



STALNA MISIJA REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE PRI OESS-U,
UN-U I MEĐUNARODNIM ORGANIZACIJAMA U BEČU

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE OSCE, UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PC.DEL/222/08
14 March 2008

ENGLISH only

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**Farewell Statement by Ambassador Vladimir MATEK,
Permanent Representative of Croatia at the PC, March 13, 2008.**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank warmly our Dean, for the kind words she addressed to me. By listening to her, one could start to believe that I am more important than I am in reality. Nevertheless, the fact is that after five and a half years the time has come to go home, and I would also like to take this opportunity and say that it was an honor and pleasure to work with both of you, Maria Pia and Antti, as well as with the other colleagues in the PC.

It was also a real pleasure to cooperate with the Secretariat – at all the levels, from the Secretary General and the CPC to the Conference Service, not to forget the interpreters - and I wish to thank them all for the kind and fruitful cooperation. It was really a privilege to know that wherever I was going I would find somebody on whom I can count on and get the help needed.

My appreciation and thanks are going also to my proper team and their work: if I succeed to be – as you said – a successful Head of Delegation, this is also their merit: without their dedicated work and expertise this would not be possible.

No doubt that in the five and a half years in this beautiful city of Vienna I had a number of very beautiful moments. No doubt also that the work with about fifteen international organizations and agencies I had to cover – certainly not all with the same intensity and involvement as the OSCE – have been very enriching for my natural curiosity and will be very useful in my future work.

Another element is not to be neglected at this very moment, either: with my spouse Cecile, we had the chance to find a number of good friends here and we will miss them all.

However – as you know, in this Organization there is always one HOWEVER somewhere - I have to say that it was not always as idyllic as one could conclude from what I said till now. At several moments I had to overcome very strong frustrations caused by the internal incoherence in the functioning of this Organization. One of the biggest ones occurred some years ago, when the Organization – through its field missions - involved itself in a case against Croatia on the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, taking the plaintiff's part, and expecting to create a precedent for some open issues. This was probably the first time in history that one organization involved itself in an international court trial, in another international organization, against one of its members. The fact that Croatia won this case has proven how wrong this decision was, causing an enormous waste of time and energy on both sides.

Dear colleagues,

There is one reason why I am mentioning this now: only few people sitting around the table today were here when this happened and certainly have no responsibility in it. Therefore – I hope – the message I wish to convey, could be very important to everybody:

The OSCE is too important for the security and cooperation in Europe to be allowed to make such mistakes having very serious auto-destructive potential. We believe in it and this was the only reason why we did not open this question at that time, but this is also the reason why I have chosen to speak about today. Such mistakes are happening when the transparency in the work is lacking, when the country concerned is the last one to be informed of some steps and when the real and substantial discussion in the deciding bodies on the important matters does not exist, as it was very often the case.

After five and a half years I could enumerate a number of other sensitive points, but I will not do it today: you have heard a lot about from my side before. Some of those issues have been resolved or improved during last years, some should still be addressed. I have confidence that with the efforts of our actual and the next Chairmanships, it will be done.

Therefore, I will conclude by wishing you, Mr. Chairman, and all the colleagues, successful continuation in the efforts to find a way for improving the functioning of the Organization for the benefit of all its Participating States.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.