

The global world lives today immersed in fear for the future. Today, like never before, the changes are so fast that we struggle to foresee things even if they happen in five years. Today there is a new poverty: that of not being able to identify answers to these fears that can be inclusive. There is always an adversary, someone who takes something away from me, whether it's a job, a high salary, a good social position, a place for kindergarten for my children.

More and more to the policy, immediate answers are demanded, in the short term. Having a long look in politics is today a guarantee of electoral failure. To speak of rights for all, equality, becomes more and more difficult when you have to find a guilty man, a scapegoat, at the unsatisfactory situation in which people live.

In the western world the economic crisis that lasted at least ten years and the ever-increasing migratory waves represent the glue of fears and the springboard for answers that tend to exclude rather than include.

People need immediate answers and politics, more and more, gives in to the temptation to turn into a fastfood: immediate and simple answers. But politics, citizens, ideals, values, need time and care. The educational system takes years to build the responsible citizen. Culture does not find it as immediate as a hamburger in a fastfood. Healthy cooking requires time, research of healthy ingredients, preparation time, careful cooking.

Today politics, together with the information system, are increasingly slipping towards an ethic and a fastfood thought. Simple answers to complex questions.

What does all this have to do with ECCAR? Eccar represents the intuition of some cities 12 years ago. In Nuremberg, some European cities, together with UNESCO, understood that it was necessary to work against racism and discrimination, and that it could not be done alone.

Trump, Macron, Merkel, (to name a few) can decide on global flows of people, they can think of building high walls, shelters or not. But in the end, concretely, at a certain point the numbers are transformed into people in flesh and blood. People with a story, bringing with them joys and sorrows, sufferings, worries, dreams, loves. In one word: life! And these lives do not walk in the gardens of the white house, the Elysee or the chancellery in Berlin.

These lives live in concrete cities. In our cities, the highest place in politics, where faces meet, where politics meets the administration closest to the citizen. Administering in Latin means serving. Diversities live in our streets, and will live more and more between our streets. The task of deciding whether in our streets, squares, schools, work or entertainment places, those differences will meet or clash, it is up to politics and city administrators.

Cities that adhere to Eccar are aware that things do not happen by chance, that to make them happen you need to set a direction. Cities of Eccar are this: cities that through their administrations have decided that they want the meeting and not the clash. They have decided, however, that the fight against inequality can not be won alone. They have decided that a collective intelligence is needed, but not just an intelligence, what is

needed is a collective heart. So they are associated, exchange good practices, ideas, compare, build connections with other realities.

This is ECCAR. A collective heart of courageous cities. In which politics decides to tackle uncomfortable topics, issues that are difficult to deal with in an electoral campaign, because they are issues that have nothing to do with haste of solutions that simplify the theme to make it a clash between different, where the most strong wins and the weaker remains on the ground.

When politics decides to start with the last, then it decides that it wants to involve everyone. That's why I think it's nice for me, as president of ECCAR, to be here tonight, in a city that has strongly acceded to ECCAR and from which ECCAR expects a lot in terms of collaboration and inspiration.

Today there is also a need for pre-political, cultural work. The construction of a common ground where policies can be sown, understood and bear fruit. A refoundation that can reunite the ideals of the Renaissance with those of the Enlightenment and, why not, a touch of romanticism. Humanity at the center through knowledge and feeling. Is this a mirage? Utopia? History teaches us that without utopias we do not evolve. I think that here tonight, there are people who have the desire to fight fears with the courage of utopia.

All this is summed up in one word: community. This is our common destiny. As a city and as a continent.

The work that awaits us is a daily job, made up of little things and big decisions. Made of policies that have in their preparation concrete faces and not just numbers.

So thank you and courage, together, with the awareness that you are not alone in fighting racism and discrimination.

Thank you

Benedetto Zacchioli