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Leipzig, Germany

Statement
on the occasion of the assumption of the presidency
of ACA-Europe

The Hague, 15 May 2018

Dear colleagues,

Our General Assembly is drawing to a close and it is my task to speak the closing words.

First and foremost I would like to express a warm thank you towards Piet Hein Donner and our Dutch colleagues for the wonderful days we have had in The Hague and in Amsterdam. Once more, we were invited to enjoy Dutch hospitality, the open cheerfulness of the Dutch people as well as their impressing culture and history. Of course, the reception by His Majesty, the King, was a very special honour. All of this required careful and thoughtful planning and preparation. Please, accept our very sincere gratitude for this.

I would like to extend this gratitude a bit further. After two years the Dutch presidency of ACA-Europe has just come to an end. Piet Hein Donner and his collaborators have raised the bar to a height, which worries all successors. In numerous seminars we treated important and interesting topics and learned a lot from each other as well as about one another. Organization and finances of ACA are in excellent shape – even so good that the First Vice-President of the Commission of the European Union Frans Timmermans has destined us for a complementary function. In brief: the outcome of the

two Dutch years is brilliant. Congratulations – and thank you from all of us.

Of course, the best presidency could not be fully unfolded, if it wasn't for the Brussels General Secretariat with Geert Debersaques and his crew, especially with Veerle Vertongen, Anne-Catherine Van Geersdaele and Joris Casneuf. With their diligence and thoroughness they have earned a special applause. And let us also think about Eric Thibaut, who unfortunately had to end his commitment to ACA recently.

Now you have elected the German Federal Administrative Court the court of presidency. I am very grateful for the confidence you have put in us. I am saying: put in us – because all by myself I could not justify your confidence. I am glad to have technical support by my esteemed colleague Carsten Günther and his assistant Alban Barrón as well as organisational help from the presidential department of my court, headed by Kathleen Ordnung.

We have already made plans for the two years to come. Primarily, we will concern ourselves with political developments which we do not determine, but to which we have to take a stand. We will especially have to consider what consequences Brexit may bring to us and to our British friends. Furthermore, we will have to assess what effects the new data bases, which the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice have installed, may have on our JuriFast. Maybe this can result in new impulses for our website, too. We should continue with the judge exchange program and maybe even intensify it; this is an important and very effective part of our work. Behind this, we do not only find the European idea, but also the embedment into the organisation of the European Union, which on the part of the Commission supports us financially. We will seek for the Commission to continue with undiminished generosity and liberality.

At the core of ACA's activities are the colloquia and seminars. We would like to invite you to a total of six seminars, four of

which will be held in Germany and one each in Ireland and the Czech Republic.

At the outset we will have a seminar concerning the so-called ReNEUAL project in December 2018 in Cologne. This label stands for the idea of making more use than before of comparative techniques for the development of administrative law in the European Union and in the member states, especially for the development of the law of administrative procedure. The project can be traced back to an initiative of the European Parliament. Yet, it was firstly promoted in the academic sphere. ACA had already been interested in the project, but – as we know today – at a time, when the task wasn't ready to be discussed. Now it is, and the results that have been reached are impressive. We think that we ought to concern ourselves with this topic again, and in more detail than before. With this we want to begin in Cologne.

We will continue with two seminars that are complementary and thus form a unit. They will treat working modes and working conditions of our courts, once as seen from the inside and once from the outside. The first of these two seminars is organised by our Irish friends around Frank Clarke in Dublin in March 2019. It is asking the question of how our courts decide – how we prepare decisions, who is of help in this process, what the role of the parties and general attorneys is, if we have oral proceedings, how extensive our reasoning is and what the public reception and reaction to our work is. For the second seminar we are inviting you to Berlin in May 2019. It will be about the conditions of access to the national supreme courts, whether there is a filter system or not and the effect this has on the case-load of the court, on the case-load of the judges and on the handling period. We will certainly discover eminent differences from one member state to another – that's the charm of it.

Our Czech friends then are inviting us presumably to Brno in September 2019. The topic will be whether there are sovereign acts which are not subject to judicial control and if

in this case there are alternative control mechanisms. In the following year it is time again for a seminar for our IT and documentation experts; due to good custom, ACA also offers the necessary forum for the coordination of our documentation sections. Finally, the German presidency will end with a colloquium and General Assembly in May or June 2020. For this purpose, we are inviting you to Leipzig. Again, the topic will be the ReNEUAL process, this time treating different aspects. Our occupation with the comparative aspects of general administrative law will thus be the bond around the next two years.

One word to the venues, as far as seminars in Germany are concerned. As I have mentioned, we are inviting you to Cologne, to Berlin and to Leipzig. We have not selected these cities at random. On the one hand, Germany is a federation consisting of several federal states. This calls for not only showing you the capital Berlin, but also two other important cities, catholic Cologne in the west, on the Rhine River, and the more protestant Leipzig in the east. On the other hand, the administrative jurisdiction in Germany is threefold. This we would like to show you as well. Thus, we will not convene in hotels or other event locations, but in courts: in Cologne in the building of a large administrative court of first instance, in Berlin in the building of one of the larger courts of the intermediate level, the Higher Administrative Court of the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg, and, last, but not least, in Leipzig in the building of the supreme administrative court, the Bundesverwaltungsgericht.

Dear colleagues: You have entrusted me, or rather us, the German Federal Administrative Court with your presidency for two years. Now, you know along general lines what you have done. Again, I would like to express my gratitude for your confidence. Also, I would like to thank Piet Hein Donner and our Dutch hosts again, in beautiful The Hague. Finally, I thank Geert Debersaques and the crew of the General Secretariat for the support in organising this event.

Now, there is a snack waiting for you. On your information sheets you will find remarks, how you reach your means of transportation for your way home. Should you have any questions, please refer to the conference office.

What remains is to express my hope that you enjoy the snack. I am very glad to have seen all of you here, and I am already looking forward to seeing you again in Cologne in early December – in the shadow of the famous Cathedral and in the heart of the equally famous Christmas market.

Thereby, I am closing today's General Assembly.