

Rektor der Universität St. Gallen  
Prof. Dr. Ernst Mohr, PhD  
Dufourstrasse 50  
9000 St. Gallen

Männedorf, 16 Juni 2009

## **Application for Business Ethics professorship at the University of St. Gallen**

Dear Professor Mohr  
Ladies and gentlemen

I herewith take the liberty of sending you my application for the open professorship in Business Ethics at the University of St. Gallen.

### **1. What is it about?**

On its website [www.unisg.ch](http://www.unisg.ch), the University of St. Gallen – Graduate School of Business, Economics, Law and Social Science (HSG) advertised a position for a new professor in Business Ethics. Applications must be submitted in English, together with an English sketch of the research profile and a list of publications, by 19 June 2009 at the latest. On enquiry, Prof. Dr. Ulrike Landfester explained on 25 May 2009 that no further formalities are required.

### **2. Motivation behind the application**

Having been active as an industrialist and a politician for many years, I have always been interested in ethics and in business ethics in particular. Ethics,

derived from the Greek work "ethos" which means "custom", (literally translated "in accordance with life"), follows the basic truth that everything in human life which corresponds with the reality of this life will one day become "custom". This coincides with the knowledge that "bad customs" must sooner or later make way for the true "customs", which correspond to reality.

From this I distil the "eternal law"<sup>1</sup>, which has emerged and established itself in the history of mankind, for as long as this history has been recorded, as a valid standard.

All my efforts to date were focused on finding the "ethos" of **reality** and to accept this as a demand presented by **reality**. This is of the utmost importance when a professorial chair in ethics, but in particular business ethics, is filled.

This is why ethics need not be a dogmatic doctrine – and at the same time a higher authority – that is used to cover up our living and vital reality in a manner that is alien to life.<sup>2</sup>

My application is therefore based on my belief that the ethic component of all human activity must prove itself to be "practical" over a period of many years and under perpetual scrutiny, because if something is to become "custom" instead of staying a "bad custom", it must prove itself in practice – and in practice only. I have therefore always – as a child, then as farmer, manager, entrepreneur, National and Federal Councillor, military officer, and also as husband and father – **searched** for the correct – the **proper** – way to act, and then immediately and constantly tested the results of this permanent research against my practical activities. In doing so I was always led by the conviction that ethics as a standard for **proper** conduct can only be derived from close **contact with the practice**.<sup>3</sup> **This I have not only researched, tried out, applied and lived, but also passed on to others in a large number of**

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<sup>1</sup> "An eternal law enforces itself, nothing else ... the moral person is characterised by his acceptance of this." (Theodor Fontane: "Der Stechlin", Karl Hanser Verlag, Munich/Vienna 1980, p. 372)

<sup>2</sup> See my speech "Ethics and the economy" on 17.11.1992 in Sursee: "I have become very sceptical of theories that dictate how life must be."

**publications, speeches and seminars. Thanks to my research-intensive and also practice-oriented way of life,** I am regarded as someone with above-average **experience**<sup>4</sup>, as a **businessman** who has achieved above-average success and, in view of my many years as a leader<sup>5</sup>, also as a **gifted teacher**.

I am convinced that I can live up to the challenges faced by a lecturer in business ethics, both in terms of substance and methodology. I am also convinced that I will be able to attract at least as many listeners to my lectures and courses as my predecessor in this chair.

As regards this application for a university chair, special mention should also be made of the **students**. Young people involved in academic study are suffering a state of emergency that cannot be taken seriously enough – this might be true of all times, but it is especially true for our time. Many young people today suffer from a lack of orientation and an emptiness especially with regard to their value systems. This is particularly true of business students who are preparing for a life in the business world. The economy is of great importance to me, as it is the sole basis of our livelihood. For this generation this means having to overcome almost unimaginable difficulties. Business students need their lecturers to provide them with a good, solid and brave foundation for their personal lives which is also true to reality, and therefore ethical, but due to the wrong forks taken in the road during the past prosperous decades, they were denied this foundation. Keeping in mind the youth in general and the academic youth in particular, it is of the utmost concern to me that students have teachers at their side whose deepest thoughts and emotions are rooted in a positive attitude which is also true to reality and therefore ethical.<sup>6</sup> This requires a great **love** for all of humanity, and in particular its **youth**. These things have also motivated me to apply for this chair.

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<sup>3</sup> See enclosure 1: Sketch of my research profile

<sup>4</sup> I include this reference in particular in view of my **age**. In this context, the fact that I am 68 years of age is an advantage, not a disadvantage.

<sup>5</sup> See Matthias Akeret: "Das Blocher-Prinzip - ein Führungsbuch", Meier-Buchverlag, Schaffhausen, 2007.

The miserable and extremely serious economic situation makes it essential that good economists with practical experience show us the way out. It is therefore urgent that an economic chair focusing on "Ways out of Crisis" is set up. As costs should also be urgently cut across the board, I would, if my application is successful, entirely waive my right to a salary, so that this money can be used, for example, to fund a chair in "crisis economics".

I herewith enclose my application documents, and would like to thank you for your trouble.

Yours sincerely



Christoph Blocher

Former Federal Councillor

**Enclosure:**

1. Curriculum vitae
2. Sketch of my research profile
3. List of publications

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<sup>6</sup> See my article "Siehe, die Erde ist nicht verdammt" of 3 November 1986 in "Zürcher Boten"