An appeal from the Academic Association of Scientific Staff at the ETH Zurich (AVETH)

**Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno**  
*One for all, all for one*

These are the words written at the highest point of the cupola of the Federal Palace in the Swiss capital and they stand symbolically for a contract of solidarity within the Swiss Confederation. The Swiss values are the foundation of ETH Zurich. We wish that all professors who accept the responsible appointment to guide young researchers through the first stages of academia would be familiar with, and dignify this basic principle of collaboration. Through a recently published news article however, doubts have arisen on our side – and probably by other people both within and outside of ETH Zurich – whether this basic principle has been valued by the respective actors.

A small research community has reacted to revelations in the NZZ am Sonntag article “Scandal at ETH: students bullied by professor” and has written a letter that deepens the divide without any regards for the affected parties or respect for the ideals written in the cupola. They try to justify the disrespectful, unethical and overall unacceptable behaviour of the accused mentor with the success of a few alumni. They put a successful career on par with an infallible character. Academic pressure and prestige are seen as sufficient reasons for suspending solidarity and as a justification for misconduct amongst established and future researchers. This should be of deep concern for righteous researchers.

We understand ETH Zurich as a community of curious and committed people who have dedicated themselves to research and are prepared to work hard for it. Each person’s success is based on previous work and support of said community. As a result, professors, students and staff should debate on equal footing. It is not tolerable that discrimination, harassment, bullying and threats, independently of the concerned people’s gender, receive space in our community. This mutual understanding is shared by several hundred members of the science community and they express their sympathies in their own “letter of support for ETH researchers”.

We welcome the initiation of an investigation and hope for a thorough and transparent analysis of the incident and following events, helping to prevent such cases at ETH Zurich in the future. Until then we appeal to everyone to remind themselves of our community’s rules and ideals and carry them higher than it has been the case.

We hope that this issue will be resolved in a way that strengthens the solidarity amongst the scientific community at ETH Zurich. At this point we want to thank all those who try to unify our community to the best of their abilities and to maintain and improve it in their own way. We will continue to engage all relevant actors in order to improve the working environments, responsibilities and career opportunities of the scientific and associated staff throughout the ETH Zurich.

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