Dear friends and colleagues

It is with profound sadness that we write to tell you that our dear friend and colleague Michel Balinski has passed away at the age of 85.

Despite his long illness which he fought against bravely and without fuss, Michel continued to think about democracy and work for its future until the very last day of his life. He left, as he had always wished, in his sleep.

Michel studied in the United States with graduate degrees from MIT (MSc) and Princeton (PhD). He held professorial positions in mathematics, economics and administrative sciences at Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, the Graduate School of the City University of New York, Yale and Stony Brook University. After he moved to France in 1980, he was appointed Research Director “de class exceptionnel” of the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique at the Ecole Polytechnique. He was Director of the Laboratoire d'Econométrie there until his retirement in 1999.

Michel was the founder and first editor of the influential journal Mathematical Programming and, having been one of the founders of the Mathematical Optimization Society also served as its president. His research was internationally recognized and earned numerous awards, including the prestigious John von Neumann Theory Prize in 2013.

Known for his work in combinatorial optimization, Michel invented and established the theoretical underpinning of several fair voting and representation systems, each of which is having a significant practical impact.

Michel Balinski was an exceptional man who will be sorely missed by all. We extend our deep sympathy and sincere expressions of friendship to his partner Katell, his two daughters, Maria and Marta, and his granddaughter Lucy.

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