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IN PURSUIT OF GOOD ADMINISTRATION

European Conference

*organised by the Council of Europe
in co-operation with the Faculty of Law and Administration
University of Warsaw*

Warsaw, 29-30 November 2007

Opening address

PRESENTED BY

**Mr Tadeusz TOMASZEWSKI
Dean of the Faculty of Law and Administration
University of Warsaw
Poland**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Warsaw University Faculty of Law and Administration, I have the honour to open the international academic conference "In Pursuit of Good Administration" held as a part of the Warsaw University Days in partnership with the Council of Europe and in collaboration with the Council of Europe Information Office in Warsaw. I welcome all participants of this conference:

- distinguished foreign guests, renowned experts in administration and administrative law and mediation, and
- eminent representatives of the Polish academia and public administration practitioners.

In particular, I welcome and thank Ms Danuta Wiśniewska-Cazals, Secretary of the Project Group on Administrative Law, who represents the Council of Europe. She has proposed this conference; without her commitment and support this meeting would not be possible.

We have been most keen to organise this academic conference on standards of good administration. The debate on this important issue is topical for several different reasons. First of all, efficient and friendly public administration is one of the preconditions for a democratic state ruled by law where individuals are free from unjustified intervention of public authorities and can effectively pursue their rights and interest within the limits of the legal system. Therefore, it is important to identify, analyse, and promote standards of good administration. We will all agree that the principles of lawfulness, impartiality and independence, objectivity and integrity, politeness, and the other principles of good administration promoted by the Council of Europe should be the universal benchmark for public administration and public officials. I believe that academics and lawyers can play a special role in promoting this approach to public affairs, also thanks to debates such as ours.

The conference we are opening today is also important because we have been building a new model of public administration in Poland over the past dozen years. We have tried to learn from the experience of other countries and to look for effective solutions which protect individual rights and freedoms and strengthen the structures of a democratic state. Building good administration is, however, no easy task, as demonstrated by the developments of the past months when legislative initiatives have been taken to restrict the powers of civil servants: professional and apolitical officials of the public administration. May I recall that the Warsaw University Faculty of Law and Administration has lodged a public protest. While we recognise diverse approaches to building administrative structures and appointing public officials, we want to give preference to solutions which will best protect the interests of citizens in line with the constitutional system of the state.

Therefore, I must admit that as an academic and lawyer, but also citizen bound to contact the administration on a regular basis, I have very high expectations of this conference, hoping to gain much valuable experience and information. I have high hopes because it is not often that our Faculty hosts such eminent experts on public administration from different countries and international institutions.

I believe that this conference will make an important contribution to the debate on the standards of good administration. I hope that our exchange of views and experience will help

to identify potential threats and to describe ways of building good and friendly administration. I am certain that this meeting will provide food for thought and an opportunity of networking. I wish you a most fruitful debate.