

**European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation, E.MA
Awarding-opening ceremony,
Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, 23 September 2007**

Ten Years of E.MA Experiences

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Magnificent Rectors, Authorities,
Dear Colleagues, Dear Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank the E.MA and EIUC presidium for inviting me to address the present ceremony.

10 years: indeed, a short time to be celebrated, especially if we refer to wide-ranging and infrastructural undertakings such as E.MA.

But in the very case of E.MA, there are at least two elements that fully justify a solemn memory of the first decade: the absolute originality of the organisational scheme and the already substantive, consolidated *acquis*.

In fact, we have a good deal of empirical evidence not only to tell the origins and developments of E.MA, but also to take stock of what has been so far achieved - always looking forward, with courageous choices -, in accordance with the axio-practical inspiration and commitment that characterise the EMA educational undertaking since the beginning.

I am not saying heroic deeds, but for sure I am referring to intelligent and farsighted endeavours that produced coherent and lasting outputs, finally a consolidated *acquis*.

In fact, I do not hesitate to emphasise that E.MA and what was being developed in connection with it, is a master piece of educational art and of transnational academic cooperation.

The **axiologic identity of E.MA** is well indicated in the solemn and innovative formula that Rectors and Presidents of the participating Universities jointly pronounce to proclaim open a new E.MA academic year: "*Bearing in mind the principles of the International Law of Human Rights and in the spirit of inter-university cooperation, we declare open the (each) Academic Year of the European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation*".

If I had to summarise in few words 10 years of E.MA life, I would repeat what I wrote 4 years ago when I concluded my service as Director of the E.MA Programme: constant curriculum-development, constant inter- and trans-university institution-building, constant in kind expenditure of didactic and scientific energies ("in kind" is the bureaucratic translation of "generous volunteering" in a co-financed project), finally, the right persons in the right place. Yes, the rights persons in the right place: the E.MA foundation and developments are marked by the "plural" and the "joint" commitment of so many many academics.

I apologise to my distinguished colleagues of the founding stage for having involved them in a permanent condition of "anguish and ecstasy", that particular

situation, so magnified by the romantic literature, that nevertheless produces excellent creative results. I keep them in my heart with perpetual gratitude.

I remind here the names of the E.MA founding fathers and mothers, most of them still at work in our Faculty are Paul Lemmens (Catholic University Leuven), Florence Benoit-Rohmer (Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg), Markku Suksi and Hanna Vuokko (Abo Akademi University), Horst Fischer and Hans-Joachim Heintze (Ruhr-University, Bochum), Antonio Papisca and Marco Mascia (University of Padua), Attracta Ingram and Brid O'Rourke (National University of Ireland, Dublin), Fred Grunfeld (Maastricht University), Jaime Oraa, Trinidad Vicente and Felipe Gomez (Deusto University, Bilbao), Aisling Reidy and Todd Landmann (University of Essex), Maria Benedita Urbano and Francisco Lucas Pirez, later on replaced by Vital Moreira and Ana Luisa Riquito (University of Coimbra). And of course, Daniela Napoli, the inspired and energetic representative of the European Commission, whom I greet in this magnificent room, and Professor Julia Gonzales, of Deusto University.

They were soon joined by Jean-Paul Lehnens (Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg) Dimitra Papadopoulou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and UNESCO Chair), Manfred Nowak (University of Vienna, L. Boltzman Institute of Human Rights), Gudmundur Alfredsson (University of Lund, Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights), Kirsten Hastrup, subsequently replaced by George Ulrich (University of Southern Denmark, Danish Institute for Human Rights).

And shortly after other Colleagues joined the first fifteen: Guy Haarscher (Université Libre de Bruxelles), Stelios Perrakis (Panteion University, Athens), Cees Flinterman (Utrecht University, Netherlands Institute of Human Rights), Wolfgang Benedek (University of Graz), Jan Klabbers (University of Helsinki), David Harris and Alastair Mowbray (University of Nottingham), William Schabas (National University of Ireland, Galway), Adalberto Perulli and Fabrizio Marrella (University Cà Foscari, Venice), Teresa Beleza y Pizarro (Universidade Nova, Lisbon) and Hans Giessmann (University of Hamburg). They all belong to the first and second E.MA faculty generation.

After them the E.MA Faculty was soon complemented and enriched by new generations of academics also as a consequence of the EU enlargement.

Now, a few words on the founding phase.

