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In memory of Prof. Antonio Papisca

We announce with great sadness the loss of our beloved founder, **Prof. Antonio Papisca**, who envisioned the European Master's of Human Rights (EMA) and the European Inter-University Center of Human Rights (EIUC) twenty years ago.

Antonio Papisca, in my view, is and remains one of the great humanists of our time. He was the Spiritus Rector of all our common endeavours in Venice and internationally. Without him, there would be no EMA, no EIUC, no Monastery of San Nicolò dedicated to us. In his extremely gentle and humble manner, he was very convincing and efficient in pursuing his ideas. He strongly believed in the power of human rights, democracy and in a culture of peace, and he was very successful in inspiring others with his enthusiasm. I wish to express my deep gratitude for all that Antonio did to foster a culture of human rights, democracy and peace, including the founding of EMA and EIUC. I am sure that his spirit will continue to guide us in our further strengthening EIUC and the Global Campus of Human Rights. With deep sadness of having lost a very good friend and source of inspiration.

— *Manfred Nowak, EIUC Secretary General*

I am deeply saddened by this news. His lectures as a first year politics undergraduate student at the University of Padova are the reason why I switched to peace and human rights studies when the courses were reformed. He was the reason why I joined EMA in 2007. A truly inspiring, humble and passionate man, to whom I owe so much. Thank you.

— *Agnes Flues, Human Rights Law Centre Co-ordinator, University of Nottingham*

Lo conoscevo bene durante gli anni della lotta per ottenere il diritto di obiezione di coscienza al servizio militare. Poi collaborammo in diverse organizzazioni internazionali. È stato un grande leader creativo di idee per un progresso libero, giusto e pacifico dell'umanità. R. I. P.

— *Alessandro Calvani, Senior Adviser on Strategic Planning, Mae Fah Luang Foundation*

Professor Antonio Papisca was a true intellectual father to us, E.MA students. His lectures were always energetic and inspirational and his educational methods geared towards application in practice. His recurrent expression “compenetration of human rights into interstices” seemed odd at first to me as a trained lawyer, but enlightened me later to represent the perfect integration model for human rights to reach all spheres of human activity. Professor Papisca was a strong believer in democracy, dialogue and grass root approach. He would always encourage students to express their own opinions, develop their autonomous frame of mind and actualize their ideas through concrete actions. But his foremost ability was to ignite a humanistic sparkle in students. One conversation with him prompted me to put together the project “Masterini Agenda for Human Rights” with an aim to present our own, masterini thoughts on human rights. I am still deeply thankful to my fellow masterinis who contributed their time and thoughts to the project, which allowed us to present this creative and formative document at the graduation ceremony in 1999. Professor Papisca was a very warm and generous person – he would always look upon his students with great affection and deep understanding. That is why his spirit shall never wither away; humanistic sparkles will continue to shine through thoughts, words and deeds of his students...

— *Andraž Zidar, E.MA student 1998-1999 and E.MA Programme Director 2015-2016*

Antonio Papisca un carissimo amico con il quale ho condiviso una meravigliosa esperienza nata dalla nostra passione comune per i diritti dell'uomo e le libertà fondamentali Il nostro incontro ha costituito l'inizio di un percorso importante per la mia vita e per quella di tanti altri che seguiranno le sue orme oggi,domani e per tanti anni ancora.

— *Daniela Napoli, Representative of the European Commission*

Descanse en paz este firme defensor y promotor de los derechos humanos, referente a nivel mundial y que ha marcado a tantas personas que, inspiradas por él, siguen extendiendo su labor y encontrando sentido practico a lo que hacen.

— *Adrian Mínguez Rojo*

Professor Antonio Papisca was a courageous, visionary and committed human rights defender. A keen promoter of peace and human dignity till the very end, he was a mentor in study, work and life. As extraordinary and as humble as he was, he inspired me and thousands of students to participate and to remain committed to the transformation of the world, “from the local neighbourhood to the United Nations”, as he used to say. He was the true embodiment of the EMA spirit - very much his own 'esprit' - always nurturing the awareness of being “the front-line servants of all members of the human family”. His sudden departure leaves many of us with profound sadness, but also with wonderful memories and much inspiration. Grazie caro Professore.

— *Angela Melchiorre, E.M Alumna 1999-2000 and E.MA Programme Director 2011-2013*

Remember one evening, at an outdoor strings concert in the Monastery? You organised it. I asked afterwards whether you had liked the music. 'A lot of Vivaldi' you said. There was only Vivaldi on the program. We met at Guidecca, in the first EMA year, when the program was based there in a blue and white building. We met in the hallway, you the venerable Italian professor - all smiles and strange English. I came to play a game with the students - custom-made in Maastricht, all

interactive problem solving, miles away from the Italian way. 'I have never seen the masterini so alive', you said afterwards, still smiling. In the early days, I mistook you for a traditional professor: far from the madding crowd, a servant carrying the luggage, speaking in words that I did not understand. That was not you at all. You were about vision, not about the law in the books. You were about young people, not about you. You were not about the university of Padua, but about creating a wonderful spot in Venice. And even if I would have loved to have you around later, you could also let go. I learned from you. I will see you in the Monastery always.

— *Koen De Feyter, Chair of International Law at the University of Antwerp*

What an extraordinary man: gentle, yet determined, engaging, full of dedication to his students, and a source of Inspiration for so many. Without him, no EMA, no EIUC, no focused European engagement in forming the next global human rights generation. What a pleasure to have known him and worked with him.

— *Amb. Christian Strohal*

If you so wish, please leave your thoughts in Antonio Papisca's memory here below.