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## SEVERAL REMARKS ON THE ETHICS OF THE PROFESSION OF A JUDGE IN POLAND\*\*

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**Summary.** The judges form a special legal corps which as a carrier of the authority of the judiciary has to fulfill an extremely important mission both systemically and socially. The power vested in them is in fact closely connected to such universal values as justice, freedom or equality. The public interest in maintaining citizens' trust in the institutions of the judiciary obliges the legislator to establish certain ethical requirements for the judges. They are to ensure that the judiciary is in the hand of people with appropriate knowledge, high ethical standards and proper dose of life experience. The aim of the article is to review and discuss Polish regulations regarding the ethics of the profession of a judge, with particular emphasis on such concepts as: the independence of the judiciary, the dignity of the judge's office or the "impeccability of character" of the judge.

**Keywords:** judges; "impeccability of character" of the judge; ethical requirements for the judges; ethics; the dignity of the judge's office.

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Kilka uwag o etyce zawodu sędziowskiego w Polsce. Sędziowie tworzą szczególny korpus prawniczy, który jako nośnik autorytetu wymiaru sprawiedliwości, ma do spełnienia wyjątkowo ważną ustrojowo i społecznie misję. Władza im powierzona jest bowiem ściśle związana z takimi uniwersalnymi wartościami jak sprawiedliwość, wolność czy równość. Interes publiczny, jakim jest podtrzymanie zaufania obywateli do instytucji wymiaru sprawiedliwości, obliguje zatem ustawodawcę do ustanowienia wobec sędziów określonych wymogów etycznych. Mają one zagwarantować, że wymiar sprawiedliwości będą sprawować osoby o odpowiedniej wiedzy, odznaczające się wysokimi standardami etycznymi oraz odpowiednią dozą doświadczenia życiowego. Celem artykułu jest dokonanie przeglądu i omówienie polskich regulacji dotyczących problematyki etyki zawodu sędziowskiego ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem pojęć, takich jak: niezawisłość sędziowska, godność urzędu sędziowskiego czy "nieskazitelność charakteru" sędziego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** sędziowie; "nieskazitelny charakter" sędziego; wymogi etyczne wobec sędziów; etyka; niezawisłość sędziowska.

The provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 are of fundamental importance when it comes to establishing the ethos of an ethical profession of a judge in Poland. The applicable basic law regulating, inter alia, the issues concerning the citizens' right to a fair trial (Article 45), the character of the judiciary (Articles 175–177) and the status of a judge (Articles 178–181), formulates specific metanormes with regard to judge's ethics in the form of the principle of independence, autonomy and impartiality of the judiciary¹. Judicial independence should be read as a fundamental ethical postulate addressed to each judge, whereas impartiality and autonomy are a consequence of independence, thus further clarifying the area in which an independent judge can and should exercise his functions².

One of the basic guarantees for the proper functioning of the judiciary is the principle of judicial independence (Article 178 (1) of the Constitution). The concept of judicial independence was used in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997 without specifying its definition, but there is no doubt that the legislator used an "existing term" coined already in interwar Poland. When defining the principle of judicial independence, the Constitutional Tribunal indicated that it "encompasses a number of elements such as: impartiality in relation to participants of the proceedings; independence of extrajudicial bodies (institu-

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Safjan, Etyka zawodu sędziowskiego, [in:] Etyka prawnika, etyka nauczyciela zawodu prawniczego, ed. E. Łojko, Warszawa 2006, p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

tions); independence of the judge in relation to the authorities and other judicial organs; independence in relation to the impact of political factors, in particular political parties; internal independence of the judge. Respect for and defense of all these elements of independence is a constitutional duty of all bodies and persons entering in contact with the activities of the courts"<sup>3</sup>. Independence was therefore closely connected with the responsibility of the judges, as a kind of guarantee of social peace in the state, for strengthening and protecting the legal culture of a society. For this reason, each judge should provide the public with as clear and understandable information as possible with respect to his decisions and thus shape legal awareness of the public. Hence, when trying to meet the requirements of openness and independence, he needs to find the right way to communicate with the public, without avoiding a response to legitimate criticism.

