

In Memoriam of Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka

Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka died on 23 May 2018 at the age of 71. She was a lawyer, an outstanding academic, long term judge of both Polish and European Union courts, a member of our circle, a fair and wise person, a close friend to many of us.

We would like to start these Memories of Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka by focusing on her exceptional carrier. It started in 1969 – immediately after graduating from the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw – when she joined the Institute of Legal Science of the Polish Academy of Science as an academic. It is there that she gained her Doctorate in 1976 on the basis of a thesis entitled *Legal instruments of the implementation of inventive projects*. From the outset, she placed herself under an intensive continued education and research programme. In 1976, she took part in the Columbia Summer Program in American Law at the University of Leyden. During the winter term of 1980–1981, she completed a 6 monthly research internship at the Max Planck Institute of Foreign and International Patent, Copyright and Competition Law in Munich. She returned to this Institute in the academic year of 1985–1986 for a yearly research stay as a holder of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Scholarship. As a result of her research project, she wrote a book entitle *Cartel law borders of the legality of patent licences*. On the basis of this work, she has gained the academic grade of doktor habilitowany (habilitated doctor). She accumulated much professional recognition at home and abroad for both of her monographs, and over 50 articles in collective publications as well as Polish and foreign periodicals concerning industrial intellectual property rights and competition law. Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka was without a doubt among the most important experts on public and private competition law and industrial property law in Poland. Among the highlights of her carrier was receiving from the Polish President the title of a professor of legal science in 2001 and full professor in 2010.

We will remember Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka not just for her outstanding academic work, including several ground-breaking publications, but also as an accomplished practicing lawyer. While actively engaging in

academic work, she started her practical endeavours with a yearly internship in the legal practice of Professor Alois Roller in Lucerne. Between 1992–2000, she worked of counsel for the law firm Wardyński and Partners. She used her knowledge to support public authorities also. Between 1981–1984, she was a member of the Economic Reform Commission concerning the self-government of public enterprises and antimonopoly regulation; in this capacity, she was among the co-authors of the basic assumptions and the draft of the first Polish Antimonopoly Act (of 1987); she also partook in the works on the overall reform of the Polish economy between 1988–1993. In 1991–1992, she acted as a legal advisor to the President of the Polish Antimonopoly Office, as well as a part of the commission preparing the draft of the new Polish Competition Act (of 1993). She was a member of the Polish Group AIPPI (Association for the Protection of the Industrial Property), Head of the Polish branch of the International League of Competition Law, and the President of the Polish Association of Competition Law (1995–1998).

It is not surprising therefore that her accumulated academic achievements combined with extensive practical experience have given fruit when in the year 2000, the Polish President appointed Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka as a judge of the Supreme Administrative Court, a position which she held from 22 February 2001 until 30 April 2004. This was followed by the decision of the Polish and European authorities to appoint Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka as a judge of the Court of First Instance (currently the General Court) of the EU, a decision which was welcomed and fully supported by both academic circles and legal practitioners. Her tenure in that role, held between 2004–2016, was outstanding and constituted the culmination of her carrier. The Polish President appointed her once again on 12 January 2017 as judge of the Supreme Administrative Court (Economic Chamber); she retired on the 7 July 2017.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka was honoured with the Cavalier's Cross (2003) and Officer's Cross (2011) of the Polish Order of Polonia Restituta for her outstanding academic achievements as well as for her contribution to the creation of a democratic Polish state and civil society.

Many more than those who signed these Memories know that Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka has always set her path towards, and managed to achieve, ambitious goals both in the academic and legal practitioners' realms. Ultimately, the results of her research work as well as the experiences she gathered as a barrister and legal advisor have opened before her the judiciary path also, a role she excelled at.

It is also necessary to point out her character traits which have defined her professional life as well. She was an ambitious person who was also very hard

working – possibly too much so. She expected the most of herself, but she also had high expectations for her co-workers, doctoral students and authors of works she reviewed. She was stern but fair. Especially during the first period of the III. Republic of Poland (the 1990ties), she was eager to share her knowledge with the Polish Antimonopoly Office and the Antimonopoly Court; she took part in the preparation of publications on the harmonisation of Polish competition law with that of the EU. We are left with the memories of heated discussion, often in the early hours, often on the phone. In recent years, we greatly appreciated her work on the Scientific Council of the Yearbook of Antitrust and Regulatory Studies (YARS®).

Socialising with Irena was also a pleasure – she was always courteous, tactful and elegant.

Losing Professor Irena Wiszniewska-Białecka was more than just losing an outstanding lawyer and co-operator, we also lost a friend.

Anna Fornalczyk
Stanisław Gronowski
Tadeusz Skoczny
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