

## **Common Grounds. An ecological and legal approach to land-commons**

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The commons have recently become an important research topic. Many see in them a promising formula for the responsible use of natural resources and the possibility to successfully address various ecological, social and economic crises. The locality and diversity of the commons are challenging the law and give a new impetus to classical debates in legal theory about some of its fundamental categories, typically ownership and property rights, but also, more broadly, about limits of the rule of law. While in most Western Legal Systems the commons are seen as an obsolete category, people are increasingly becoming involved in 'commoning' practices of self-organisation towards local lands and territories. The present research aims at addressing the legal issues that arise when commons (re-)emerge today in a legal environment that seems deficient when confronted to their contemporary vitality. It contributes to efforts aimed at understanding and alleviating tensions with the prevalent law. The research elects the Brussels Capital Region (BRC) as the geographic scope for its empirical and ethnographic inquiries. It will formulate proposals on how law can compose with the new territorial commons in conciliatory ways, by providing a legal environment better tailored to their practices and 'ecological' relation to land. While it will lead to findings fitting the Brussels context, the project will deliver results of a generic pertinence valuable far beyond the BCR, and abroad.