Press Release

Project Extension of the Käte Hamburger Centre for Advanced Studies “Law as Culture”

Continued funding was granted by BMBF!

The Käte Hamburger Centre for Advanced Studies “Law as Culture” was brought to life by its founding director Professor Dr. jur. Dr. h.c. Werner Gephart in 2010 and it has carried out work that is both nationally and internationally visible. The achievements and findings of the Centre at the intersection of cultural and legal studies have now been positively evaluated by a committee of experts. The activities of the Centre, which counts with Professor Dr. Nina Dethloff as Managing Director, receive sustained support by the administration of the University of Bonn and will be continued in a second funding phase (2016 to 2022), as recommended by the evaluators. The funding budget for the second term amounts to 9.5 million Euro.

During the first funding phase, the research of the Käte Hamburger Centre for Advanced Studies “Law as Culture” has centered around the foundations of law in the cultural sciences (i.a. the relationship between law and religion, the role of law in the globalization process, as well as conflicts of legal cultures). Fundamental questions – for example regarding the question of guilt in law or the reasons for the binding character of legal rules – were discussed as well as recent events and developments: The Centre not only dedicated an international conference to the transition processes in the Arab world as early as April 2011, but also put its focus on the logic of the legal-cultural institution of tribunals that deal – in The Hague amongst other places – with crimes against humanity.

On the basis of a perspective that results from these discussions, the six years of the second funding phase will initially revolve around the tense relationship between law and politics. Taking on a comparative perspective, the emphasis will lie on different constitutional cultures that balance competences and power structures of state actors in different ways or have an influence on the status of religion in the legal and political discourse. In the years to follow, the interplay of law and economy will be investigated, for example by asking for the legal foundations and implications of the very distinctive economic cultures of the world. Within the scope of the Georg Simmel Artist Stipend, the institution of the Artist in Residence enables the Käte Hamburger Centre for Advanced Study to follow up an aesthetic dimension
of its project that provides for continuous irritation of certainties in occidental conceptions of law; as exemplified by “Breakdown Clown”, the talking robotic sculpture by Tim Shaw (member of the Royal Academy), asking fundamental questions about our law.

The appointment of Professor Dr. Clemens Albrecht and the establishment of a senior professorship for Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Werner Gephardt from spring of 2018 on set the course for sustainability even beyond the period of funding by the BMBF.

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