

12.01.2015 The challenges for 2015.

Showing humanity in the face of humanitarian dramas, accepting the reality of situations of economic distress, and respecting the democracy of peoples expressing themselves freely, those are the main European challenges for 2015.

Are human values still on the programme for European politicians? It is in the Mediterranean that this issue has arisen. Italy is undoubtedly in the process of saving the honour of Europe's democracies by maintaining "Mare nostrum", an expensive policy which detects vessels in distress and tries to come to their aid before the hundreds of refugees on board are drowned, as thousands before them have been. To date, Europe has refused to support the Italian state in continuing and expanding this policy. However, it has been sustained by the Sicilian people whose coasts, particularly on Lampedusa, receive the majority of these migrants. When Marine Le Pen travelled there a few months ago to make an anti-immigrant, anti-European video in front of the island's reception centres she was roundly booed by the residents who were revolted by her condemnation of them for bringing aid to people in distress, including many children, and saving them from certain death. Because people do not all experience a situation of human misfortune in the same way; it depends whether they are its direct witnesses. And northern Europe must resolve to accept that Italy needs to be supported so that a humanitarian attitude remains the only acceptable option in the face of the most tragic situations.

Is the truth still a value that matters in economic policy? In Greece, the moment of truth is approaching for European economic policy. And this truth is simple: the responses of "official economists" to the crisis have pushed the Greek people to the edge. After five years of sacrifice unimaginable to those who live in France where the crisis has been, so far, incomparably less severe, the Greek people may "rebel" at the polls by electing an anti-austerity government, ready to stand against the "troika" which is orchestrating European support. A dialogue must inevitably follow between the future Greek administration and the newly-appointed Juncker Commission. The outcome of this dialogue will be key in avoiding the fragmentation of the European Union, because the Greeks are not the only people put into an intolerable situation. If the Greek reality overcomes dominant economic dogma, or, to put it more simply, if the most prosperous economies accept that they need to contribute more to recompensing those who have suffered the most, we will have taken a turning.

Is democracy still a key principle for Europe's heads of state? The question came to the fore in the UK when Scotland voted on its independence. All the promises made to prevent "yes" from winning will be empty unless the Scottish people can maintain the pressure. In Catalonia, the Spanish government does not want to hear anything about the wishes of the Catalan people. It is even in the process of creating a "crime of democracy" as the president of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Artur Mas, is being brought before the courts for having organised, "illegally" according to Spanish justice, a referendum in his country, in line with the most basic of democratic principles. The French government is guilty of the same denial of democracy, and when Manuel Valls decided to speak in Madrid during holiday period to directly oppose the aspirations of the Catalan people, it was to align France in the same political context, that of heads of government who reject dialogue with the stateless peoples who aspire to emancipation. Likewise, the Corsican people will probably be treated with the same contempt when the time comes for official responses to the calls made by the Corsican Assembly, even though they were passed by a very large majority. And in Corsica, as in Catalonia and Greece, the power of the ballot must in time impose the will of the Corsican people on the obstinate blocking position taken up by the dominant powers. A step in this direction could come at the local elections next December. Tandù, forse, 2015 sarà una bella annata pà a Corsica. Cusi sia, è, à tutti, Pace, Salute, è Libertà !