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20.09.2018

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Ceremony for the Awarding of Diplomas of the “European Master in Human Rights and Democratisation” Academic year 2017/2018



The Ceremony of the Awarding of Diplomas of the European Master's Programme in Human Rights and

Democratisation (EMA, Global Campus Europe) for the academic year 2017/2018 and inauguration of the 22nd course, academic year 2018/2019, will be held on Sunday 23 September 2018 at 16.00 at Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice.

Welcoming the graduates, students, professors and partner organisations will be **Manfred Nowak** and **Dzidek Kedzia**, respectively Secretary General and President of EIUC, as well as **Veronica Gomez**, Chair of the Global Campus Council.

Among guest speakers are **Hauwa Ibrahim**, Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, **Koen Vanmechelen**, Artist and human rights activist, **Henriette Geiger**, Head of Unit People and Peace – DEVCO - European Commission. The Ceremony will be accompanied by the notes of **Musicians for Human Rights**, an international network of musicians committed to the promotion of human rights, coordinated by the Executive Director, **Julian Fifer**.

The Ceremony will mark an important moment of recognition and sharing of the accomplishments of EIUC, the association coordinating EMA, and more extensively of the Global Campus of Human Rights, the network composed by 100 universities worldwide specialised on human rights education, for which EIUC functions as hub. Participating in the Ceremony will be the representatives of the partner universities which organise the Regional Programmes in South East Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latina America and the Caribbean, in the Caucasus and in the Arab Region; the rectors and professors of the EMA and EIUC participating universities; the representatives of some among the international organisations and local government authorities which actively cooperate with the programme: the European Union - main supporting institution to EIUC and the Global Campus – the Municipality of Venice, UNESCO, the development cooperation agency GIZ, and others.

Additional highlights of the Ceremony will be the Awarding of the winners of the **Global Campus Visual Contest 2018**, a video and photography competition dedicated to the topic of diversity and inclusion (www.globalcampusvisualcontest.org), and the signing of two **Memoranda of Understanding**: the first with **UNESCO** for the realisation of common activities related to human rights promotion in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the second with the **Lawyers' associations**: Venice Bar Association, Foundation Feliciano Benvenuti – Venice Law School, Italian Union of Criminal Law Associations, Criminal Law Association of Venice “Antonio Pognici” –confirming cooperation in organising legal training dedicated to lawyers on human rights issues.

[The speech given by Manfred Nowak](#)

"Excellencies, Rectors, Professors, graduating and inaugurating students, families, friends, ladies and gentlemen

Last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the European Master in Human Rights and

*Democratisation (EMA) in the presence of some 300 alumni, many of whom are now working in high governmental, inter-governmental or non-governmental positions and spread the message of human rights and democracy to all corners of our planet. We also paid tribute to **Antonio Papisca**, who was and remains the Spiritus Rector of EMA and who inspired us to jointly build up this programme, our European Inter-University Centre (EIUC) and the Global Campus of seven similar Master programmes in all world regions.*

*We are proud of our more than **3,000 Global Campus alumni**, of our new EMA graduates, who yesterday successfully defended their Master theses on highly innovative and inspiring human rights topics, and of our newly enrolled students, who were selected in a highly competitive procedure and who just concluded their first week of introductory classes, workshops and discussions with a group of distinguished members of the European Parliament. In my own class on Thursday, I was deeply impressed by your broad knowledge and understanding of the current human rights problems and challenges. Let me also add that I am very proud of our Global Campus of Human Rights. This morning we finally reached a consensus among all stakeholders on the legal modalities of transforming our European Inter-University Centre into a global Inter-University Centre called the **Global Campus of Human Rights**. It will be by far the **most prestigious institution of post-graduate human rights education in the world**. By combining academic knowledge with practical skills and ethical attitudes, we offer the most advanced and successful Master programmes, not only in Europe, but also in other world regions.*

*Why am I so confident and convinced that we are the best? Because we are different from other human rights Master programmes, which are mushrooming around the world, often inspired by our pioneering work. What makes us so special? Our Master programmes are not offered by one university only, but they are a joint undertaking by many different actors and stakeholders. First of all, we are a global network of some 100 well-known universities with many outstanding human rights professors from different disciplines and some of the leading human rights institutes worldwide. Every Master programme is **a joint activity of many different universities** in the respective region. In Europe, 41 universities from all 28 EU member States are working together, sending teachers to Venice in the first semester, receiving and supervising students in the second semester and finally jointly grading the students in the most objective and inter-disciplinary manner possible.*

