In memoriam Dr. Erich Wettstein

To the World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy, 708 3rd Avenue, Ste. 1715, New York, NY 10017, USA

Weltföderalisten der Schweiz / Fédéralistes mondiaux de Suisse (World Federalists of Switzerland), C.P. 3092, 1110 Morges, Switzerland

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To the memory of Dr. Erich Wettstein (September 24, 1931 – October 2, 2015)
WFM Council member, former president, honorary president of the Swiss World federalists

Dear friends,

We, the Swiss World federalists, have the sad duty to inform you that Dr. Erich Wettstein passed away on October 2, after a long illness. Late Dr. Wettstein has devoted to world federalism in an exemplary way and the Swiss World federalists owe much to him.

Our Swiss member organization of the World Federalist Movement was founded 1960. The first years of our association were extremely difficult, due to the fact that the first president resigned after a few months. The vice-president did absolutely nothing. It was a great luck that Dr. Erich Wettstein was present at a meeting where we spoke about world federalism and immediately joined us and accepted to become our president. He was elected to this function 1962 at our general assembly. This election saved our association. Thanks to his action he succeeded to win many devoted new members and gave thus a solid basis to our association. He represented our Swiss association at the World Federalist Movement’s Tokyo congress 1963. Later he accepted to become our delegate to the World Federalist Movement Council till now. He left the presidency 1971 but remained a member of our governing committee. At the meeting of the WFM-Council in La Lambertie, in France, 1993, he took the initiative to invite the WFM-Council to meet the following year in Switzerland. In collaboration with William Pace and the secretariat in New York, he organized the WFM council meeting 1994, in the chief town of the Swiss canton of Glarus. The meeting was very successful. We elected him once more as president for the year 2011-2012. After 50 years of good services in our committee, he resigned in February 2012, but was elected honorary president of our association. Even this summer, despite his declining health, he won a new member for our association. But now the time had come for him to rest in peace.

Dr. Wettstein studied law at the University of Zurich and worked as a civil servant in the administrations of the cantons of Zurich and Thurgovia. Finally, he worked for 22 years, till his retirement, as the vice-chancellor
of the canton of Glarus, this means as the deputy of the chief of the canton’s administration.

He lived in conformity with his world federalist ideal of universal brotherhood. He traveled in great parts of the world and had a great number of good friends in many countries. With his wife who is a citizen of Ghana, they have a son and a daughter and two lovely grand-daughters. For all of us who worked with him and for all the numerous persons he met everywhere in the world, he was an extremely good friend. With the help of his wife, he exerted always a delightful hospitality to all those who came to visit him.

Wettstein participated in a difficult diplomatic initiative during the Kuwait war 1990. The Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein took all foreigners living in his country as hostages. In the hope to obtain the liberation of the Swiss, and as the Swiss government refused any negotiations, members of parliament from almost all political parties decided to send a delegation to Iraq. Wettstein was the only non-parliamentarian member of this delegation who was received by Saddam Hussein. This initiative illustrates his will to engage always the dialogue.

How open-minded he was is illustrated by one of his last wishes. Although he was a good protestant, he asked that, at his funerals, his friends, in place of flowers, send donations to a catholic humanitarian organization, the “World villages for children of the Sisters of Mary”.

At his funerals, in the presence of some hundred persons, his daughter and the minister mentioned many times that he was a very convinced world federalist.

We will always continue in Switzerland our work for world federalism guided by his spirit.

In the name of the World Federalists of Switzerland, the secretary:  Rolf Paul Haegler