

**CULTURA  
CONTRO  
CAMORRA**



## Culture against camorra

### European civil society network against organised crime

#### **Manifesto**

I) On April 30, 1982, the Regional Secretary of the PCI in Sicily, Pio La Torre and his employee Rosario Di Salvo, were killed by the mafia.

Pio La Torre had proposed the bill on crime of mafia and the confiscation of mafia property. He had been among the first to realize that, in order to combat organised crime, it was necessary to address the relationship between economic power and illegal activities and to draw the line between the two terms.

Following his assassination, the law providing for the confiscation of mafia property was adopted by the Italian Parliament on 13 September 1982.

About 14 years later, the return to local authorities of properties seized from organised crime (mafia, camorra, etc.) and their allocation to social economy enterprises were made possible by the so-called law 109/96.

The action of trade unions and LIBERA, an association set up on 25 March 1995 with the intention to mobilise civil society for the fight against the mafia and the enforcement of the rule of law was crucial for this achievement and its operational follow-up.

This achievement of Italy's civil society is unique in the European Union. It is "best practice" that should be disseminated all over the Union to support citizen's initiatives in other Member States in their fight against organised crime. Increasing transnational crime, illegal trafficking and money laundering by organised criminal groups are becoming a serious threat to democracy and the rule of

law in the European Union.

Mafia groups are not only involved in illegal trade and money laundering, but – during recent decades- have been successfully infiltrating economic and political structures of quite a few Member States of the European Union. They have become engines in an economic development “under control”, thus succeeding to influence policy choices. As a matter of fact, mafia groups are increasingly controlling non-Italian territories in the European Union.

In 2012 the European Commission met this concern by preparing a directive on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime in the European Union (COM 2012/085).

These objectives are also among the declared priorities of an EU action plan (2014/2019) against organised crime, corruption and money laundering that the European Parliament adopted on 23 October 2013.

Currently, many social economy enterprises that manage confiscated criminal properties have increasingly been facing difficulties partly due to the economic and financial crisis. Moreover, in some cases, the mafia has been exercising effective blackmail forcing customers and suppliers not to use confiscated assets. In other cases, confiscated properties have even been returned to the mafia. On the other hand, institutions, in particular local ones, have not always effectively been assuming their responsibility to support these enterprises.

Developments show that the confiscation of criminal assets is crucial, but just the first step in the fight against organised crime.

To the end of protecting democracy and the rule of law throughout the European Union those who are fighting in the front-line in Italy need solidarity. Awareness of the impact of organised crime on the economy needs to be raised and the role of culture in the fight against organised crime be promoted.

The objectives of Culture against camorra therefore are to:

- support those social economy actors – namely in Campania/Italy, who are involved in the management of confiscated criminal properties;
- restore confidence among the citizens in the role of cooperatives and other social economy enterprises (which base their activities on values such as participation, transparency and democracy) as opposed to the reign of organised crime;
- make citizens, and especially young people, understand that also in those areas which are dominated by organised crime a different culture is possible;
- raise awareness of the increasing threat of transborder organised crime to democracy and the rule of law among Europeans;

- assemble Civil society and social economy actors throughout Europe for a constant struggle to resist the economic influence of organised crime.

Based on these clear needs, and starting from the Campania region, a region severely affected by this kind of crime, the European network "Culture against camorra" was set up.

II) As a result of the Conference on the "Impact of the organized crime on the EU economy" that "Culture against camorra" organised on November 8, 2013 at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels, the following proposals for action have been made:

- The European Economic and Social Committee, in coordination with the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, prepare in cooperation with "Culture against camorra" an own-initiative opinion with regard to:

- \* making an inventory of resources and best practices in particular as regards the use for social purposes of properties confiscated from criminal organizations;

- \* creating/strengthening the coordination between initiators of these practices;

- \* making an inventory of anti-mafia initiatives, their programmes and resources throughout the European Union;

- \* promoting the dissemination of best practice;

- \* creating a network of social partners in the Member States to conduct outreach in terms of legality and infiltration of the economies by organized crime;

- \* promoting legislation concerning the freezing and confiscation and social re-use of proceeds of crime in the European Union;

- \* making proposals to improve European solidarity both at the political (by the European institutions) and at the operational levels (with the structures of the social economy);

- \* finalizing a program with objectives and tight deadlines and securing the necessary funds for its implementation.

- This opinion will also allow the EESC and the CoR:

- \* to call on the European political parties to commit themselves- in their election campaigns for the European Parliament- to both promoting the use of properties confiscated from criminal organizations for social purposes and fighting against the economic and political influence of organized crime;

\* to request the next President of the European Parliament and the Presidents of the future European political groups to establish the Special Commission on organized crime, corruption and money laundering (CRIM) on a permanent basis;

\* to call on the European Commission to implement a process of mainstreaming concerning the fight against organized crime in Community policies.

- A "European Observatory of mafias" should be created within the European Economic and Social Committee, composed of representatives of the three groups (employers, workers and other activities) and of academia (universities/research centers). This observatory should complement existing similar initiatives.

- EU Structural Funds should support structures that fight against organized crime (in Italy, to make a voluntary regional register with stringent mandatory requirements under the responsibility of the Direzione distrettuale anti-mafia).

- EU programs (for example, "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs", EVS - European Voluntary Service, and especially the new ERASMUS +) and programs for internships in the organizations of the social economy should be used to raise awareness, especially among youth in the areas dominated by organized crime.

- Education programs for citizenship and training in the rights of workers, should be set up for workers, especially foreigners, in the confiscated businesses.

- Initiatives should be taken to give young people the opportunity to work in loco, even valuing traditional crafts.

- Workshops should be organized to train social operators and officials of public administration in social management and in capacity building.

- Cultural exchanges (theatre, music, ...) with areas dominated by organized crime should be enhanced, notably by promoting the creativity of young people and highlighting the benefits of legality in a sound economy.

- A permanent stand in the "economat" (shop) of European Parliament, which sells products of businesses confiscated from organized crime should be installed; these products should be used in canteens and restaurants of the EU Institutions. Beyond this initiative, the commercialization of products from confiscated enterprises should be enhanced through European support.

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