In late 1996, when Daniela Napoli, the pioneer Head of the Unit on Human Rights and Democratisation of the European Commission, came to Padua, at the University Human Rights Centre (that was founded in 1982), to exchange ideas on possible initiatives for human rights education at post-graduate level, we imagined a structural investment, something that could last in the long term by preparing new generations of young people with "the mind and the heart of human rights". We wanted to combine the 'constitutional' content of what was being drafted, at that time, as Article 6 of the Amsterdam Treaty, with the *incipit* of the Universal Declaration that indicates teaching and education as the most effective guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this nascent phase, the ambitious idea was shared by another founding-mother, Professor Julia Gonzales, now Pro-Rector of the University of Deusto. Professor Marco Mascia, now a Jean Monnet Chair on European Integration and V. Director of the Human Rights Interdepartmental Centre of the University of Padua, was fully involved in shaping the overall strategy and since the establishment of the

E.MA took over the burden of daily assisting the Director of the Programme from the inside of the Rectorate of the co-ordinating university.

Then we launched a call, in the framework of the Socrates Programme, with very short deadlines. Besides Padua 9 prestigious Universities of EU countries promptly replied and a first plenary meeting was convened in Venice in March 1997, in the basement of Palazzo Ducale. What happened in that occasion was an exploratory exchange, marked by good will: the idea of a "European Master" was unanimously accepted. Professor Horst Fisher, a key protagonist of our decennial history, successfully advocated for addressing, as a prior item, the organisational scheme. This was agreed in general terms at the end of the meeting convened in Deusto-Bilbao in May 1997: Julia Gonzales played there a major role. Two months later the E.MA architecture was finalised in Venice during the "Seminar for Trainers on Human Rights and Democratisation" (18-26 July 1997). In that week, hard and innovative work was carried out at Villa Herriot (Giudecca Island) and in the monumental venue of the Island of San Giorgio. All participants shared the deep awareness that we were creating something really new. The Venice Charter, containing the Rules of the European Master Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation, was happily endorsed on July 25th, under the effective chairmanship of Professor Markku Suksi. We unanimously decided to locate in Venice the E.MA activities. We relied on the promise of generous hospitality that was formally expressed by the Venice Mayor, the well-known philosopher Massimo Cacciari.

Then, enthusiasm, commitment, and so much hope ...

Let me underline the very short time in which the overall E.MA Project was finalised. If we consider the sophisticate complexity of the architectural design and the magnitude of E.MA membership, we could even talk of a "structural miracle" that advanced the most ambitious goals of the then nascent "Bologna Process".

The **inauguration of the first E.MA Degree Course** took place the 6th of October 1997 at Palazzo Ducale, in the "Sala del Piovego": from the basement where we held the first exploratory meeting in March of the same year we upgraded to a more comfortable and formal floor. It was the beginning of a logistic - and ceremonial - *crescendo* in the most prestigious historical building of the "Serenissima" Republic of Venice. The following years the opening awarding ceremonies took place in the magnificent "Sala del Maggior Consiglio", enlightened by the largest Tintoretto painting, and in the (no less prestigious) "Sala dello Scrutinio".

Due to the shortness of time, accommodation in Venice of the first generation of E.MA students - the pioneers - was not easy, but the pioneer Masterini were all so pleasantly (and patiently) adaptive and cooperative! They deserve special gratitude also for that. I like to recall the accommodation that was organised in the narrow spaces of the "Hotel Milano", near Piazza San Marco. In order to make it more comfortable (at least from a cultural and axio-practical point of view), we provided a name to the different narrow floors by quoting from "An Agenda for Peace": then, first floor was "Preventive diplomacy", second floor "Peace-keeping", and so on. The same sophisticated logistic culture was spent in the monumental Monastery of San Nicolò, the E.MA headquarters, where we moved from the "Palladio" building of Giudecca (the provisional premises of the first E.MA Course): San Nicolò's meeting rooms are called "Global civil society", "Human development", etc. Needless to say that I am remembering these

aspects in order to further highlight an E.MA own spirit which is pleasantly shared by both teachers and students.

The opening ceremony of the first academic year of EMA in October 1997 was addressed by the message of Mary Robinson, that came by fax just a few minutes before saying the academic formula of the inauguration. I had the honour to read it exactly at noon when the powerful bells of the St. Mark tower were ringing: *mysterium coniunctionis*. Let me quote some words of that inspiring Message: "I would like to convey to all you my greetings and my encouragement...I would also like to pay tribute to all those who took this forward-looking initiative and established a close partnership to translate a European idea into a project for the advancement of universal rights...This European Master Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation will provide a unique academic, research and training environment in close contact with the practice of international organisations...In doing so, this multidisciplinary programme can build a network of high level specialists dedicated to the cause of human rights and the establishment of a universal culture of human rights".

