

*Artikkeli on julkaistu FINEn juhla kirjassa Vakuutus- ja rahoitusneuvonta 45 vuotta (Toim. Olli Norros, Irene Luukkonen, Erik Sirén ja Ville Raulos), Vakuutus- ja rahoitusneuvonta, Helsinki 2016.*

Helsingin Metropoliitta Ambrosius

## Juhlapuhe

Metropoliitta Ambrosius piti tämän juhlapuheen FINEn isännöimän finanssialan ombudsman-elin-ten kansainvälisen INFO-konferenssin gaalailallisella 14.9.2015. Metropoliitta Ambrosius on FINEn hallituksen puheenjohtaja.

May I start with a short story. Some time ago I was invited to speak about human values and ethical principles to a large leadership and management team in one of the leading Finnish insurance companies. I had carefully prepared what I wanted to say. While travelling in a taxi to the outskirts of Helsinki, it occurred to me to ask whether a Christian church and an insurance company could have something special in common. Upon reaching the podium I said that I had come to the following conclusion: We both work in the same field but we are not rivals, because in our core business we do not offer the same products. However, I assure you: I have got better "products" to offer but the prices are much cheaper.

Dear guests, I already said that it is a privilege for me to greet you tonight. This joy is related to the unique work you do in your own field. The ombudsman systems in Europe, and today increasingly all over the world, serve as signs of the mature quality of human culture. The ombudsman systems have come to stay as permanent structures in our open democratic societies. These institutions perpetually build up civil societies. The best financial practises show the present amount of the cultural and spiritual capital in our contemporary societies, and following your examples, we should always passionately encourage and promote this state of affairs.

In Finland we physically live in the periphery of Europe. Today we Finns are almost shocked to learn that Angela Merkel is prepared to welcome one million refugees and immigrants to Germany. We have not yet learned to share our treasures sufficiently with others. In spite of our active membership in the EU we still live, to a certain extent, in our splendid isolation. We nevertheless work hard and we have developed a high-standard welfare society. This includes excellent financial practises, transparency and self-regulation. For this reason various ombudsman systems and consumer movements endure and flourish in this country. This applies to the fields of finance, health-care and ecology, for example.

If I understand correctly, the ombudsman agencies from Canada through Armenia and South Africa to New Zealand and Taiwan, they all promote similar precious human values, ethical codes and common justice. This is what we should always do together and learn from each other as is the intention of this conference.

It is not a great surprise, perhaps not astonishing at all, that also through this conference we share the common ethical ideals and values in spite of our diverse philosophical and religious backgrounds.

In our Western spiritual context, culture is based on the three Greek classical values: goodness, truth and beauty. Christianity gave the fourth element to these values: love of one's neighbour. On

the foundation of these core values we have later built ethical principles like those of the French Revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity, and the UN declaration of human rights or the entire Western legislation. But this is not all. In my study of Buddhist culture and mystical Islam I detect the identical ethical values and ideals. They also pave the way for the future work of our ombudsman institutions in a creative and responsible manner.

Dear guests, I congratulate you for your work, your efforts and struggles on behalf of all humanity and human culture. It is often difficult and challenging to work in a context of competing views and conflicting interests, but this task and vocation is also a precious gift given to human beings. In the words of the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman: "Moral responsibility is the most personal and inalienable of human possessions, and the most precious of human rights."

On the other hand, Tony Judt, a philosopher and historian who died recently, says that without idealism political activity shrinks into social bookkeeping, daily administration of human resources and practical concerns. Whenever your ombudsman bureaus stand strong in your visions and commitments, your pursuits promise good results in the context of today's financial and political turbulence both in the East and the West. Particularly for this reason as a representative of customers and as a citizen I am allowed to say: What a precious task you do. I congratulate you and thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Finally, the golden onion cupolas of our cathedral above us glitter brightly in the sunshine. May they encourage you and remind you of your vocation to shed light, hope and love on people around you. Through your work you will not only write history but you'll make it. For all this I wish you the angels' presence and perpetual touch.