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CITIZENS 'POWER' TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF THEIR CITIES

The conference on "Co-Governance, co-responsibility in cities today" addresses the wounds and issues of cities and the key role citizens play in identifying solutions through genuinely participatory processes.

A new concept of citizenship is emerging based on participation in all areas of city life: from town planning to communication, from education to preventing corruption, from multicultural integration to interreligious dialogue. The words trust and hope were frequently heard, as values to be re-acquired and applied.

"In some neighbourhoods of Medellin there are truly resilient populations. They are building their own city within the city; a city in the suburbs ". The pilot project in this city in Colombia, in neighbourhoods originally settled by forced migrant workers, is working towards a healthy urban environment through town planning. "We began to involve citizens starting from projects, because the works underway belong to the citizens," explained Federico Restrepo, an engineer and former director of the Enterprise Performance Management of the Colombian city. Concerning the increased immigration to Colombia from neighbouring Venezuela, he emphasised that nothing is resolved by building walls: "It is our responsibility to build relationships between the city and the surrounding regions in order to solve this deep social problem that our society is going through".

Professor Melchior Nsavyimana, from Burundi, currently teaching at the Regional Integration and Development Institute in Nairobi outlined the challenges and fragility of cities today asking what hope there is for the future: "According to World Bank data (2017) the African continent has only \$ 68 billion available to meet its basic infrastructure needs. It is a massively inadequate sum. Tomorrow's cities must be reinvented by putting citizens at the centre of urban policies, their needs and their future ".

Communication is the greatest challenge in every place. Fadi Chehadé, former managing director of ICANN and founder of Vocado: "Instead of talking about smart cities, we should talk about cities that can be lived in, where technology is really at the service of the person. The only way city authorities can control the power of technology and the multinationals is from the bottom up, that is, from the people. Now is the time to reverse the trend and for citizens to make their voices heard. Regarding ethics and technology, "We need a value based digital system. The very technology we are afraid of contains the solution in itself. It depends on how we use it. There are already those who think like this, even in Silicon Valley".

Co-Governance is not only discussing challenges and problems, but ways of preventing blights on society such as corruption. For **Adriana Cosseddu, professor of law at the University of Sassari (Italy)** the idea of lawfulness "needs revisiting, exploring the reason for the law and the impact of each and every action, whether legal or illegal".

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In this way "people will not so much try to avoid keeping the law, as often happens, but rather they will be motivated to keep it in view of the good of others which they too are responsible for". She concluded asking, "Do we have the courage to renounce opportunities, for personal gain, thinking of the needs of one other person today, and of the community tomorrow? I believe we must start to build up the concept of "we" that we want to dwell in our cities, and that can renew our cities through a new fabric of relationships".

The simple motto "Whoever respects the rules is happy" was chosen for a cultural twinning project with youth in German-speaking countries, in a hostel in San Leonardo di Cutro (Italy). It began in 2015 thanks to funding from goods confiscated from the 'Ndrangheta [Mafia]. The manager Loris Rossetto added the subtitle, "Do to others as you would have them do to you", explaining that, "During the 48 hour programme students learn foreign languages through simulations and dialogues. A second hostel was opened in Crotone. We want to keep our feet on the ground but keep looking above and beyond for ways to improve our area".

Danuta Kaminska, an official in the Council of Upper Silesia, spoke of a different Poland from the closed sovereign state that Western European media project. There are cities such as Katowice, which work for the inclusion of migrants, of which there were c. 700,000 in Poland last year, mostly from Ukraine. "Co-governance in our city means supporting citizens from the moral point of view as well as practically. Collaboration with religious communities and non-governmental organizations helps integration and makes them increasingly part of the community. Examples are support for Jewish and Muslim communities".

In Florence, on the other hand, the 'Citizens' Pact' to promote the values of coexistence, mutual knowledge and respect was signed in February 2016 between Imam Izzedin Elzir and Mayor Nardella. Since then Pisa, Turin and many other cities have followed suit and the Pact has become national. The Imam spoke at Co-Governance of the terms of the agreement: using the Italian language in mosques; economic transparency of the Islamic communities, education for citizenship and respect for the law: "We try to educate our faithful to be Italian citizens of Muslim faith: faith is not opposed to citizenship".

The conference will end with the presentation and signing by participants of the "Pact for the City on Co-Governance", drafted at the event, with ideas and practices of participatory, effective, supportive and community governance.

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