The implementation of the principle of judicial independence is to be realised through a number of constitutional institutions of a systemic, procedural and economic nature. The basic guarantees of the principle of judicial independence include: 1) the subordination of judges in the exercise of their office only to the Constitution and statutes; 2) immunity and personal inviolability of judges; 3) an obligation for the judges to remain apolitical; 4) stabilization of the professional position of the judges; 5) the requirement to provide working conditions and remuneration corresponding to the dignity of the office of the judge. Also the judge's personality traits and his high moral level are considered to be important factors for securing independence<sup>4</sup>.

Pursuant to Article 178 para. 1 of the Constitution, in the exercise of their office judges are subject only to the Constitution and statutes. It is the duty of the judge to strictly comply with the Constitution and laws, while maintaining certain "system threshold points"<sup>5</sup>. As noted by the Provincial Administrative Court in Poznań "due to the above constitutional empowerment, a judge (...) may in a specific case, when the legislative authority does not perform its duties or performs them in a highly careless manner, directly apply an appropriate constitutional provision to ensure the application of the *ex iniuria non oritur ius* principle in the democratic state"<sup>6</sup>. The fact that judges are subject to statutes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cf. Judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal of June 24, 1998, K 3/98, (MP of 1998, n. 22, it. 331).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cf. M. Serowaniec, *Sądownictwo*, [in:] *Prawo konstytucyjne*, eds. Z. Witkowski, A. Bień-Kacała, Toruń 2015, pp. 461–462.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> M. Szyszkowska, *Etyka sędziego w procesie stosowania prawa*, "Gazeta Sądowa" 2000, n. 9, p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Cf. The judgement of the Provincial Administrative Court in Poznań of 25 January 2006, I SA/Po 2626/03, Legalis.

also establishes their powers to independently assess and determine compliance of a given case with lower-level acts of law, and in the event of confirmation of their non-compliance with laws, to refuse to apply them in this particular case<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, the Constitutional Tribunal has repeatedly emphasized in its jurisprudence that the role of the judge is not to enter into the matter of political, economic or social disputes over the direction and shape of particular legal solutions<sup>8</sup>.

The autonomy of the judiciary from other authorities is also guaranteed by the institution of judge's immunity. As emphasized by the Constitutional Tribunal, the judge's immunity provides protection for "the guardians of justice against provocation and retorsion, and pressures (even indirect) from other authorities or — which is currently the greatest threat to the third power — against the impact of political circles interested in staffing the judiciary as well as wrongly targeted media pressure"9. Therefore, what underlies the institution of judges' immunity is a special social role that is attributed to judges in the state. It serves to ensure the unfailing judiciary and the administration of justice, and, as a consequence, the implementation of procedural rules, in particular legalism and the rule of law.

With the principle of judicial independence the Constitution also connects the obligation of the judges to remain apolitical (Article 178 (3) of the Constitution). A judge cannot belong to a political party, a trade union or perform public activities incompatible with the principles of judicial autonomy and independence. As noted by the Constitutional Tribunal, "the cases of violation of the duty of impartiality also encompass the situations where the judge has subjected the legal content of the decisions issued by him to his political views or ideological preferences"<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, the judge cannot take up additional employment, except for a teaching, research-related or scientific work, provided that it does not interfere with the performance of the judge's duties<sup>11</sup>.

On the other hand, professional stabilization is ensured by the principle of appointing judges by the President of the Republic of Poland for an indefinite period of time (Article 179 of the Constitution) and the principle of irremovability of judges (Article 180 para. 1 of the Constitution). If fact, the removal of a judge from office, his suspension, transfer to another seat or position against his

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Cf. The judgement of the Supreme Court of 23 April 2008, III KK 475/07, Legalis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> M. Safjan, op. cit., pp. 50–51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Cf. The judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal of 28 November 2007, K 39/07, (Journal of Laws of 2007, n. 230 it. 1698).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Cf. The judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal of 24 June 1998, K. 3/98 (MP of 1998, n. 22, it. 331).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> L. Gardocki, *Naprawdę jesteśmy trzecią władzą*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 4–6.

will may only take place following a court's decision and only in cases specified in the Statute (Article 180 para. 2 of the Constitution). In turn, judge's retirement due to sickness or loss of strength preventing him from exercising office may only take place pursuant to provisions specified in the Statute (Article 180 para. 3 of the Constitution). Constitutional regulation also stipulates that in the event of a change in the organisation of courts or a change in the boundaries of courts' circuits it is possible to transfer a judge to another court or a judge may retire with the guarantee of receiving full remuneration (Article 180 para. 4 of the Constitution).