In that occasion the "Camerata musicale vicentina" played the Overture from the "Te Deum" by J. Charpentier to mark in a solemn way the entering of the procession of Rectors and Professors in cap and gown, and the European Anthem from the Ninth Symphony of L. van Beethoven concluded the ceremony. It was the starting of a humanistic practice that is now consolidated.

Let me also remind that in that same occasion, the '*lectio magistralis*' was offered by Professor Jaime Oraa, who has just spoken in his capacity of Magnificent Rector of the Deusto University: another *mysterium coniunctionis*.

The 1998 awarding-opening ceremony was prized by Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, who, after the inauguration of the E.MA venue at the Monastery of San Nicolò, offered a keynote speech. Let me also point out that in the ceremonies in September 1999 and in September 2001 the key-lectures were offered by professors Manfred Nowak and Horst Fischer. We were then facing dramatic situations (Kosovo war, Twin Towers attack) challenging the effectiveness of both International Humanitarian Law and the International Law of Human Rights. On those occasions advocacy for international legality based on human rights and the rule of law sounded very strong at Palazzo Ducale. The same commitment was expressed in the 2002 awarding-opening ceremony, in the eve of the Iraq war, when the Director of the E.MA Programme launched the provocative password: *We are on a peace footing*. A further opportunity to express our firm position in favour of the International law based on the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and for a European Union's more active role in the construction of a peaceful world order, was offered by the meeting of the E.MA Governing Bodies that took place in April 2003 in Athens.

A significant piece of the E.MA decennial history is the so called "**training field missions**", that were intended to provide the Masterini community the opportunity to carry on a week of intensive training on dramatic spots. The first mission was organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 1998, notwithstanding the budget for that year did not include a specific figure. The Italian Government promptly provided ad hoc financial support and free travel and local transport facilities. The 18 January 1998 two C130 military aircrafts came to the Venice airport and brought us (we were seventy) to Sarajevo (to the would-be Sarajevo Airport) and back to Venice. In Sarajevo we organised our

headquarters in the damaged premises of that University. In the first meeting, held in the Aula Magna, we were joined by the Sarajevo Rector and by the Ambassadors of the EU members states. At that time nobody could have imagined that three years later on January 13th, 2001, during the fourth training mission always in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we would have participated, in the same Aula Magna of the Sarajevo University, in the inauguration of the first year of the Regional Master in Human Rights for South-East Europe and joined the pioneer generation of students enrolled in that Master. In that moving atmosphere I had the unique chance to formally express friendly wishes to the new-born brother-Master, and Manfred Nowak shared with me the same joy by offering the first introductory lecture.

Other training missions have been so far organised in Kosovo. We all are indebted to Marjanna Grandits, who was the wise and energetic leader of those ventures.

The **academic ceremonies** of E.MA were since the beginning addressed by high personalities of the EU institutions, of UNESCO, Council of Europe, OSCE, of national, regional and municipal authorities: speeches were offered, among others, by Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the OSCE Secretaries General Giancarlo Aragona and Jan Kubis, Joseph Verde y Valde and Enrique Baron Crespo for the European Parliament, Vladimir Volodine (Chief Unit for the Promotion of Human Rights and Action to Combat Discrimination, UNESCO), Daniel Tarschys (Secretary General, Council of Europe), Giancarlo Galan (Governor of the Region of Veneto), Marialuisa Coppola (Councilor, Region of Veneto), Massimo Cacciari. And many many others, especially the members of the COHOM, the Working Party of the EU Council on human rights and democratisation, with which we developed some kind of *fil rouge* crossing the permanent relationships with the EU institutions.

In this context it should be reminded that since the starting in 1999 of the series of the **EU Discussion Forum on human rights**, a large E.MA delegation has actively participated in the works. Indeed the COHOM-E.MA permanent relationship has proved to be a fertile opportunity to actually mainstream human rights in the whole EU system. Referring to COHOM, I would like to mention especially Ambassador Christian Strohal and Ambassador Klaus Metscher, who were long time active in the E.MA teaching as well: they deserve deep gratitude.

Always in the EU framework, a significant indicator of how we endeavoured to translate into practice the human rights policy- and action-oriented approach is provided by the so-called **E.MA Diplomatic Conferences**, a series of annual meetings convened in Venice with the aim of facilitating free and refreshing exchanges on relevant EU-human rights topics between academics, diplomats international and national officials, and NGOs leaders.

