

Castellina's Manifesto

for a Europe of Common Goods & Collective Rights

We face a global crisis – financial, economic, environmental and alimentary – which weakens our democracy. This crisis was predicted. It results from the dominant model that has led to uncontrolled financial speculation, depletion and waste of natural resources and food, the exclusion of an increasing number of people from access to basic goods and services, as well as to processes that disintegrate human relationships.

To get out of the crisis one needs to reformulate principles, values and actions which will finally enable the preservation of common goods. Many civil society organizations are already mobilized to search for better ways to respond, at different levels, to these issues.

The current institutional framework has so far provided only sectoral, or territorially limited answers. But there are in Europe numerous emerging framework agreements between institutions, corporations, trades unions and associations. These agreements recognize the undeniable role acquired by civil society.

It is now time for civil society to participate in defining a new, and newly global, framework for common goods and collective rights related to the management of our economies, individual behaviour, to the evaluation of policies and to indicators of progress.

At European Union level, civil society organizations need to combine to elaborate, together with the institutions, corporations and trades unions, a solemn declaration in the form of a Charter, a pact or any other document whose appropriate designation will be agreed after discussion (hereinafter referred to as "The Proclamation"). In this way it might be possible to transform the crisis into an opportunity for progress in European integration, towards a society serving the well being for all.

Common goods are those goods, services and resources which benefit everyone. These are realities that are tangible or intangible, culturally and/or socially important concerning the respect for life and ecosystems and the well-being of all. Those realities are the key factor in developing a new ethic in economics and politics, new ways of managing the economy, finance and business. Ethical values and common goods are closely linked.

Common goods are goods necessary for peace, freedom and democracy, justice and equality, environmental and resource protection, for the cultural heritage, the sharing and enrichment of knowledge, the rights of future generations, social cohesion and solidarity.

To implement and protect them is the responsibility of European institutions, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, corporations, trades unions and citizens. Their implementation demands the recognition of collective rights.

Collective rights are rights that are owned and/or exercised collectively. They are advocated by groups whose rights are themselves safeguarded by the European institutions and courts.

The rules concerning the management of common goods and collective rights will be defined in the Proclamation's proposals for implementation.

Methods, means and resources are to be gathered and made available in order to ensure adequate participatory processes for debating, drafting and approving the Proclamation.

To formulate the desires of European citizens about their common future, it is of paramount importance that these three participatory processes take the maximum account of those geographical, cultural, social and technological particularities to be overcome and that the processes are continuously fed by contributions from all territorial levels: local, regional, national and European.

The signatories of this Manifesto call on all civil society organizations to mobilize in order to make the current crisis an opportunity for renewal of the European construction.

Manifesto written in Casa al Bosco, Castellina in Chianti (Italy), on 22 February 2009 by a group of eleven European citizens from seven EU Member States and active in ten civil society organizations:

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