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## Farewell Statement

by H.E. Ambassador Vladimír Galuška

Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the OSCE

in the Permanent Council

on 12 July 2018

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Dear Alessandro,

Thank you Maria Pia for your kind words, addressed to me and to my career, of which I became an accidental hero.

I would like to start with a big thank you to my humble team of three diplomats, Lenka, David and Daniel, who have been doing a wonderful job, so often on my behalf, and with no other reward than a good word. I thank the EU delegation team and Joanis for always saying it better than I would.

My thanks go to my wife and her trust in me, with which she left me alone in this most livable city in the world. Her regular and frequent visits in Vienna allowed us to enjoy at least some of the exciting diplomatic life in this country.

Maria Pia was maybe too kind to me, assessing the 28 years of my diplomatic career ending on August 15th this year. Much of my professional advancements came as a surprise to me.

If it wasn't for the revolutions of 1989, particularly our Velvet revolution, I would have been an unknown corporate lawyer behind the Iron Curtain with little prospects of meeting any foreigners, not to speak about any of you, diplomats in enemy Vienna.

Thanks to the twist of fate of the European nations of which I was a miniscule part, a new career opened to me, and I have been musing ever since how lucky in fact I was. And how improbably lucky I was that as a Czech of my generation, and a trained T-54 commander, I have not experienced a hot war in my lifetime.

As for my part in the OSCE family, I honestly admit it was minor. I took bigger roles on the UN side of the river, but that of course does not excuse me. I feel sad from the state of affairs, or current issues as we call them, and I deeply regret that the light at the end of the tunnel always showed to be the headlights of an oncoming fast train. From 2013, when I arrived, on, I see the cornerstones of the OSCE terminology like confidence building measures, comprehensive security, dialogue, trust and consensus turned to hollow phrases. I do not want to sound nostalgic but I sometimes wish we could turn back time, and return to the enthusiastic nineties when we thought we would be building this

world together and not against each other. I have been on both sides of the imaginary East - West divide in my lifetime, and I deplore the fact of its lasting existence.

I decided to retire at the age of 65, and I thank those who kindly pretend that I look younger. The world has moved on with fascinating speed, and not always in a direction I welcome. I think I can live without many latest inventions and gadgets, but as a diplomat I would be lagging behind. I don't have a Facebook account, I do not tweet, I do not do Instagram, Telegram or Baidu, I have never snapped a selfie of myself, I don't understand why anybody would watch a 30 second homemade movie on YouTube, and anytime I was invited to join LinkedIn and they asked me for my personal data, I switched off the computer in panic. At least I vote for the parties of my own choice.

I wish that everybody in our OSCE region could be as lucky and fortunate as I was, that all would be allowed by others to live their lives peacefully and on their own terms. With this, and with best wishes to all in this room, I am leaving our diplomatic corps, or Mutual Admiration Society, as we called ourselves in New York, in your good hands Mr. Chairman, and kind hands of our dean Maria Pia.

Thank you