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Conference Services

At the request of the OSCE Delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the attached farewell address by Ambassador Arsim Zekolli delivered to the 747th Meeting of the Permanent Council on 22 January 2009, is being distributed to all delegations.



Farewell Address by Ambassador Arsim Zekolli
Permanent Council meeting 747
Vienna, 22 January 2009

Poetry says *parting is such a sweet sorrow*, but in our *metier* parting is nothing but the closure of a chapter, a page away from opening a new one. And I am no exception to this rule.

As many others around this table, I had my moments of doubts and dilemmas, my own rituals of soul-searching on how to proceed, what stand to take. But not for a single moment that I had forgotten how blessed I was on many fronts, such as

- the honour of representing my country,
- the pleasure of leading a team of excellent colleagues in my mission,
- the privilege of meeting and working with and alongside wonderful colleagues from 55 states,
- led by the calm and composed wisdom of Belgium,
- the sunny-side-up friendliness of Spain and
- the quiet, determined and broadminded Finland.
- enjoying the services and friendliness of the people in secretariat,
- and living the most memorable days of my life surrounded by the everlasting beauty of Vienna.

Past is the prologue and the future is now. And my past spent here gives me hope and optimism for tomorrow, as I know that we are in the able hands of the Greek Chairmanship. I expect nothing less than reliable and strong leadership from you Mara, as I know very well that– with the support and cooperation by all of us – you can deliver it. I look forward working with you during and after your Chairmanship.

And I better not forget our Secretary General. I was and still am amazed by the scope and depth of your knowledge for particularities of every single state seated here in the Neue Sale, but even more important – the understanding for differences we have and your patience, ability and determination to bridge and surpass them. You are indeed our safety net, so forgive us our moments of national selfishness and keep up the great job you are doing.

I am excited by the silk road stretched ahead of me, leading east, on the footsteps of Marco Polo. Dear Esen, I am looking forward to my new assignment in Ashgabat and meeting not only the dignitaries of your country, but even more so the people and the culture of Turkmenistan. I assure you - and others - that I will do my utmost in ensuring a successful partnership of challenges and opportunities, for the sake of a shared success.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to complete my national mandate by extending a proposal to all here – and that is to honour these walls by placing the photographs of the founding fathers of this organization. Not for the sake of some self-serving shallow aesthetic, but for the sake of reminding us all from where we came, understand why we happened to be and advise on how to proceed further. Being a passing traveler through this room, I often questioned myself – was it more difficult for them to build it or more challenging for us to keep it. Those were indeed some wise men and women, true visionaries and courageous pioneers. It is by their merit that the OSCE today is the leading example of institutionalized soft – power mechanisms, a modern Agora where battles are fought by the might of mind and the wit of words in order to achieve the noble humbleness of compromise. True, we all go through our moments or periods of disappointment with the organization, but in the words of Sammuel Huntington, “it can be a disappointment only because it is also a hope”.

There are many things that we still must achieve, many crossroads ahead of us, but to end what started with a spirit of old writer, we must not be swayed by the deep dark woods ahead of us, but rather never forget the promise we must keep.

Thank you dear friends and see you soon.