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LA COSTITUZIONE... APERTA A TUTTI.  
A ROMA TRE UNIVERSITY PROJECT

*ABSTRACT. The paper illustrates the Project "La Costituzione... aperta a tutti," which was launched in 2018 by Roma Tre Law Department to spreading knowledge of constitutional values among high school students.*

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In few lines, we illustrate the new relevant activities carried out by the Law Department within the scope of the University “Third Mission.” These initiatives witness the interrelation between the University and the civil society: they go along with the University’s traditional activities such as research and teaching.

The University of Roma Tre is indeed committed to several projects with which it establishes relationships with schools, associations, theatres, prisons and other entities within either the society and the territory, where the University is located and delivers its main educational purpose.

*La Costituzione... aperta a tutti* (*The Constitution... open to everybody*) represents University’s commitment to spreading knowledge of constitutional values among high school students. The Law Department is carrying out the aforementioned Project for the third consecutive year, always improving it, because it has been very successful: several schools have applied to join, being able to use university teachers for directing young students in the fundamental bases of Italian constitutional culture, which is important to acquire at school, both for those who will then attend university courses and for those who will not.

The Project was launched in 2018 by prof. Marco Ruotolo, full professor of Constitutional Law of the Department of Law. Later, due to the Project’s growth, Marta Caredda was named as coordinator and the Law Department Administrative Office also provided support.

We decided to start by listening to lessons from great and well-known professors of Constitutional Law: they addressed the meaning of the fundamental Charter’s keywords and they explained their importance to the school students. Bearing in mind that the hope for greater diffusion of constitutional culture is aimed specifically at targeting students of the last years of high school, we continued with in-depth analyses and debates on the relevance of the Constitution with younger Constitutional Law teachers. Such a double track approach has a clear scope. On the one hand, we think it is important that the reflection on constitutional principles takes place both through lectures – valuable and authoritative – and through comparisons, debates, work to be done in class on the issues addressed. On the other hand, the involvement of younger law scholars undoubtedly allows to reduce the generational gap between teachers and students, with a formula that fosters the active participation of boys and girls,

encouraging the assimilation of particularly complex legal concepts. In the meetings with younger researchers, in fact, students' questions are generally more frequent and the interventions characterized by greater spontaneity.

In October 2018, we arranged the first three lectures held by Law Masters in the Roma Tre Aula Magna, inviting the schools of Rome that were interested in participating: Prof. Luigi Ferrajoli held a lecture about the keyword "Legality;" Prof. Giovanni Maria Flick addressed the keyword "Memory" and Prof. Marta Cartabia dealt with the keyword "Respect." More than three hundred students from middle schools were present.

Later, we invited high school students to participate in seminars held by young constitutional scholars, in order to encourage debates. In fact, these seminars are not only about the meaning of key concepts of the Constitution, but also reflect on the current value of those concepts and how they can be part of everyone's daily life. Andrea Giubilei addressed the concepts of "Freedom and Responsibility;" Marta Caredda dealt with the theme "Solidarity and Health;" Caterina Tomba gave a talk about the relationship between "Freedom and Equality."

The University of Roma Tre continued with a greater commitment and openness to society: our senior university students, along with young teachers, conducted study meetings on the Constitution by visiting high schools' classrooms. In this way, a direct confrontation with the new generations was further encouraged, also through the narration of personal experiences of social participation and defence of legality (for example: being elected as a representative of university politics; doing activities with no profit associations).

The success of the first edition of the Project gave the enthusiasm to go ahead with the second cycle of lessons dedicated to high school students.<sup>1</sup> In December 2019, we invited two established professors of Constitutional Law and over five hundred

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<sup>1</sup> The schools involved in the first Project's edition – also thanks to the collaboration, in the initial stages, with the Assessor for person, school and solidarity community of the city of Rome – were Liceo classico Anco Marzio, I.M.S. Margherita di Savoia, I.I.S. Einaudi, Istituto cinematografico R. Rossellini, Liceo Keplero e Plinio Seniore, Istituto W.A. Mozart, I.C. Nino Rota, I.C. Via P. Semeria, I.C. Giovanni Falcone, I.C. Angelica Balabanoff and I.C. Via Casal Bianco.

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children from Roman schools to the University: Prof. Lorenza Carlassare held a lecture on the word “Culture” and Prof. Valerio Onida on the word “Representation.” Shortly after these two lectures from the “Masters,” the Covid-19 epidemic led to an interruption of our activities. However, through the distance learning mode, we were able to carry out a seminar on “Right of asylum and legal status of the foreigners” held by Simone Barbareschi.

We are ready for the third cycle of lessons. In the last month several schools applied to participate: we have planned many new lectures and seminars, adapting the Project to the needs of the current situation. We will provide the equipment for distance learning, thanks to the collaboration of the Einaudi Institute of Rome, a high school involved in the Project from the very beginning. Lectures will be followed in streaming and also recorded on a specific digital platform, so as to be seen even on a deferred basis by the largest possible number of interested students.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of January 2021, three lectures are scheduled to start the third edition: we want the students to reflect on “Justice,” with Prof. Giorgio Costantino; on the meaning of “Freedom,” with Justice Giacomo Ebner; on “Honesty,” with Prof. Bernardo Mattarella. Each Monday of next February, March and April, we will do classes, along with young constitutional law researchers from the Department of Law of Roma Tre University, to look into a word or a concept of the Constitution. Among the insights that will be carried out, there will be “Europe,” “Environmental Protection,” “Labour” and “Democracy.”

The lectures and seminars held on the occasion of the first cycle of lessons on the Constitution were collected in the book *La Costituzione... aperta a tutti* published by Roma Tre-Press in 2019. This contribution can be freely downloaded by anyone, as a study material for students and teaching aid for school teachers.

In Italy, Civic Education was no longer taught in schools; it has been only recently decided to reinsert it in the high school curricula. Therefore, the Law Department of the University of Roma Tre wants to offer help and contribute with

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<sup>2</sup> For the third edition, 30 schools and over five hundred students are involved in the Project *La Costituzione... aperta a tutti*.

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school teachers to the spreading of the constitutional tradition of the Republic. The lessons collection is preceded by an essay by Prof. Marco Ruotolo, which introduces the other writings explaining why the Constitution is a limit to Power and how the idea of Constitutionalism was born. Last October the second edition of the Volume was published: it was enriched by the lectures held between the end of 2019 and 2020. It should be mentioned that we were capable to develop such a significant project also thanks to the great support shown by the Ministry of Education from the very beginning.

With *La Costituzione... aperta a tutti*, the University of Roma Tre – in this specific case, the Department of Law – makes available to school students a wealth of fundamental knowledge on the meaning of the most important words of the Italian Constitution. We think that this activity is very important, as it represents the role that the University can and wants to play in the society, for the civic education of young citizens, before and regardless of their enrolment in our degree courses.<sup>3</sup>

The University is a community where the exchange of experiences and knowledge takes place. It can be and we want it to be a place of dialogue between generations: between established and young professors, university students and school students, for the harmonious growth of the constitutional culture in our country.

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<sup>3</sup> Since several hours of lessons are scheduled, students can apply for credits, which can be useful in case they will begin a University Curriculum. It is an additional chance that is offered; it being understood that participation is free and in no way connected with subsequent enrollment at the University.

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