

The Toulon Declaration *

PROCLAIMED on March 29, 2019 - TOULON - FRANCE

(The Toulon Declaration, which emerged from the trilogy of symposia on the legal personality of animals, is conceived as a response by legal scholars to the Cambridge Declaration of 7 July 2012).

PREAMBLE

We, legal scholars, having participated in the trilogy of symposia on the legal personality of animals organized at the University of Toulon.

Taking into consideration the research performed in other disciplinary fields, particularly by researchers in neuroscience.

Taking into account the Cambridge Declaration dated 7 July 2012 by which researchers came to the conclusion that "humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness", these traits being shared with "non-human animals".

Regretting that the law has not taken advantage of these advances to bring about fundamental changes in all legal corpuses relating to animals.

Noting that in most legal systems, animals are still considered as things and lack legal personality, which alone can grant them the rights they deserve as living beings.

Considering that today, the law can no longer ignore the advances in science that can improve the consideration of animals, knowledge that has hitherto been largely underused.

Finally, considering that the current incoherence of national and international legal systems cannot tolerate inaction and that it is important to initiate changes in order to take into account the sensitivity and intelligence of non-human animals.

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Hereby declare that,

Animals must be universally considered as persons and not things.

It is urgent to put a definitive end to the reign of reification.

Current knowledge requires a new legal perspective with respect to animals.

Consequently, animals must be recognized as people in the legal sense of the term.

Thus, beyond the obligations imposed on human beings, animals shall be granted their own rights, enabling their interests to be taken into account.

Animals should be considered as non-human natural persons.

The rights of non-human natural persons shall be different from the rights of human natural persons.

Recognizing the legal personality of animals is an essential step towards the coherence of legal systems.

This movement is a part of not only a national, but international legal consensus.

Only the path of legal personification is capable of providing satisfactory and favourable solutions for all.

Reflection on biodiversity and the future of the planet must include non-human persons.

In this manner, the link with the community of living beings is underscored; a legal interpretation can and must be established.

In the eyes of the law, the legal situation of animals will change by raising their status to that of a legal person.

END

* The Toulon Declaration was officially proclaimed on 29 March 2019, during the formal symposium on The Legal Personality of Animals (II) held at the Faculty of Law of the University of Toulon (France), by Louis Balmond, Caroline Regad and Cédric Riot.