Additionally, Article 178 para. 2 of the Constitution introduces the requirement to ensure the working conditions and remuneration corresponding to the dignity of the office and the scope of duties of the judge. As the Constitutional Tribunal has pointed out, "the system of judges' remuneration, as corresponds to the provisions of Article 178 para. 2 of the Constitution is an important element of the judiciary. The status of the judge, including his financial status, is one of the determinants of judicial independence, and thus of independence of the courts"<sup>12</sup>.

Duties related to the seriousness and dignity of the office were specified on the basis of the Act of 27 July 2001 on the Law on the Common Courts System (hereinafter the Act)<sup>13</sup>. The concept of the dignity of the office of a judge means that the office should be held with a sense of high moral and professional authority, with the expectation of social respect. Such dignity expresses the duty addressed both to the whole judicial environment as well as to individual judges, to follow the oath of the judge, to constantly raise professional qualifications, to maintain "impeccable character", to guard, both while on and off duty, the seriousness of the judge's position and to avoid anything that could bring disregard the dignity of the judge or weaken the confidence in his impartiality (Articles 82–82c of the Act)<sup>14</sup>. By taking an oath, the judge undertakes to "faithfully serve the Polish Republic, guard over the law, perform the duties of the judge conscientiously, exercise justice in accordance with the law, impartially in accordance with his conscience safeguard the legally protected secrets, and follow the principles of dignity and integrity in the proceedings" (Article 66 of the Act).

 $<sup>^{12}\,</sup>$  Cf. Judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal of 4 October 2000, P 8/00 (OTK 2000, no. 6, it. 189).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> See The Act of 27 July 2001 the Law on Common Courts System (Jounnal of Laws of 2001, n. 98, it. 1070 as amended).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Cf. Judgement of the Supreme Court of 11 September 2007, SNO 50/07, LEX no. 471858.
See also J. R. Kubiak, J. Kubiak, Odpowiedzialność dyscyplinarna sędziów, "Przegląd Sądowy"
1994, n. 4, p. 16.

Literature on constitutional law sees a direct reference of the judge's oath to the constitutional principle of judicial independence, which is defined as creating such an environment for the judge as to enable him to make impartial decisions in a manner consistent with his own conscience and be protected against the possibility of any direct or indirect external pressures<sup>15</sup>.

One of the factors determining the image of the future judge, in addition to his legal position, manner of appointment, office durability, the scope of his judicial and disciplinary liability, is "impeccable character" (Article 61 para. 1 point 2 of the Act). Having an impeccable character, also understood as an appropriate moral-ethical level, is not only one of the professional qualifications of a future judge, which has an impact on the dignity of this office and its image, but also an important systemic guarantee of its independence. The impeccability of the judge's character is to make him immune from any attempt to influence his impartiality. The judge must first and foremost be a person with the deepest sense of righteousness and justice, as the essence of exercising the function of a judge is to seek for a fair solution in a particular case<sup>16</sup>. Among the qualities that characterize a judge in the subject literature are: nobility, integrity and honesty, civil courage in using privileges, high personal culture, independence, empathy, problem solving skills, high moral level, dignity, responsibility for one's actions and behaviours, ability to follow one's opinion and make independent decisions, strong character, unbreakable will, having a sense of justice and fairness, balance and calmness<sup>17</sup>. The judge should also express his thoughts clearly, reason discursively, write well, be sensitive, but at the same time strict and rigorous in the application of procedural rules. The judge should also be characterized by a high sense of fairness, with a simultaneous tendency towards a reasonable compromise<sup>18</sup>.

