



Press releases
Meetings of 4 December 2014
Europe against mafias

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EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
under the presidency of **Georges Dassis**, president of the Group II-EESC
«Fight against the economic crime»

The risk is that organized crime takes advantage of the present economic crisis to make the finance field fall into its sphere of influence, for instance by proposing to use mafia's profits to refinance banks with "zero interests". This is the warning which was made on Thursday in Brussels, at the Economic and Social European Committee by Renato Natale, mayor of Casal di Principe and leading figure of the fight against the camorra in Campania.

The Workers Group of the EESC organized on Thursday an extraordinary meeting dedicated to the fight against the economic crime. Its president Georges Dassis recalled the existence of a Europol report which mentions that, in the European Union with 27 States members before the entrance of Croatia, there were 3.600 organized crime organizations among which 70% bear a transnational nature. Therefore the mafia problem is not only about Italy, its spread is at least at European level. These organizations make profits of around 670 billions euros; these incomes are taken away from the states revenues and from the reliable businesses.

In this context, three Italian personalities together with Mr Natale strongly stated the need to fight against mafia, a fight started by the Italian civil society. This fight must be extended to all the European territories, with the support of the political authorities of the EU. This message was carried by the author and musician Daniele Sanzone, the movie director Claudio Metallo and Umberto Di Maggio, regional coordinator of the association Libera in Sicily.

President Georges Dassis concluded the discussion with the promise that the Workers Group will support the idea that the entire European Economic and Social Committee will strive against the organized crime, in order to break the walls of indifference inside the EU.

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Meeting in the European Parliament
under the presidency of **Nicola Caputo**, member of the group S&D
«**The commitment against mafias**»

and with the participation of:

Ignazio Corrao, member of the group EFDD

Caterina Chinnici, member of the group S&D

Speeches by:

- **Renato Natale**, mayor of Casal di Principe
- **Dionigi Magliulo**, mayor of Villa Briano
- **Giuseppe Varacalli**, mayor of Gerace and member of the CoR
- **Franco Ianniello**, president of “Cultura contro camorra”

President Caputo thanked the participants in this first informal meeting, which purpose was to spread awareness about the fight against mafias at the institutions' level.

He especially underlined the cultural aspect of the mafia problem. The roots of mafias power are indeed to be found in the lack of culture or in an absence of culture, which is based on oppression, silence and corruption.

For this reason the answer has to be cultural as well: we need to change the system through education and good practices.

The speech of the mayor of Villa Briano followed the same line: his proposal was to educate the European citizen, teaching him/her the risks of the organized crime and developing a strong civic conscience.

The members of the Parliament Chinnici and Corrao talked about two other important topics: first of all, the need to create a common legal space in the EU in order to standardize the application of the law in the different State members and therefore to make its implementation easier. In this sense, it would be desirable to create a European Prosecutor Office and a European legislation specifically targeted at mafias. Similar tools indeed do not exist to fight against the organized crime in the different European countries, except few exceptions, and this makes efficient answers more difficult to elaborate.

Secondly, the members of the European Parliament, expressed the wish to re-establish the CRIM commission within the European Parliament, as it proved really useful to study the organized crime in Europe.

Renato Natale made a plea to the members of the European Parliament to be careful and arrange measures to avoid the risk of mafia getting into the big finance world: this would enable it to take control of the economy first, and of the democracy in a second step.

He underlined also that the South of Italy has a good reputation in Europe; no one however takes to the streets to defend the freedom of those citizens who are fighting against what is a true military dictatorship.

He expressed his belief that the EU needs Casal di Principe to understand the huge dangers of the organized crime and to become aware of the possibility to defeat the mafia, as happened in Casale.

At the end, the president of “Cultura contro camorra” Franco Ianniello recalled that the association works on two important themes:

- to make the European citizens aware that the organized crime is not only an Italian problem;
- to give all possible support at European level to everyone who is fighting against the organized crime.

He proposed to the members of the Parliament to:

- organize European events in the areas where there is a high presence of the organized crime in order to give a clear and unequivocal message to the citizens: Europe is with you!
- promote at national level the nomination in the European Committee of the Regions of mayors who are leading figures of the fight against the organized crime, ;
- study the possibility to give priority to the structures which fight against mafias in the European funding programmes;
- be the first ones to initiate the aggregation of all forces willing to fight against mafias, especially in the institutions (EP, EESC, CoR, COMM);
- organize during the spring, and with the cooperation of the civil society, the labour unions, the Italian, Belgian and European institutions, a week against all the mafias.

President Caputo expressed his hope to see all the participating people at the beginning of January for another meeting.