



# Commission on Legal Pluralism

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Irvine, 14 March 2017

Re: Decision re biannual course and conference in Syracuse, NY

Dear all,

In February, we contacted you to share our concerns with the Executive Order of the United States Government barring citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen entry for 90 days into the United States. This Executive Order has currently been replaced with a new one. Although the new Executive Order differs slightly from the first one, it still targets groups on the basis of their religion and nationality.

We have considered the consequences of the travel ban – and of the increased hostility to Muslims and other visitors to the United States at immigration and customs -- for our course and conference in August in Syracuse, New York. We feel that holding the course and conference in the US in the current climate would exclude certain scholars from our meeting. This diametrically opposes our aim of open dialogue and cooperation between researchers and practitioners from various regions of the world. In addition, we would like to send a strong message of disapproval of any policy that targets groups on the basis of their religion, nationality, race, sexual orientation, or any other discriminatory grounds.

It is for these reasons that we have decided to relocate the conference to outside the United States to ensure open access. This also entails a postponement of the conference, to 2018. We are concerned with including our US-based colleagues at a time when the freedom of speech



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and academic freedoms are under threat in the US, and will try to promote and enable their participation next year.

**We welcome ideas from our members for new partnerships and locations. One possible way to ensure easy access for our US-based colleagues would be to relocate to Canada, so we specifically ask our Canada-based members to consider hosting the conference.**

We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this change of plans, but expect that you will understand our reasoning. We will contact you as soon as we have information on the new location and date of the course and conference.

Yours sincerely,

The Executive Body of the Commission on Legal Pluralism

(Janine Ubink (President), Giselle Corradi (Executive Secretary), Yüksel Sezgin, Melanie Wiber, Bertram Turner, Marc Simon Thomas, Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, Dik Roth, Gordon Woodman, Anne Griffiths, Maarten Bavinck, Markus Weilenmann, Carolien Jacobs, Waheeda Amien)