



**The Siena Declaration of Solidarity**  
**at the**  
**Launch of the Ecological Law and Governance Association**

**October 13, 2017**

An Addendum to the Oslo Manifesto for Ecological Law and Governance (2016)

Individuals and organizations from around the world gathered in celebration on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the University of Siena in Italy to launch the Ecological Law and Governance Association: a global, multi-disciplinary network of professionals and practitioners that seeks to transform law and governance to better protect the foundations of life.

This association, known as ELGA, has its origins in the 2016 Oslo Manifesto for Ecological Law and Governance, a call to action to reframe law and governance “from environmental law to ecological law.” This document not only detailed the need for such a transformation but provided a roadmap to do so. ELGA is a realization of the Oslo Manifesto.

The Oslo Manifesto also laid the groundwork for the Strategic Plan of ELGA. When experts from across disciplines joined in Siena, not only did they celebrate the launch of ELGA, but they provided input into the substance and process of realizing a new framework for governance. The participants in Siena are therefore among the founding voices of ELGA, directly contributing to its Strategic Plan, guiding the way forward.

In the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena is *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, painted in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. The frescos consist of scenes depicting good and bad government, and its effects in the city and the country. In the spirit of these civic-led depictions of law and governance, and the virtues of Good Government that they advance, namely, Peace, Fortitude, Prudence, Magnanimity, Temperance, and Justice, the participants of the Working Group and Launch of ELGA stand together, and in solidarity

- 1 RECOGNIZE the urgency to act now to address global ecological crises;
- 2 ACKNOWLEDGE that the current structure and implementation of environmental law and governance is not adequately protecting the foundations of life;
- 3 CHALLENGE notions of state sovereignty without global responsibility, the concept of growth without limits, fields of economics not rooted in ecological realities, and negotiation practices that fail to recognize power imbalances and the foundational necessities of life on Earth;
- 4 BEAR WITNESS to a global movement toward ecological law in practices, principles, policies, laws, constitutions, and courts around the world;

- 5 EMPHASIZE the indispensable need to provide a platform for, and an amplifier to, these existing local, regional, national, and global initiatives that advance principles of ecological law and governance;
- 6 CALL for a new comprehensive, holistic framework, a new societal, legal, and governance structure, that promotes, protects, and restores Earth's systems for the sustainability and flourishing of all life;
- 7 ADVANCE the hope, the truth, and the justice that only an Earth-centered approach to law and governance, in harmony with nature, can offer.

This new framework for law and governance:

- 1 PROMOTES the entire Earth, the ecological whole, in decision-making;
- 2 VIEWS humans as a part of ecosystems, and not separate from them;
- 3 RECOGNIZES the level of specificity and contextuality needed in knowledge and practice to ensure the health of ecosystems;
- 4 PROMOTES ecological literacy and education that unites disciplines with a common ecological understanding and a new language, with a trans-disciplinary and systematic approach, and strong ties between science and law;
- 5 RECOGNIZES the limits to human understanding;
- 6 ADVANCES the precautionary principle;
- 7 ADVOCATES an Earth democracy philosophy, where everyone in our societies has a role to play as ecological citizens;
- 8 UNDERSTANDS the critical importance of voices and experiences from local and indigenous communities that live in harmony with nature;
- 9 VIEWS that individuals, organizations, government entities, and sovereign States are global agents of nature protection;
- 10 RECOGNIZES the need to adjust notions of state sovereignty, where the whole shapes the parts and the parts shape the whole, while avoiding any part to undermine the whole;
- 11 UNDERSTANDS that common property and state sovereignty can co-exist;
- 12 REDEFINES the commons as the entire Earth system, not simply the leftovers of state sovereignty;
- 13 RECOGNIZES the need for new processes of decision-making, giving nature a voice at the table, and addressing the failure of negotiation procedures to protect the foundations of life;
- 14 ADVANCES legal mechanisms that prioritize preserving ecosystem functionality in decision-making and give non-governmental organizations and individuals the rights to represent nature;
- 15 ADVOCATES for the rights of nature, and the further development of their scale, scope, and practice;
- 16 IMPLEMENTS and EXPANDS the constitutional right to a healthy environment;
- 17 REQUIRES that actions in the short-term be constrained by the need to preserve the life supporting properties of the Earth, its systems, the biosphere and its ecosystems in the long-term; and
- 18 ADVANCES social and economic development based on sound ecological principles.

A revolution in thinking, a re-imagination of the mind, with a new language, are needed. We shall work together to define ecological law and promote a real workable vision for the future. There are stories of success around the world, indicators of change occurring, but we also know that there are very powerful forces working at the destruction of health, of life, of life systems. We do not face our challenges blindly. We face them together, with truth, justice, and courage.

Everything in nature is connected, and we, as humans, as citizens of Earth, must strive to connect every decision we make to its impacts on nature. Ecological causes are life causes and we come together in solidarity for the future of life.