GOETHEANUM COMMUNICATIONS

 Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, 17 February 2021

**Responsibility for conservation and settlement quality**

**Goetheanum takes legal steps to protect pastureland**

**In view of reassurance received in the past, the Goetheanum had remained neutral regarding a building project (‘La Colline’) in Arlesheim, Baselland, Switzerland. Now that an adjoining conservation area is under threat, it has taken legal steps.**

As the owner of the nature conservation area adjacent to the building site, the Goetheanum had asked the Arlesheim authorities for assurance that the planned construction work would not cause damage to this ecosystem. This assurance was given, most recently on 4 December 2020 by the town of Arlesheim. But now that construction work has started, with extensive earth-moving and drilling, the future of the protected wetland, springs and the wet meadow situated below the Schwinbach brook appears to be endangered.

As soon as the drilling started, the spring in the north of the conservation area became turbid and polluted. Monitoring of critical water parameters by the Goetheanum‘s Natural Science Section and testing of water samples commissioned by a local conservation initiative (Natur- und Kulturraum Dornach-Arlesheim) found contamination by concrete and heavy metals which partly exceed the legal limit. The amount of water rising from the northern spring has by now (9 February 2021) gone down considerably, causing parts of the brook, which usually carries water through-out the year, to dry up. Shortly before, the construction firm had dug out a trench, drilled through impermeable earth layers and carried out excavation work in the protected brook‘s eastern drainage area.

With the support of the Franz Weber Foundation the Goetheanum is now taking legal steps. It has obtained a judicial order from the Dorneck-Thierstein district against harmful interference with the fauna, flora, soil and water on the land in question. In addition, an appeal has been made to the district court of Greater Basel West for a preliminary stop of the construction work and charges have been filed against ‚‘persons unknown’.

The Goetheanum has repeatedly sought talks with all the parties involved, including the construction firm and the local and regional authorities. The Schwinbach and the wetland in question are located across the boundary of two cantons and the area constitutes an important connection between the natural recreational areas Birstal and Gempen. The town of Dornach, which is at present reconsidering its land-use plans, appreciates the importance of the Schwinbach brook and the contribution the Goetheanum parkland is making to the area‘s settlement quality.

(2525 characters/Wolfgang Held, translation by Margot M. Saar)

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