

LAUDATION

on the occasion of bestowing the

JUSTITIA REGNORUM FUNDAMENTUM AWARD

on Professor Péter Paczolay

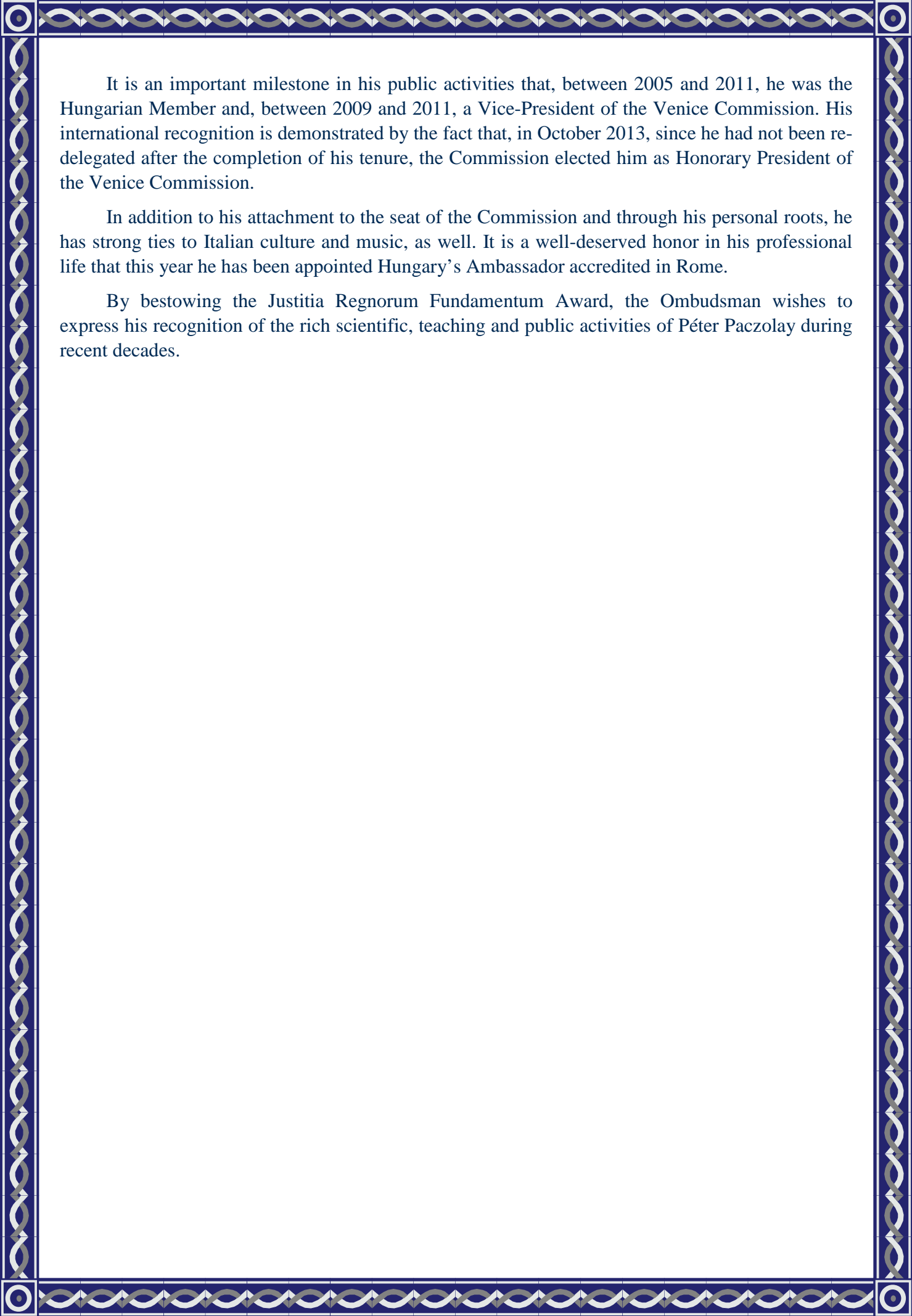
Péter Paczolay is a good example of how to reconcile scientific ambition with practicing law. He graduated from the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University in 1980, where afterwards he would teach political and legal theory, then political science till 2005. He has strong ties to Szeged, too: Since 1992, he has been the Head of the Department of Political Science of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of József Attila University, the present University of Szeged. He has been steadily moving forward in his scientific career: He received his candidate's degree in 1989, habilitated in 1999, and he was appointed Professor by the President of the Republic in 2000. Since 2002, he has been a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts in Salzburg.

Péter Paczolay has never thought that science is an end in itself: he considers political and legal theory as a study that can be directly utilized by society. It may be one of the reasons why, in addition to his university career, he has never stopped practicing: He started to work at the Constitutional Court in 1990, first as a senior advisor, then as Secretary General. In 2000 he became Deputy Head of the Office of the President of the Republic, then, in 2005, the Head of the OPR. One year later, in 2006, he returned to the Constitutional Court, already as a Judge at the CC. The nationwide recognition of his professional qualifications is well demonstrated by the fact that he was elected Judge at the CC with the consent of both the government coalition and the opposition; it was the only occasion in the history of the Constitutional Court when a judge was elected with consensus, even if there was only one candidate to the post.

During his tenure as Judge at the Constitutional Court, he often referred to the creed of his favorite author, Niccolò Machiavelli. *"All courses of action are risky, so prudence is not in avoiding danger (it's impossible), but calculating risk and acting decisively"*, pointed out Machiavelli; should he have known Péter Paczolay, he might have had Professor Paczolay in mind, when he wrote it. Being a Judge at the Constitutional Court is a profession not without any danger – calculating risks and acting decisively were a necessity. It is proven by the numerous resolutions of the Constitutional Court on fundamental rights and on issues concerning the organization of the state where Péter Paczolay was the Judge-Rapporteur.

He was elected President of the Constitutional Court twice: In 2008 by his peers at the Constitutional Court, and in 2011 by the Parliament. Therefore, he is the only President of the CC who received authorization to fulfil this post from both a professional as well as a political organ.

Among the various institutions of the state, the coming into effect of the Fundamental Law on January 1, 2012, had the most direct impact on the Constitutional Court. Its profile was transformed, its competence and personnel were changed. Péter Paczolay played a key role in maintaining continuity, in preserving the values of the first 15 years of the CC's existence. He managed to do it "swimming against the tide", despite the simultaneous narrowing of the Constitutional Court's competence and the altering of the rules of nomination.



It is an important milestone in his public activities that, between 2005 and 2011, he was the Hungarian Member and, between 2009 and 2011, a Vice-President of the Venice Commission. His international recognition is demonstrated by the fact that, in October 2013, since he had not been re-delegated after the completion of his tenure, the Commission elected him as Honorary President of the Venice Commission.

In addition to his attachment to the seat of the Commission and through his personal roots, he has strong ties to Italian culture and music, as well. It is a well-deserved honor in his professional life that this year he has been appointed Hungary's Ambassador accredited in Rome.

By bestowing the *Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum* Award, the Ombudsman wishes to express his recognition of the rich scientific, teaching and public activities of Péter Paczolay during recent decades.