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Vatican City State Tribunal passes sentences in the trial for disclosure of reserved information and documents

Vatican City, 8 July 2016 – Yesterday afternoon Vatican City State Tribunal passed judgement in the trial for the crime of disclosure of confidential information and documents, in which different charges were brought against Msgr. Lucio Angel Vallejo Balda, who at the time of the events in question was secretary for the Prefecture of Economic Affairs of the Holy See and secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Reference on the Organisation of the economic-administrative structure of the Holy See (Cosea); Francesca Immacolata Chaouqui, also a member of Cosea; Nicola Maio, secretary to Msgr. Vallejo Balda for work related to the Cosea, and the Italian journalists Gianluigi Nuzzi and Emiliano Fittipaldi.

With regard to the defendants Gianluigi and Emiliano Fittipaldi, after affirming first the "existence, rooted and guaranteed by divine law, of the freedom of expression of thought and the freedom of the press in the Vatican legal system", and considering that the trial proceedings, fully developed only in the course of debate, showed that the charges brought against the defendants had been made outside its normal jurisdiction, and the fact that the defendants were not, for the purposes of criminal law, public officials of the Holy See nor equivalent to them, the Tribunal declares its lack of jurisdiction.

Likewise, it acquits Msgr. Vallejo Balda, Francesca Chaouqui and Nicola Maio of the offence of criminal association. Nicola Maio is also acquitted of the charges of complicity in the disclosure of confidential documents on the grounds that there is no case to answer, in view of the evidence that emerged during the trial.

Msgr. Lucio Angel Vallejo Balda is convicted of the crime of disclosure of confidential documents and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.

Francesca Immacolata Chaouqui is acquitted of the crime of disclosure of confidential documents, but considered guilty of complicity in the crime committed by Msgr. Vallejo Balda, and therefore sentenced to ten months' imprisonment, to be suspended for five years.

The judgement is signed by the president of the Tribunal, Giuseppe Dalla Torre, the judges Piero Antonio Bonnet and Paolo Papanti-Pelletier, and the chancellor Raffaele Ottaviano.