An attempt to define the concept of "impeccability of character" was also taken by the Supreme Administrative Court. In the light of the previous case-law of the SAC, the notion of "impeccability of character" should be understood as the entirety of individual characteristics, events and circumstances comprising

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> K. Grajewski, *Głos w dyskusji podczas debaty kwartalnika Krajowej Rady Sądownictwa* "Zasady etyki sędziowskiej – teoria i praktyka", "Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa" 2011, n. 4, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> G. Ławnikowicz, S. Pilipiec, Nieskazitelność charakteru i nieposzlakowana opinia w prawie prawniczych samorządów zawodowych, "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska" 2016, vol. LXIII, p. 235.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> T. Ereciński, J. Gudowski, J. Iwulski, *Komentarz do prawa o ustroju sądów powszechnych i ustawy o Krajowej Radzie Sądownictwa*, Warszawa 2002, p. 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> M. Laskowski, *Ustawowe pojęcie "nieskazitelności charakteru"*, "Prokuratura i Prawo" 2008, n. 6, p. 52.

the image of a judge (also facts and events from the sphere of non-professional life that could undermine the positive assessment of a moral and ethical attitude, culpable from the public perspective, deserving general denunciation, recognized as a belowing of dignity, not always resulting in disciplinary liability), while it is necessary to delimit the sphere of private and family life and improper behaviour and attitude towards other people, showing disregard for moral and social norms and rules of social coexistence. Thus, they are qualities that appraise a particular person not in the intellectual and professional sphere, but solely ethically and morally. The possession of such qualities can be confirmed by opinions from periods of previous employment or legal training<sup>19</sup>.

Also important for the correct functioning of a democratic state of law is proper recruitment of persons<sup>20</sup>, who will be able, according to the oath, to deliver justice impartially and according to their conscience, and who in their conduct will follow the principles of dignity and integrity<sup>21</sup>. The aid in verifying the impeccability of character comprises, inter alia, a special verification mode, consisting in collecting detailed information about the candidate for a judge. It is an assessment of the effectiveness of work and professional competence of the future judge in the field of work methodology and culture of office, as well as specialization in recognizing particular types of cases and performing particular functions<sup>22</sup>. Judge's work is evaluated, among others, from the point of view of: culture of office, including personal culture and culture of work organization, respect for the rights of the parties or participants in the proceedings when hearing cases or performing other tasks or functions entrusted to them and the process of professional development (Articles 57a-57f of the Act). When assessing the candidate's qualifications for a vacant judicial office, the personal predispositions of the candidate for the judge's profession and adherence to the ethics of the profession are taken into account, as well as information on criminal, disciplinary or explanatory proceedings pending against the candidate (Article 57i of the Act). However, these evaluation criteria are not sufficient, because in assess-

 $<sup>^{19}</sup>$  Inter alia: Judgement of the Supreme Administrative Court of 18 June 2001, file no. II SA 1610/00, LEX no. 53475.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> More about the model of training of candidates for judicial offices in Poland: M. Serowaniec, *Kilka uwag o modelu kształcenia kadr sędziowskich w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, [in:] *Współczesne problemy sądownictwa w Republice Czeskiej i w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, eds. Z. Witkowski, J. Jirásek, K. Skotnicki, M. Serowaniec, Toruń 2017, pp. 167–182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> J. Bodio, *Przewinienia służbowe a uchybienia godności urzędu sędziów sądów powszechnych*, "Kwartalnik Krajowej Rady Sądownictwa" 2010, n. 2, p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> J. Bodio, "Nieskazitelność charakteru" jako kwalifikacja zawodowa sędziego (wpływająca na jego wizerunek), "Kwartalnik Krajowej Szkoły Sądownictwa i Prokuratury" 2013, n. 4(10), pp. 9–10.

ing the integrity of character one should also take into account general behaviour of a future judge in relation to superiors, colleagues and the environment<sup>23</sup>. The subsequent assessment will take place in the case of a suspicion that the judge has committed an act contrary to the principles of professional ethics, thus affecting the impeccability of character. In such a situation, the character is assessed in the course of disciplinary proceedings, against the background of specific events usually associated with the violation of the office of the judge, but also with the commission of offenses or crimes. The result of such subsequent verification of impeccability of character may be the imposition of disciplinary penlaties on the judge<sup>24</sup>. As emphasized in the literature, only a truly impeccable judge can show his independence in delivering justice in accordance with the law and conscience. Both states – the impeccability and independence that results from it, form an ideal judge, which, however, in the face of the handicap of human character is practically impossible to achieve<sup>25</sup>.

