Council

Guest speakers at the Permanent Council in 2007

11 January
(Special PC): Chairman-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Miguel Angel Moratinos

18 January
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier

25 January
Head of the EU Border Assistance Mission, Brigadier-General Ferenc Banfi

8 February
EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Peter Semneby

13 February
(Special PC): Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, Nikolay Bordyuzha

20 February
Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the UN for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari

8 March
(Special PC): President of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus

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Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania, Besnik Mustafaj

17 April
(Special PC): Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Vartan Oskanian

19 April
EU Special Representative for Skopje, Erwan Fouere

26 April
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk

30 April
(Special PC): Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Marat Tazhin

23 May
(Special Joint PC/FSC Meeting): Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov

31 May
(Special PC): Secretary of State of the United States, Condoleezza Rice

14 June
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Gela Bezhuashvili

5 July
Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Terry Davis

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Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Ambassador Bolat K. Nurgaliyev

10 July
(Special PC): Prime Minister of Croatia, Ivo Sanader

12 July
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Luis Filipe Marques Amado

17 July
(Special PC): Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Vuk Jeremic

19 July
EU Special Representative for Moldova, Kalman Mizsei

26 July
Minister of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan, Yermukhamet Yertysbayev

—
Secretary General of the Eurasian Economic Community, Ambassador Grigory Alexeyevich Rapota

25 October
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, Milan Rocen

—
High Representative of the UN and the EU for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Miroslav Lajcak

30 October
(Special PC): Prime Minister of Georgia, Zurab Noghaideli

15 November
UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Kosovo, Joachim Ruecker

Permanent Council



The Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Carlos Sanchez de Boado of Spain, at the Hofburg in Vienna on 11 January (OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

The Permanent Council, which convenes weekly in the Hofburg in Vienna, is the Organization's main body for political consultation and decision-making.

In 2007, many senior political officials from OSCE participating States addressed the Permanent Council and presented their views on contentious and important issues. The Council also heard numerous reports from Heads of Institutions, field operations and the Chairman's Personal Representatives.

One of the more difficult and lengthy but ultimately successful debates surrounded the appointment of a new High Commissioner on National Minorities. The Spanish Chairmanship steered the appointment of Knut Vollebaek of Norway, who took up his duties on 4 July, succeeding Rolf Ekeus. Many participating States praised the Chairmanship's decision to use a food-for-thought paper to help pull together a consensus; they suggested employing a similarly transparent process in future.

The main innovation of the year was the launch of the three-committee structure. Adopted at the Brussels Ministerial to reflect the three OSCE security dimensions, the committees transformed the Council's day-to-day work.

The Chairmanship considered the committees' record in the first year to be very satisfactory, although still perfectible, and suggested extending their mandate with a view to making them permanent.

The Security Committee, led by Ambassador Peter Lizak, the Permanent Representative of Slovakia, drove forward the OSCE work programme against terrorism and co-operated with the Mediterranean Partners in this field. Similarly, the Committee shepherded OSCE agendas on border security and management, international anti-drug co-operation, work on organized crime, community-based policing and other issues.

The Economic and Environmental Committee, chaired first by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Doulat Kuanyshev followed by Ambassador Artim Zekoli, the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, helped prepare the *Economic and Environmental Forum* and discussed follow-up recommendations. It examined the economic and environmental aspects of security.

The Human Dimension Committee was chaired by the Chairman of the Permanent Council and the Permanent Representative of Spain to the OSCE, Ambassador Carlos Sanchez de Boado. The committee looked at the implementation of commitments by participating States in this sphere, provided support for relevant OSCE

meetings and recommendations for follow-up. It also considered the work of the relevant OSCE Institutions in this area.

Each committee discussed a number of political initiatives and draft texts, which resulted in various decisions and declarations of the Permanent Council and the Ministerial Council.

The Chairmanship found the committees provided a useful interface between participating States, the Secretariat, Institutions and, in some cases, a broader constituency including civil society. All three committees fulfilled their work programmes; they each met once a month or more as needed, dealing flexibly with their respective portfolios.

The committees were particularly invaluable in their consultative role in planning the Ministerial Council in Madrid. In general, the Chairmanship found the committees enhanced planning throughout the year and increased transparency in the process of consultation.