

Press release - November 9, 2015

Environment and law: responsibility and participation

A congress sponsored by *Communion and Law* will be held at Castelgandolfo (Rome) from 13-15 November 2015.

This international Congress will reflect and discuss the relationship between environment, person and law, starting from the laws and regulations enforced in different geographical areas and aiming at new legal openings to reinforce participation. The theoretical approach is based on tested facts: investigations on harm caused to the environment, involvement of populations in legislative proposals, firmness to face the strong power of the State mechanism, etc

The theme of the Congress emerged from discussions among lawyers, legal practitioners and students who adhere to the initiative proposed by *Communion and Law*, a platform for sharing legal difficulties and perspectives, including those that regard the environment, and for giving a voice to countries, different and distant from each other; some of which are often neglected. At the same time, through its method of reflection and dialogue, the Congress wants to be a possibility to offer a specific contribution towards a positive global response. The participants come from 21 countries in 4 continents.

The programme includes various talks on the environment and law, responsibility and participation: "*Environment and law: analysis and critique*", "*Environmental protection in the light of international and constitutional law*", "*Responsibility as a relational paradigm*", "*Common good and participation*", "*Participation: normative dimension and international organizations*", "*The urban structure: security and legality*". It is the result of discussions held during the International Seminar at Castelgandolfo, Italy in March 2014, in which scholars and students from Europe, Africa and Brazil took part and of the Summer School for European and African youth held at Abrigada, Portugal in July 2014.

This conference will also present the opportunity to **share and evaluate the proposal of a popular law** that recognizes the right of participation in legislative and regulatory activity. Such a bill originates from a regional law concerning the territory of Pachino (Sicily-Italy), that has made manifest the contrast between legislative procedure and participatory power, seeing in this a *violation of the right to participate*.

Experts and scholars in various academic and cultural fields, such as economics, environmental science, pedagogy, political science and architecture will contribute to enrich the conference, to prove the complexity of the topic discussed and to highlight the urgency of the issues in question. Against the background of these various themes emerges the prospect of a unitary vision, able to recompose the terms, man and nature, in a relational anthropology.

Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement, who was the first woman lawyer to be registered in the court of Cosenza, Italy will give her talk during the last session of the conference. **Cardinal** Francesco Coccopalmerio, president of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and **Maurizio D'Errico**, president of the National Council of Notaries are among the guests invited to attend this conference.

Communion and law, founded in 2001 as a cultural emanation of the Focolare Movement, is a network of scholars, students and professionals in the various fields of law.

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