In this place it is also worth mentioning the so-called "ethical courage" of judges, i.e. the ability to cope with the difficulties that can be generated by legal disputes entangled in the collisions of social values<sup>26</sup>. The concept of "ethical courage" also encompasses the ability to weigh the confronted arguments according to the commands of reason. As it is emphasized in the literature, it is an important component of ethical competence. It can be inferred that an "ethically courageous" judge may be subject both to the regime of liability for certain misconduct as well as be verified in terms of knowledge of argumentation in ethical disputes<sup>27</sup>.

The specificity of judges' ethics, similarly to any deontology of a profession of public trust, is to secure compliance with its rules through a system of sanctions imposed as part of disciplinary proceedings. The catalogue of duties whose infringement constitutes belowing of dignity of the office of a judge is established, among others, by analyzing the content of the oath (Article 66 of the Act), the provisions specifying the qualifications needed to take this office (Article 61 of the Act) and the provisions on the rights and obligations of the judge

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> G. Borkowski, *Nieskazitelność charakteru a powołanie do wykonywania zawodów prawniczych*, [in:] *Etyka zawodów prawniczych w praktyce. Wzajemne relacje i oczekiwania*, ed. G. Borkowski, Lublin 2012, p. 209.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> G. Ławnikowicz, *Etyka sędziego w czasie przełomu*, [in:] *Legitymacja władzy sądowniczej*, ed. A. Machnikowska, Gdańsk 2017, p. 91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> A. Rocławska, Czy polski ustawodawca wymaga od sędziów "dzielności etycznej"? Rozważania na tle ustawowego wymogu "nieskazitelności charakteru", "Ogrody Nauk i Sztuk" 2015, n. 5, p. 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

(Article 82 et seq. of the Act). However, there remains a whole range of other behaviours of the judge which can be considered unworthy in the light of Article 82 of the Act, and the evaluation criteria in this respect are generally accepted norms of ethics and morality, and even good manners<sup>28</sup>. The "unworthy" deeds, as stipulated in the doctrine, are first and foremost all acts that interfere with the law, as well as the conduct of the judge violating the norms of ethics and morality<sup>29</sup>. The scope of disciplinary responsibility of the judge can include all areas of the judge's life, if only they reveal belowing of dignity of the office. It should be noted that every assessment of the behaviour of the judge is based on social reception of this behavior. Undoubtedly, a stately holding of the office builds public confidence in the justice system. If, therefore, in the public consciousness an observed behaviour of the judge leads to distorting of his image, such behaviour is perceived as belowing the dignity of the office.

In accordance with the provisions of art. 107 para. 1 of the Law on the common courts system, misconduct, including blatant and gross offense of legal provisions and belowing of the office's dignity, subjects the judge to disciplinary proceedings. Moreover, the judge is disciplinarily liable for his conduct prior to taking up his position of a judge, if it had not been in conformity with the office held at the time or proven him not to be unworthy of the judge's office (Article 107 para. 2 of the Act). As a side note to these considerations regarding the disciplinary liability of judges, it is also important to point to the most important changes related to the entry into force of the Act of 8 December 2017 on the Supreme Court<sup>30</sup>, which fundamentally remodeled the previous rules governing disciplinary proceedings for judges in Poland. On the one hand, it was decided to establish a new Disciplinary Chamber within the structure of the Supreme Court<sup>31</sup> to deal with such matters, whilst on the other hand, to significantly strengthen the position of the Minister of Justice in the disciplinary process. The Minister of Justice was granted the power to appoint disciplinary judges to appellate courts as well as disciplinary ombudsmen. The legislator has also intro-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> J. Bodio, "Nieskazitelność charakteru" jako kwalifikacja..., p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Cf. Act of 8 December 2017 on the Supreme Court (Journal of Laws of 2018 it. 5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Pursuant to the Act of 8 December 2017 on the Supreme Court, the SC Disciplinary Chamber consists of two departments. The First Department deals in particular with the following matters: 1) Supreme Court judges; 2) judges and prosecutors regarding disciplinary offenses with the features of deliberate offenses prosecuted from public prosecution and offenses indicated in the application as referred to in Article 97 para. 3. On the other hand, the Second Department considers in particular: 1) appeals from decisions of disciplinary courts of first instance in cases of judges and prosecutors, as well as decisions and orders hindering adjudication; 2) cassation from disciplinary decisions; 3) appeals against resolutions of the National Council of the Judiciary.