The first diplomatic Conference, held at the Monastery of San Nicolò on May 2000 in formal cooperation with the Portuguese Presidency of EU, was devoted to "Human Rights in the EU relations with third countries. "How to improve the EU input into UN human rights policies". The last Conference in July 2007 addressed the subject of the EU Guidelines on human rights.

This synergetic practice is proving to be fruitful and lasting. At the EU level, the E.MA Programme was being supported by considerable financial resources (the pertinent figure was soon included in Chapter A of the EU budget), and now the EIUC activities primarily relating to E.MA are explicitly included in the Regulation n.1889/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20

December 2006 “on establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide”. Let me also point out that, before this Regulation, E.MA was mentioned in the Declaration issued by the European Council in Vienna (1998). Another important step was achieved in 1998: on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration, the Assembly of the Region of Veneto unanimously endorsed an *ad hoc* Bill to ensure E.MA substantial support on a regular basis. In the same year, the European Parliament devoted a public hearing to the E.MA project: I would like to remember the MEPs sympathy and unanimous consent at the end of the session. More recently, on March 2007, the European Parliament hosted the presentation of the results of the research regarding “The impact of the human rights activities of the European Parliament”.

The collaboration with the European Parliament had an impact also on the content of the Decision 1720/2006 of the EP and of the Council on “establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning”. Upon proposal (and lobbying) of the E.MA-EIUC Governing Bodies, the pertinent Committees of the European Parliament amended and completed the list of objectives provided by the present article 1,i, of the above-mentioned Decision, with the following text: “to reinforce the role of lifelong learning in creating a sense of European citizenship based on understanding and respect for human rights and democracy, and encouraging tolerance and respect for other peoples and cultures”.

Since the beginning fruitful relations have been carried on with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Geneva in May 1999 jointly by Mary Robinson and the E.MA Director: Gianni Magazzeni, Senior officer at the Office, played a major role), with the UNESCO (Memorandum of Co-operation signed in 2000: Vladimir Volodine in the Paris headquarters is constantly at work to develop our relationship), with the OSCE (its Secretary General, Ambassador Jan Kubis, came twice to Venice to address our awarding-opening ceremony, with the Council of Europe (let me mention Stefano Valenti), with important NGOs: among others, I would like to mention Lotte Leicht, of Human Rights Watch, who is offering expertise and advice since the very E.MA beginning. All those entities, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Commission of Jurists and the International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims are formally part of the E.MA Advisory Board.

At the beginning of my speech, I referred to an “**E.MA *acquis***”. Always using the European integration dictionary, I would add: “**E.MA *spill-over***”.

The E.MA organisational scheme was soon acknowledged as a model for similar international undertakings. While under the legal supervision of a coordinating university - the old University of Padua (1222) -, which conferred the diploma including also the seals of the partner universities, activities were since the beginning endorsed and carried on, both at the headquarters in Venice and in each participating University by a supra-national structure of E.MA Governing Bodies according to the original “Venice Charter”: namely, the E.MA Council and the E.MA Executive Committee. The institutional architecture was shaped as a holistic entity, not as a mere sum of individual contributions provided by the partner units.

And some kind of *spill-over* is constantly working within the E.MA undertaking. At the beginning we were ten universities, soon becoming fifteen, right after twenty-seven, and now we are thirty nine.

Then, E.MA as a fertile model. Following and around the European Master based in Venice, always with the support of the European Commission, a family of similar undertakings, having similar organisational and holistic schemes, is now flourishing in different regions of the world: besides Sarajevo, in Pretoria (African Master), in Malta (Mediterranean Master) and in Hong Kong.

A new deal for E.MA was further qualified by the establishment of a body that, considering the magnitude of the E.MA network, would have been able to provide the Master Degree Course, and other complementary activities, a more proportionate instrumental organisation. Then, in September 2002 the **European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation, EIUC**, was created in Venice in the form of an association of universities with legal personality. Such trans-university and supra-national merging offers the suitable ground for running the European Joint Degree in a really "European" way.

In the academic year 2002-2003 another ambitious dream became a reality: the **European Joint Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation** was created. The University of Padua was then complemented by some other partner universities of the so-called inner circle, and is now serving as the first enrolment university of the Joint Degree. Here again, something new and original was born: the E.MA Diploma was conceived not as the mere sum of individual acknowledgments by the partner universities, but as a single academic legal act, like the single currency. And here again developments are being in process: the University of Maastricht and hopefully the Catholic University Leuven are entering the inner circle of the European Joint Degree.

