

# Statement of the Staff Council President Imed Zabaar to the IAEA Staff Association Ball 2019

## Good evening everybody!

It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you to the annual IAEA Staff Association Ball. Thank you for coming in such numbers.

Our ball is clearly a winner. Tickets were sold out in two days last November. Some of you came into the VIC at the crack of dawn and queued for hours to get seats in the rooms of their choice. Others travelled the globe to be with us here tonight. And, believe it or not, they do it year for year because our Ball is one of the most enjoyable and sociable events during the ball season here in Vienna: It is the experience of a lifetime.

In most countries in this corner of the world there is a saying 'They are welcome who bring', 'Bienvenue qui apporte' or 'Wer bringt ist überall willkommen'. We thus bid you all welcome as we know you are all bringing something very special: a good mood, a good appetite and stamina to carry you through the night.

## Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being an organization of excellence, we always aim for the very best. Not only do we enjoy the patronage of our immediate neighbour here at the Hofburg, the Federal President of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen, but the man from the other side of Ring, the Mayor and Governor of Vienna Mr Michael Ludwig, has also assured us his moral and practical support.

We are also most grateful that the Director General of the IAEA, Mr Yukiya Amano, and his lady wife are gracing us with their presence.

Your Staff Association has also brought something tonight. As the body that secures the rights of staff and safeguards their interests, we have brought with us

the President of FICSA, the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations, Mr Brett Fitzgerald, and the outgoing and incoming General Secretaries of the Federation, Ms Gemma Vestal and Ms Evelyn Kortum. They have just spent a week here in Vienna at the FICSA Council mapping out how in the year ahead FICSA will be defending our rights and securing our benefits in the numerous UN interagency consultative bodies.

There are so many other people I need to thank this evening.

Our very own ball organising Committee under the leadership of Elly Wynsford-Brown who have done their part – far beyond the call of duty. They have gone to great lengths to replicate the Imperial aura of the past. They have invested countless hours of labour and love into ensuring the success of this evening. They have hired the best musicians, artists, designers and caterers.

A special big thank you must also go to Jennifer, our master of ceremonies, as well as the management of the Hofburg, all the volunteers, Graphic designers, Web designers, musicians, artists, security officers, catering service and photographers. Thank you.

I would like to reiterate my thanks to everybody – seen and unseen – who have made this ball a memorable occasion. Our thanks are also due to our sponsors, CASINO Wien, Volvo and UNFCU.

But most important of all – our thanks are due to you who have come here this evening to enjoy yourselves in the company of your friends.

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, without further ado – **La vita è bella** so get ready to dance holes in your soles!

Enjoy the Ball! We hope to see you again next year!

Thank you!