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PROGRESSIVE
CITIES

VS

CONSERVATIVE
STATES

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NEXT DEMOCRACY

The price of data

NEXT GLOBAL

China's silk road and its impact
on Europe and the World

NEXT ENVIRONMENT

Improving the air
that we breathe

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PROGRESSIVE CITIES VS CONSERVATIVE STATES



by Maria João Rodrigues, FEPS President

Brussels, Paris, London, Vienna, Lisbon: through cities such as these, led by progressives of a new generation, social democracy continues to show that it is alive and kicking despite the efforts of those who wish to bury it. It is a social democracy of proximity, which responds to the questions and concerns of local residents. It is a social democracy that defends those embroiled in long term struggles for housing for all and defends those who have breathed new life into the debate about sustainable energy.

It is no coincidence that social democracy is rooted in big cities. In these ever-growing spaces, there is a new generation of young people attracted by local amenities and migrants drawn to the cities in the hope of finding their first job and a better life where they are fully included in society. In these

political, economic, digital and international capitals, the world is constantly changing. This is an open, multicultural and multilingual world.

But the city can sometimes seem rather like an employee in a public administration who is dealing directly with the public or the switchboard operator at a large company. They listen to the complaints and concerns of respectively, citizens or dissatisfied customers but they can do nothing about the issues raised. The state dominates and, when it is led by conservative forces, often acts overly cautiously or even in a cowardly way.

Currently, nation states are predominantly huddled together in Europe and appear prepared to let the market decide what is best for them. Instead of taking responsibility and offering a reassuring vision to citizens, the state gives time

and freedom of speech to nationalists, which only serve to make the situation worse.

Ceding in many ways to the powers of influence of conservatives and liberals, the European Commission has just proposed reducing the component of the European Union's budget that was dedicated to the development of cities and regions, who are the major stakeholders in people's everyday lives.

Progressive forces must now propose a new agenda. It is up to progressive forces to translate their local actions to a national and European level.

PROGRESSIVE CITIES VS CONSERVATIVE STATES



| The increasing pace of daily life and our consumption patterns are pushing some people to begin a movement to slow down

TO BE 'SMART', CITIES NEED TO SLOW DOWN

by Pier Giorgio Oliveti

It is not a matter of being literally "slow" but rather cities need to be "reflective" and attentive to their own model of development. At the heart of the Cittaslow project are community relations, cultural heritage and beauty, the balanced relationship between city and countryside, the defense of natural biodiversity and agri-food. Pier Giorgio Oliveti reminds us of the need to slow down to create new environments.

Twenty years ago, four mayors from four small Italian cities, Greve in Chianti, Bra, Positano and Orvieto, gave life to a network of municipalities that aims to transfer the concept of 'positive slowness' proposed by Carlo Petrini and the concept of 'slow food' to the local government of territories. Today there are over 240 cities in this network, from 30 countries around the world. From the ancient concept of the walled Italian and European villages of medieval municipalities ('Libero Comune'), was born a new and very modern approach to urban self-government, more attentive to the values present in individual territories, to the natural environment, to culture and to social issues.

Cittaslow, let's face it, has somehow anticipated what is now on

everyone's lips: the possibility of small or medium-sized centres and more generally of individual territories, to be "active" and not passive subjects of their development in a world increasingly subjected to global phenomena that are both positive and negative. Respecting and enhancing the dynamic identity of places, of collective memory, of the landscape as a synthesis between geographical space and territory and the affirmation of community economy policies: This is Cittaslow's main mission.

Some consider it an impossible challenge that borders on utopia. But, in reality, over many years of activities, the mayors and the communities have shown exactly the opposite everywhere. Despite a problematic general context featuring constant and rapid change and deregulation, Cittaslow has offered pilot

*#EuropeanCities
Cittaslow: There
are projects and
actions to be
shared together*

@cittaslow_intl



project examples of active resistance compared to models of 'fake development', of ephemeral development that has no future.

Rather than speaking in conferences, Cittaslow mayors prefer to grow the 'slow' territories step by step, to concretely engage in local quality in a 360° way, to resist the most insidious global storms better than others (statistical data comfort us in this sense).

In summary, a mayor from the Cittaslow network offers its citizens some projects and actions to be shared together. The areas concerned are sustainable agriculture, the local and virtual market, art and functional crafts, education and school and the aim is to encourage the emergence of 'slow' citizens, new types of energy, sustainable and quality transports shared social responsibility, participatory forms of governance, a new form of citizenship and social inclusion, Cittaslow style tourism (i.e. not industrial but based on identity specificities).



> AUTHOR

Pier Giorgio Olivetti is Secretary General of Cittaslow International.



I Cittaslow project logo shows a snail to encourage people to slow down and reflect more.

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