

PC.DEL/987/08  
13 November 2008

ENGLISH  
Original: GERMAN

Delegation of Austria

**FAREWELL STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARGIT WÄSTFELT,  
HEAD OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA TO THE OSCE**

13 November 2008

Mr. Chairman,

I knew, of course, that Ambassador Maria-Pia Kothbauer-Liechtenstein would deliver another brilliant address. But one is surprised when one is the subject of such an address — thank you! I also wish to thank her for being always at hand when the OSCE family needs to be given a voice or a service needs to be done. How often was she entrusted with the delicate task of sounding out opinions so that, particularly in the case of difficult personnel decisions, a consensus could be found! And that brings me to the OSCE: nowhere else has such a well-established culture of consensus-building been developed as in this organization. As long as the conviction remains that a question must be worked on until a consensus is found, naturally requiring a compromise, the Organization will be able to fulfil its purpose. It is my hope and wish for the OSCE that it will never be hindered in the pursuit of its declared goals by unilateral measures, apathy or insufficient political will, and that it will remain a forum for dialogue in which one speaks not about participating States but with them. There is a kind of OSCE spirit which anyone who has ever worked for the OSCE, or earlier for the CSCE, is undoubtedly influenced by. I have the good fortune to be able to go on to work at a place which is highly symbolic for the OSCE, and I am very much looking forward to representing Austria in Finland. I am convinced that “Helsinki III” will represent another milestone in the further development of the OSCE. So that this can happen, we are all called upon to support the Chairmanship. This will be to the advantage of all.

When my period of service with the OSCE in Vienna comes to an end after so many years, I will be taking with me a wealth of experience for my future work and I can look back on innumerable valuable personal and professional encounters. Many of these were the beginning of real friendships.

I should like to thank all the colleagues in the delegations and in the OSCE institutions for this — all who make their irreplaceable contribution here to the good functioning of the Organization, those who work with so much commitment in the field and everyone in the Hofburg and Wallnerstrasse. Here, too, the OSCE has continued to develop and it has, I think, received a good material basis for its work with its completely new facilities.

It only remains for me to thank my own staff for their devoted efforts and to pass the team on to my successor, Ambassador Christine Moser, who should find it well prepared.

I extend to the Finnish Chairmanship, the Secretary General and all those involved my best wishes for the preparations for the coming meeting of the Ministerial Council, and for a result that will enable Greece to continue successfully in the promotion of our common cause — and I look forward to seeing many of you again very soon in Helsinki.

Thank you for your attention.