

LAUDATIO:
PROF. JAAP W. DE ZWAAN

FLORA GOUDAPPEL *

Ladies and gentlemen,

I MET prof. Jaap de Zwaan for the first time in 1997. I was preparing for my PhD defense at Erasmus University Rotterdam and he was the incoming new professor of European law at that university. Despite me leaving for another university right after, Jaap immediately kept in contact and asked for collaborations, even convincing me to return to Erasmus University after a couple of years. I have always considered this a prime example of his character and attitude: he is always interested in his colleagues, interested in academic collaborations, and always managing to making you enthusiastic for new, exciting yet very time-consuming projects.

Here, I have to admit that I was the one who got him into EGPL, so I can't blame him for that. It has, however, been a membership that he has fully embraced and in which he is very very active. And he is not only a good lecturer, always willing to step in when he can contribute to interesting courses on all possible levels and for different audiences, he is also one of the main specialists in what he still likes to call 'justice and home affairs' in EU law, or the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, as Ton van den Brink already told you. He did not start out as an academic, though. He first had a long career in the Dutch diplomatic service. After graduation from the law school of Leiden University, he immediately specialized in European law by studying at the College of Europe in Bruges. He even was the president

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of the alumni association for many years. After this, he first worked as a lawyer but soon joined the Dutch diplomatic service at the department of European integration. He represented the Netherlands in many cases before the European Court of Justice, most concerning constitutional issues and the overseas countries and territories. In addition, he was a member of the negotiating team for the Netherlands for the Single European Act and several accession treaties. For me as a professor at the University of Curaçao, his emphasis on the position of the overseas countries and territories is still very relevant as the outcome of the cases rules the overseas countries and territories regime to this day. He was even one of the initiators of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association OCTA, nowadays the official counterpart for the European Commission on all things relevant for these islands.

In the meantime, he began his academic career and wrote his PhD on "The Permanent Representatives Committee, its role in European Union decision making" at the University of Groningen, writing and researching while being in the diplomatic service. After he joined Erasmus University as professor of European law, he very quickly became the dean of international relations as well, which was more or less a logical position for a former diplomat. As this was the period of accession for many Central and Eastern European countries, he focused on the relations with many of those. After dean of international relations, he became the dean of Erasmus School of Law. For us members of the EU law department, it meant that he would have an office one floor below us. He would still try to meet us for lunch every day. He would come up in the staircase and we would know way in advance that it was lunchtime: he was always whistling tunes when he was on his way This cheerful nature is very characteristic of him. He tends to react to things you say with 'nice' (or: '*leuk*' in Dutch) instead of 'okay'. "Jaap, we just won a reward. Nice." "Jaap, we are going to EGPL. Nice." Even when it is something negative, the reaction is always positive: 'nice'. I even remember one of the professors going into his dean's office because she had made a big mistake. When she left, she said: "I don't know what just happened. He was justly angry with me. And somehow I just walked out happy."

For Jaap, family always comes first. Yet, always tackling each hurdle with his characteristic positive attitude.

When Jaap's deanship ended, he remained a part-time professor at Erasmus University. He continued to combine academia and diplomacy by becoming the director of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael' in The Hague. He led the institute with much enthusiasm while not forgetting that he is an academic as well. Together with colleague Sarah Wolff, he and I won the European LISBOAN award for our book on the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice after the Lisbon Treaty. Even at the end of his directorship of Clingendael Jaap did not retire, and he became lector on European Integration at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. In this capacity, he set up all research and teaching on EU law in The Hague. And somewhere during that period, he officially retired from Erasmus University. While we, the staff of his department, were preparing a farewell conference and *liber amicorum*, we were contacted by the law school because Jaap was one of three retiring professors within a very short time span. It turned out that the other two departments had started the process to apply for a Dutch royal decoration. So, we decided to do the same for Jaap. We figured that that would not be very difficult: an outstanding academic should easily get it. We soon found out that it had to be more than that: additional volunteering activities needed to be listed as well along with letters of support. So we contacted for instance the French-Dutch Cooperation Council, the Amsterdam Institute for German Studies, and several similar organizations. We were not surprised that he did indeed receive the royal decoration at the end of his official farewell lecture. It took us several months to realize that his merits were indeed way above average as the other professors, for whom the departments had set up this whole process, had not received this decoration.

Being officially retired has not slowed Jaap down. He even became active in many other organizations, most notably EPLO, as Matteo Gnes will explain in more detail. Just a selection of organizations Jaap was or is active in which I have not yet mentioned: The Dutch Helsinki Committee, Governing Board of the European Studies Institute in Moscow, European Movement, Dutch section, Advisory Council on International Affairs to the Dutch government, and many

others. Apart from the Dutch royal decoration, Jaap has received the Diploma of Excellency from the Romanian embassy, the Ad Fondes medal of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the commemorative medal of the Faculty of Law of Comenius University in Bratislava, the Imrich Kavas medal of the University of Economics in Bratislava and the Diplôme d'officier dans l'ordre de mérite français.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope I have managed to contribute to not only the *laudatio* for professor Jaap de Zwaan, but also to your understanding of his achievements.