



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

STÄNDIGE VERTRETUNG
DES FÜRSTENTUMS LIECHTENSTEIN

FAREWELL
TO H.E. AMBASSADOR H.E. VLADIMÍR GALUŠKA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE OSCE
BY
H.S.H. AMBASSADOR MARIA-PIA KOTHBAUER
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE OSCE

IN THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
ON 12 JULY 2018

Mr. Chairman, dear colleagues,

today we say farewell to our distinguished colleague and friend: Ambassador Vladimír Galuška from the Czech Republic, who will sadly be leaving the OSCE. As today will be his last meeting at the Permanent Council, I have the honour to say a few words of acknowledgment on behalf of all of us.

Ambassador Galuška's early experiences in life have strongly been shaped by growing up under a totalitarian regime. After his father lost his job as Minister of Culture with the collapse of the Dubček government, his family and he himself experienced two decades of discrimination, police harassment, phone tapping and constant surveillance. These experiences shaped both Ambassador Galuška's own thinking as well as his professional prospects as he had limited choice in this respect.

In 1975 he graduated from Charles University with a law degree. He started off as junior legal counsel with Skoda Praha. He studied English, French and Spanish in private, being fully aware that at the time, civil or Foreign Service jobs were off-limits to him. In November 1989 his time has finally come. He joined the Civic Forum and participated in the Velvet Revolution, contributing to the democratic change in his country.

In 1990 he joined the Foreign Service and started off a most distinguished career within Czech diplomacy. His first posting led him to Washington D.C. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Galuška was tasked to open the Czech Mission to the United Nations. He started off the bid of the Czech Republic for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council and proved to be successful once more.

As Czech Ambassador to the United Nations in New York he served as President of the Economic and Social Council and as Chairman of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. In 2004 he was appointed Czech Ambassador to Slovakia, another top position.

Within the Czech Foreign Ministry Ambassador Galuška acted as Director of the Department of American States, as Director General of the Section of Bilateral Relations, as Director General of the Consular Section in Prague and finally as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs a position that he held until he joined us here in Vienna in August 2013.

Vladimír,

Your personal and professional experiences have made you a great asset to our organisation and a highly respected and very dear colleague. Due to your thorough understanding of the consequences of totalitarian regimes, you had a clear appreciation for the importance of safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms. Both you yourself and your country have always been on record when it came to defend human rights and the rule of law.

Ever since 1990 the former Czechoslovakia and President Vaclav Havel personally were active promoters of the OSCE. Prague played a special role in the history of the OSCE. In 1992 Czechoslovakia chaired the OSCE and hosts the OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague and the annual EEI meetings.

During your tenure the Czech Republic has kept a keen interest in the OSCE and showed its readiness to contribute, including through candidacies for high-level positions. Currently the Czech Republic is chairing the Open Skies Consultative Committee.

Vladimír, your conviction that everybody in the OSCE region should be able to live in peace, enjoy freedom and prosperity have made you a staunch supporter of the OSCE and its instruments, including the field missions and their activities.

Your great knowledge, your unique experience, your conciliatory approach, your kindness, your openness and your sense of humour will be greatly missed by all of us. Conversations with you always proved to be rewarding and so pleasant on a personal level.

Vladimir, as you will be leaving Vienna you will also be retiring. You look back on an accomplished diplomatic career of 28 years. You have achieved everything in the diplomatic service that you could achieve as a career diplomat. We wish you all the best for your new phase in life, where you will have more time for your family and your various hobbies.

Thank you Mr Chairman