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Prof. Dr. Marcin Wiącek
Ombudsman
Republic of Poland
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Zurich, 13 December 2022

Dismissal of the Deputy Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection, Dr. Dr. h.c. Hanna Machińska

Esteemed Mr. Ombudsman, dear Prof. Wiącek

We are deeply concerned to learn that Dr. Hanna Machińska was dismissed from her position as Deputy Commissioner for Civil Rights last week.

The Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich awarded Dr. Machińska an honorary doctorate in April 2022. In doing so, it honoured the life's work of a person who has made an extraordinary contribution as a supporter of European integration and as a defender of our common European values.

A little more than a month ago, you welcomed a delegation from our Faculty at the Ombudsman's office. We were impressed by the seriousness and dedication you showed for the fulfilment of your highly demanding constitutional task. It is for this reason that we cannot hide our concern about a step that could compromise the credibility of the institution that you represent.

In view of the many challenges that Poland faces regarding the effective protection of human rights, we are deeply concerned that a high-profile advocate for these values has lost her position. Esteemed Commissioner, we are of course aware that the organization of the Ombudsman's office lies fully within your competence. We would be doing you and the important mission that your office pursues a disservice, however, if we did not express our serious concern over the hasty and baffling dismissal of our esteemed colleague, for reasons that remain unclear to us.

Kind regards

University of Zurich
Faculty of Law

Prof. Dr. iur. Thomas Gächter
Dean