duced the institution of the disciplinary ombudsman of the Minister of Justice, who can be appointed to conduct any case selected by the minister. Moreover, should the offense of which the judge is accused meet the prerequisites of an intentional offence prosecuted by public indictment, the minister of justice will be able to appoint for the position of an ombudsman not only a judge, but also a prosecutor from among those indicated by the public prosecutor. Until now the judge was always the prosecutor before the disciplinary court. The Act also introduces changes to second-instance proceedings. As mentioned before, the Disciplinary Chamber was established in the Supreme Court, and the authority deciding on its composition is the National Council of the Judiciary. The new law on the Supreme Court also gives considerable powers in the disciplinary process to the president of this chamber. Inter alia, he will indicate the presidents of all disciplinary courts and have the right to inspect each of the pending disciplinary proceedings. The Act of 12 April 2018 amending the Act on the Supreme Court<sup>32</sup> further strengthens the position of the President of the Disciplinary Chamber in the field of independent disposition of the budget of the Supreme Court in relation to the functioning of the Disciplinary Chamber, without the participation or authorization of the First President of the Supreme Court. A significant change is also connected with the appearance of jurors in the Supreme Court, which is being referred to as a social factor. Already at the stage of works on the project, skeptical voices appeared, which indicated that although the participation of citizens in the delivery of justice is an important element of the democratic rule of law, it should be introduced at a lower level. However, what raises the most concern is the procedure of selecting the jurors. The act has transferred this competence to the Senate, i.e. the body of a political nature. Until the first term of office of the Supreme Court jurors, these duties are performed by a jury appointed by the First President of the Supreme Court from among the members of the District Court in Warsaw and the Warsaw-Praga District Court in Warsaw who have declared their readiness to adjudicate in the Supreme Court. In the light of democratic standards, the disciplinary proceedings of judges should be internal, as this is an expression of the organizational autonomy of the judiciary. Unfortunately, the new statutory regulations to a large extent seem to limit the existing autonomy<sup>33</sup>.

 $<sup>^{32}</sup>$  Cf. Act of 12 April 2018 on amending the Law on the Supreme Court (Journal of Laws of 2018 it. 848).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Cf. broader in S. Patyra, *Opinia prawna na temat zgodności z Konstytucją Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej przedstawionego przez Prezydenta RP projektu ustawy o Sądzie Najwyższym*, pp. 14–17, on-line: http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/rexdomk8.nsf/0/13369DD6A2E48A65C12581AD-00463BE2/%24File/i1912-17A.rtf. (access: 5.09.2018).

To summarize, it should be emphasized that the high ethical requirements aid judges in discovering their own moral identity<sup>34</sup>. Knowledge of ethical theories also enables judges to better understand the parties' arguments, to appreciate the values they defend and the motives that guide them. It is the knowledge of ethics that makes them aware of the fact that while issuing judgements one should remember about moral laws, values or characters. By doing so it is easier to see and assess the values entangled in the case, to predict the moral consequences of decisions and settlements made, and assume responsibility. The ethics also provides judges with conceptual categories necessary to understand the moral sense of the situation, as well as helps in formulating their own position, presenting it and defending during the debate. Thus, in the era of current challenges, the authority of the judiciary depends to a large extent on the attitude of the judges themselves<sup>35</sup>. As is rightly emphasized in the literature, a strong judiciary cannot exist without strong judges in the field of personal, intellectual and moral qualifications<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> R. Tokarczyk, *Etyka prawnicza*, Warszawa 2007, p. 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> See more M. Zubik, *O przewrotnych interpretacjach przepisów Konstytucji dotyczących władzy sądzenia*, "Państwo i Prawo" 2017, n. 10, pp. 5–19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> J. Bodio, "Nieskazitelność charakteru" jako kwalifikacja..., p. 6.

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