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## **Interview with Jessica Fiorelli, President of the EMAlumni Association**



The Press Office of the Global Campus of Human Rights had interviewed the new President of the EMAlumni Association Jessica Fiorelli, about her now role, the 25 years anniversary of the EMA Master

and the main activities of the organisation.

### **Could you tell us more about yourself and your new role in charge of the EMA Alumni Association?**

*Hi! I'm Jess and I graduated the EMA in 2016. Before the EMA I studied Modern Languages and had a short spell as an English teacher in Turkey and Poland while I figured out what to do with my life. Initially, I wanted to be an interpreter for the UN but after listening to some of the UNGA sessions I realised I had a lot to say about the issues discussed in those gatherings and wished to do more than interpret. That's how I ended up doing the EMA, a programme that has truly shaped my life in many ways.*

*After graduating I went for an internship in Brussels, this is fully thanks to the EMA internship because I would not have been able to afford an unpaid (or barely paid) internship in the field of human rights. I stayed in Brussels for about six years working as in EU advocacy and policy for different civil society organisations, mainly on the topic of social justice from many different angles. I'm now studying a Masters in Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Management at Radboud University (Netherlands) as I'm interested in how processes at the workplace can contribute to advancing the social cause.*

*I first got in contact with the EMA Alumni Association when I had just arrived in Brussels back in 2017, as I wanted to find friends in the city and get some professional advice. So, I joined the Belgian Hub (a group of alumni living in Belgium who gather for social occasions) and later became an ambassador for the hub, that involved organising meet-ups and supporting second semester students – which was wonderful as I got to relive the EMA experience with them!*

*In 2021, I put myself up for elections to be part of the Board of the EMA Alumni. This is largely since during the various lockdowns I discovered the joy of volunteering and wanted to give back to the EMA community. I took care of establishing a stronger presence of the Association and a clearer picture of who we are and what we do. This led to a new website [www.emalumni.org](http://www.emalumni.org) which is still in the making, but we hope will give a virtual home to the alumni community! In 2022, the previous President Adam ended his mandate and I wished to help continue the amazing work done by him and all his predecessors and previous boards, so I stood for the election of the position of President. I was elected in June 2022, and this is when the big adventure began for me!*

*As President I'm in charge of setting the direction of the EMA Alumni Association, I lend a hand to the board members who each lead one or more activities of the Association and I support its functioning as a legally registered NGO together with the Secretary General – Penny. I also represent the EMA Alumni externally. I have set myself two broad aims for my two-year mandate. The first is to strengthen the community by providing a clear picture of how alumni can engage with the Association and what they can get out of it. Ultimately the EMA Alumni Association is the alumni organised in a community-like structure, every single alum has ownership of the organisation. The second is to explore new avenues of collaboration with different stakeholders, also outside our community.*

## **Which are the most important activities and events of the EMAlumni association planned by the new Board for the next year?**

*Besides the work we do together with the GCE for the current students of the EMA (such as careers day, the skills building session, arts & human rights workshop, orientation for the second semester), we've got some interesting webinars we'll bring out, such as a new edition of the Conversations with Alumni which will focus on Human Rights and Journalism, as well as the Wellbeing and Career webinars which will be launched in March and will look at issues commonly experienced when working on human rights related careers and other types of jobs as well and how to deal with them. We'll also participate in the Global Campus Alumni Mentorship programme which we do in collaboration with the alumni communities of the other 6 regional masters. I'm very excited to announce that we are going to have a pilot event in Brussels which will consist of a conference and a social event afterwards. I invite any alumni in Brussels interested in contributing to the making of this event to get in touch with us! After years of lockdowns and social distancing we're also very happy to get the local hubs up and running again with social events.*

## **How are you celebrating the 25 years anniversary of the EMA Master Programme?**

*It's incredible that it has been 25 years since the first batch of EMA students came to Venice. I got to meet someone from the first generation in Venice at the careers day just this September and it was really interesting to hear about how it all first started. We've now got 25 generations of EMAlumni which is about 2,000 people from all over the world doing all sorts of interesting things with their lives. We're working on a video of 25 EMAlumni from different graduation years who each express what the EMA has meant for them and what they're up to now. We are also working on a history book of the EMAlumni Association, recording the past decade of our activities and all the different constellations of the Board that we've had since 2010 when we were founded.*

## **Could you share a message with the Global Campus of Human Rights Community and members of the Global Campus Alumni Association in particular?**

*I strongly believe in the power of communities to make positive change in our societies. It is in numbers that we have a voice and that we can have an impact. This said, I think the EMAlumni community is one with the Global Campus community and I'm really happy to have sisters and brothers in the Global Campus Alumni network that we can connect with, learn with and fight for human rights and democracy with! I think it's amazing that we are such a large network that encompasses so many different voices from all corners of the world and walks of life. This for me is strength. My message to them is we're here and we're committed to cooperating in this global community for the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.*

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For more information contact our [Press Office](#)

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