



Dear Mayor Zoričić,

2020 marked a turning point for the entire world. We, as mayors, had to face the emergency day by day, at multiple levels. Yet this unprecedented crisis gave us the opportunity to prove how crucial local communities are and the role cities can play in implementing new strategies and finding solutions.

Cities can be actual laboratories, the core of institutional life, where new and original visions can be explored to face the challenges of our time. From social inclusion to environment and sustainability, from social justice to cultural growth, a new Humanism can start from cities.

I'm convinced that most of these issues can actually be addressed starting from the Mediterranean area. Historically, the crossroad of Eastern and Western civilisations, of the North and the South of the world, the Mediterranean can play again the role of cultural bridge it has played in previous decisive historical junctures, this time thanks to the dialogue between its cities.

For all these reasons, on my initiative, the City of Florence has decided to host an International Conference of Mayors of Mediterranean Cities on February 24-27, 2022 in Palazzo Vecchio, where over a hundred mayors from the Mediterranean countries will gather to debate issues, share experiences and compare possible solutions, addressed at the same time by prominent speakers.

The conference will coincide with the annual Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI), *Mediterranean frontier of peace* event, which will be held in Florence on the same dates and that gathers bishops from both shores of the Mediterranean.

In consideration of this favourable coincidences, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has confirmed that, on Sunday February 27, he will meet the mayors and bishops attending the conference in Palazzo Vecchio.

As you can see from the attached draft programme, the conference proceedings will start in the morning of Friday, February 25 in Palazzo Vecchio, Hall of the Five Hundreds, and will proceed on Saturday, February 26 to end in the morning of Sunday, February 27, at the Pope's presence, who will preside the last joint session and will meet the mayors.

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Among the topics of the conference's work sessions, which involve the participation of prominent speakers, are: cultural dialogue and cooperation among Mediterranean cities; public health and social security; Mediterranean area and environment protection policies; new technologies in sustainable energy transition; migrations across the Mediterranean sea; cities' contribution to define new migration policies and cooperation in human rights protection. A "Florence Declaration" will be presented by the participants at the end of the conference.

While my offices will follow up shortly with a detailed programme, I am pleased to confirm, in the meantime, that the City of Florence will cover hospitality (three nights) for each mayor and one accompanying person.

My team will be glad to assist, should you need further details and information during this first stage of the event's organization (your offices can contact Miriam Zamparella, Mayor's Office Adviser, at the email address miriam.zamparella@comune.fi.it or at the telephone number +39 3407291938).

In consideration of your commitment and role, I would be honoured if you could attend the conference: your presence and contribution would be a great opportunity to all of us mayors.

I look forward to your positive reply and to welcoming you to Florence.

Kind regards.

Dario Nardella

Palazzo Vecchio, December 20, 2021

To the Mayor of Pula

Hon. Filip Zoričić

Forum 1, Pula

CROATIA

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