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Dear colleagues,

It was with great sorrow that I learned today of the death of the Czech Ombudsman, Mr Otakar Motejl. From my visits to your office over recent years, I know how close you all were to Mr Motejl and how much he was appreciated on both the professional and the personal level by those who had the chance to work with him. In my role first as Greek Ombudsman and then as European Ombudsman, Mr Motejl became an esteemed colleague who over the years honoured me with his friendship. I would like you all to know that my thoughts are with you at this difficult time and I wish you strength in the coming days.

When the Czech Republic elected its first Ombudsman almost ten years ago, Mr Motejl was the ideal choice. His long experience at the highest level in your country had enabled him to gain the trust of the citizens, particularly in his roles of Justice Minister and President of the Supreme Court. This trust was regularly confirmed by the opinion polls conducted in your country, but was also recognised internationally. I'm sure that I echo the sentiments of ombudsmen throughout Europe in expressing the trust, respect, and indeed friendship that developed over the years in my relationship with Mr Motejl.

I am convinced that Mr Motejl will be remembered for many years to come for having created an efficient and citizen-centred Public Defender of Rights institution in the Czech Republic. And I am sure that you will all help his memory to live on by continuing to follow his example in supporting all those who turn to your institution for advice or help.

Yours in deepest sympathy,

P. Nikiforos DIAMANDOUROS