



Against Homophobia: Two European Engagements of the Municipality of Venice

The Municipality of Venice has joined the Ilga-Europe network - International lesbian & gay Association, and the Mayor Massimo Cacciari has undersigned the plea on “the freedom of expression for Lesbians, Gays, bisexuals and trans”. These two initiatives have been joined on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, which took place last Thursday, on May 17th. A press conference occurred in Ca' Farsetti -the Municipality seat – in presence of **Franca Bimbi** major's delegate for Active Citizenship and Rights to Difference Policies and in charge of Osservatorio LGBT (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Trans) of the Municipality, as well as president of the Commission for Community Policies of the House of Deputies **Luana Zanella**, Local Councillor for Communitarian and International Relations and for the Youth Policies, and **Riccardo Gottardi**, Co-president of Ilga-Europe.

The verbal attacks and violences against Lgbt people which happened in some European Countriesaid **Franca Bimbi** – get us thinking that a worrying emergency situation is on, concerning the refusal of the “other” and the “different” one, that we definitely have to fight”. The Municipality of Venice has joined the campaign promoted by Ilga-Europe against hate and discrimination crimes that still exist in Europe against lesbians, gays, trans and all the Ilga activities.

- “The engagement of the Municipality, for example with the campaign against homophobia-explained Local Councillor Zanella- is that of using instruments, also international ones (as the Nizza Document and the resolutions taken by European Parliament) for giving to young generations opportunities of meetings, dialogue and thinking. Only maintaining the debate on the right tracks we can fight homophobia.”

Along with Cacciari, the first subscribers of the plea are from some important European cities, like London, Paris, Amsterdam and Nicosia. Ilga, which wrote the document, think that the “majors of the European cities can play an important role in the promotion of the respect of human rights for all people living in Europe” as **Riccardo Gottardi** underlined.

Venice is the first Italian Municipality to join the actives of Ilga-Europe, the most important network dealing with citizenship rights and struggle against discrimination, which collects more than 200 LGBT organizations and it is a permanent member of the European Council with an advisory status.

“This is an important step that the Municipality of Venice has been walking for many years, aiming to build up an open, supportive and civil “common house”- underlined Franca Bimbi - who also participated in the extraordinary session of the Municipal Council dedicated to the European Celebrations.