*Secondly, we are only able to offer our special services to our students thanks to our **partners in the international community**. Above all, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the **European Union**, which not only initiated EMA and the Global Campus, but which also has been our major donor and partner from the very beginning. We are the flagship of the EU's commitment and insistence to promote human rights education worldwide. We closely cooperate with the European Commission, the Council, the European External Action Service, the European Parliament and the Fundamental Rights Agency. All EU institutions send their own experts to teach and participate in our Master programmes, conferences and training workshops. I am happy to welcome **Henriette Geiger**, who is representing the European Commission and who will address you soon. In addition to the EU, we cooperate closely and are supported by many other international organizations, including the Council of Europe and other regional organizations, the United Nations and its specialized agencies. I am glad to announce that we will renew our long-standing and very fruitful cooperation with **UNESCO** by signing another Memorandum of Understanding today. We are also cooperating with many Governments and national institutions and will sign another MoU with four important **Italian lawyers' associations**. We also collaborate with bilateral development agencies, such as the **German GIZ**, which fosters a closer cooperation between the three regional human rights courts in Europe, Africa and the Americas. Finally, as a global network of academics and universities, we are also part of global civil*

society and actively work together with numerous non-governmental organizations, media and artists around the world.

*The **arts and human rights have more in common than we usually might think**. On the one hand, the human rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the arts protect artists against censorship, repression and intimidation. This is very important at a time when the space of civil society is gradually shrinking. On the other hand, the arts in all their expressions, whether fine arts, photography, sculpture, poetry, theatre, cinema or music, appeal with emotions, empathy and passion to a much broader public than we human rights academics could ever reach. In times of global crises, instability, insecurity and turmoil, many artists feel the urgent need to link up with the human rights community to make use of their specific skills to spread the positive values and messages of human rights and democracy. There is no better place on our planet than **Venice**, with its rich cultural heritage as exemplified in this **beautiful Scuola Grande di San Rocco with its magnificent Tintoretto paintings**, by its Biennale of Arts and Architecture, and the oldest and most prestigious film festival in the world, to combine the universal language of arts with the universal language of human rights. I am particularly grateful that **Julian Fifer and his musicians for human rights** have become friends of EIUC and the Global Campus and cooperate with us on many occasions, including by providing us with some unforgettable pieces of world music today. The same holds true for **Koen Vanmechelen**, who was so kind to dedicate to our Monastery of San Nicolò a beautiful sculpture entitled “**Collective Memory**”, made of Carrara marble, and who donated a miniature version of this sculpture to the graduating students yesterday. As from next year, we wish to turn our beautiful Monastery into a “**Human Rights Pavilion**” with Koen Vanmechelen acting as curator. Koen, together with 30 other well-known artists from all world regions, also contributed to a beautiful art book entitled “**Imagine Human Rights – Artists Celebrate the Universal Declaration**”, which we will present to the public on 10 December during an International Conference, organized by our Global Campus partners in **Beirut**. On this occasion, instead of celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we wish to engage in a critical and self-assured dialogue with those who think that the era of human rights is over and that we are already entering a post-human rights society. We will prove that the current attempts of undermining the basic values of human rights and democracy are only a short intermezzo in world history, and that these universal values will prevail. A shining example that at even in the most difficult circumstances human rights and dignity will prevail is our keynote speaker of today, **Sakharov Prize Laureate Hauwa Ibrahim**, who - as a staunch human rights defender in Nigeria - achieved results which others have deemed impossible. I am very proud that Hauwa is a true friend of EIUC and the Global Campus of Human Rights.*

Dear graduates of the EMA academic year 2017/18, I warmly congratulate you to your outstanding performance! You deserve to join our rich alumni network of human rights ambassadors. I am fully aware that we send you with all your knowledge, skills and enthusiasm into a world that is much more hostile towards human rights and democracy than two decades ago when we founded this Master programme. Join forces with other members of the global human rights and arts community, stay creative, use your passion and adhere to the following core principles, which my friend Ian Martin defined as the “four weapons of successful human rights defenders”: show empathy for victims of human rights violations, who should always be at the center of your work; be truthful and base your work on objective facts in a time of fake news and “alternative facts”; found your actions on the universal law of human rights as an empowerment tool; and believe in the strong power of collective action of ordinary citizens and civil society.

Dear Masterini of the academic year 2018/19, I wish you much success, fun and joy at the Lido, in Venice and at your second semester destination. You will see that this year will pass much faster than you expect.

Even if you will complain, as all your predecessors did, that we make you work too hard, you will definitely enjoy the world of human rights and this unique experience of pan-European, trans-disciplinary and inter-University learning, teaching and togetherness!"

- [Regional](#)

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