Both EIUC and E.MA Joint Degree are the last and mature achievement in the direction that was clearly advanced in the E.MA Venice Charter of July 1997 and that since then I humbly advocated for.

This is an element that indicates that we have already entered the "beyond".

In this fertile context we should mention another important step: the Memorandum of understanding signed in 2004 with the German Technical Cooperation Agency, GTZ. E.MA laureates are benefiting from a generous programme of internships.

And many other additional activities have been organised.

The current year is marked by the 3rd edition of the EIUC Summer School on cinema and human rights, the 4th edition of EIUC Human Rights Film Award in the Venice Film Festival, the 2nd EIUC Photo competition visualising democracy and human rights.

We should mention the increasing production of publications, among others: the traditional refreshing Masterini Yearbook, the annual collections of Masterini best thesis (printed by Marsilio, in Venice), research books with prestigious University Press.

Among the most recent acknowledgments, let me mention the Honourable Mention Award linked to the 2006 UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education.

Looking beyond. The Human Rights Centre of the University of Padua, which is celebrating in this very year the 25th anniversary of its foundation (another *mysterium coniunctionis*), did its best in the take-off of E.MA or, if you want, being the 'womb' or the incubator. I can say that my University is deeply

proud for having fulfilled that task, jointly with the other partner Universities. I express deep gratitude especially to Rectors Marchesini and Milanese, to Pro-Rector Aldo Rossi, to the Rector's Delegate for European Affairs Luigi Filippo Donà dalle Rose, who is here representing the Rector Milanese, to Mrs. Emanuela Pavia, who was for six years a competent and committed chief-administrator of the E.MA Programme within the Rectorate of the University of Padua, and again to Prof. Marco Mascia.

I should mention here the E.MA staff of the first years of the undertaking, some of them are still at work with a lot of experience: Elisabetta Noli, Alberta Rocca, Corinna Greco, Cinzia Clemente.

And grateful mention should be made of those who provided, especially in terms of logistic facilities, a unique service to the EMA like Mr. Nereo Tescaroli, the former Secretary General of the Municipality of Venice who helped us behind the scenes, and Mr. Piero Meneghetti, the anomic-creative administrator of the Monastery of San Nicolò (but he was very visible on the scenes!).

I want to emphasise that I was very lucky to have capable and prestigious successors, who assured continuity, inspiration and are certainly much better than me: I refer to George Ulrich, who succeeded me as E.MA Programme Director, Carmen Marquez Carrasco, the present Director Anja Mihr, Koen de Feyter, who was for some years a marvellous academic coordinator.

Let me strongly point out that the overall complex adventure, in the mark of capacity, dedication, commitment - briefly, international prestige -, has been mainly assured by two pillars and a bridge: Professors Manfred Nowak and Horst Fisher, and Doctor George Ulrich. For sure, further valuable and innovative outcomes can actually be expected by the E.MA-EIUC community, the present leadership of which deserves full appreciation.

And finally, the core wealth of the E.MA community: the 790 laureates, who are enriching the critical mass, strongly gender-marked, of the human rights defenders that will contribute to change the present unbearable world. When I was the Director of the E.MA Programme I used to address the E.MA students as the servants of "all members of the human family". They actually form a living community of expert and committed people. Most of them are active in any part of the world, in international and national institutions, foreign ministries, universities, NGOs, in many field missions. Each of them deserves gratitude, acknowledgment, support. Let me recall the names of the two Masterini who were the representatives of the student body in the first academic year of E.MA, 1997-1998: Barbro Gustaffson, from Finland, and Ron Hermann, from Germany. And, just to recall some other names: Laurence Hart, whom I sent to Bosnia in late 1997 to prepare the ground for the first training mission (he is now serving at the IOM), and Thomas Barret, Nuala Ni Mhuirtcheartaigh, Anne Godert (their are serving in Diplomacy), and Miguel Berraondo, Carla Marcelino Gomez (they are teaching at university), Carlotta Bellini (who has an important position in the NGO "Save the Children"), and...

To the new E.MA Laureates, I wish a fertile career at the service of the human family, sharing with them and with the entire E.MA Faculty the awareness that the real alternative to war and to extreme poverty is to strive for the protection and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The major resource of our strength resides in the International law of human rights, to which we are urged to provide effectiveness by spending our competence and

commitment. To say human rights is to say life and peace, the two faces of the same coin, that is: the human being, *la personne humaine*.

To the fresh Masterini I heartily wish a profitable participation in the current E.MA courses.

To all E.MA community I say: *Ad majora!*

I thank you.