

## APPEAL FROM MESSINA

Palazzo Zanca, June 6 2015

Sixty years after the Conference of Messina we are all gathered here, Citizens, Policy Makers and Academics, not only to celebrate this crucial event that gave a decisive impetus to the construction of the European Union, but also to contribute to achieve that intercultural civilization model that has brought well-being and progress in a large number of countries.

From this City of Sicily, a region placed – as Vitaliano Brancati said – *“at the entry of two continents: from Messina it looks to Europe and from Capo Passero it looks to Africa”*, we would like to look to the future in order to face the new challenges.

We strongly believe that the construction of the European Union, under the aegis of the values established by the Founders, is an irreversible process. The only alternative would be a catastrophe, a return to the horrors of nationalisms. The European Union should now finally leave the twentieth century behind and realize that in this new millennium, it will have an important role to play in the era of globalization for the universalization of human and social rights, if it becomes:

- a global, strong and credible political body able to resolve conflicts and to build peace processes;
- an institutional actor that promotes individual and collective fundamental rights by placing the person at the center and as the objective of its political action;
- the territory where all citizens are guaranteed the right to a basic income, employment opportunities, health care, housing and education;
- a leading player in the protection of the ecosystem and of all living things, the use of renewable energy, waste reduction and containment of land use.

We know that this civilization roadmap cannot be achieved in an Ivory Tower. The European Union has to deal with conflicts flaring up once more in areas near and far with neighboring populations suffering and living in anguish, and millions of people oppressed by unjust economic systems.

In agreement with these assumptions, we Citizens, Policy Makers and Academics gathered in Messina:

**ask** the EU comes out of the cage that it has built with its own hands, breaking free from subordination to power strategies that don't belong to us, from the subservience to the rule of finance and the consequences of unilateral policies of rigour and austerity.

**ask** for the creation of an institutional system which guarantees democratic control over government' decisions, overcoming the current imbalance between a decision-making center that has power without responsibilities and peripheries which have administrative responsibilities without power.

**call** for a renewed commitment to build social cohesion and tackle poverty, so that the theoretical principle of equality can be transformed into concrete actions.

**demand** concrete measures to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions and, in particular, the strengthening of interventions to support innovation and scientific and technological research in the field of renewable energy, the definition and implementation of a strategy to disseminate them, the definition and implementation of a European "Zero Waste" program, the implementation of measures for the protection of the right of access to water, the protection of agricultural biodiversity, the development of smallholder agriculture.

**demand** that the European Union pursue a policy of openness towards the Southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea to create a Mediterranean-Euro Community based on a shared citizenship, mutual respect and equal dignity for all countries and organizations that overlook this basin. This Community must be a key element of a new neighborhood policy that unites the European Union - in an "alliance of the three seas" – to the South and East, including Russia.

**strongly demand** that a process of cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the Mediterranean basin be rapidly set up ; not out of liberality, but fostering a "real co-production policy" in the fields of technology - not military - agriculture, health, culture, tourism, industry and the environment.

**ask that**, in this process of cooperation, fundamental human rights become a priority, starting with the establishment of humanitarian corridors for migrants fleeing war, persecution, environmental disasters and severe economic crises.

**demand** that the current "Erasmus+ Program" be financially strengthened and extended to all the Mediterranean countries, together with other cooperation instruments in the scientific, technological and cultural domains.

We invite representatives of the Municipalities which overlook the Mediterranean basin to work together:

- To set up a Mediterranean Civil Alliance;
- To establish a Forum of Mediterranean Cities that will regularly meet to verify the achievement of the above objectives;
- To promote a meeting in March 2017 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome.