

## **Presentation of the Venice Declaration by the president of the Regional Council of the Veneto Region, Roberto Ciambetti**

First of all, I would like to thank the protagonists of the Venice Declaration, the authors, the university experts and professors, and those who have worked to draft this document starting with Daniela Bas and Ignacio Socias, without whom this work would not have been possible.

The Venice Declaration contains **keywords** to pave the way for a sustainable and inclusive future that is attentive to the needs of the environment and of all social groups. The first key word is Family: the development of the city and its services must start with the family and place citizens, **from the most vulnerable to the elderly**, at the center of their **interventions**.

The text of the Venice document is clearly written and awaits now for each city, each territory, to translate its guidelines into concrete policies. The goals we have set are feasible and can be grasped. By signing this Declaration, we are committed to this task.

The Veneto Region will subscribe it and furthermore help to deliver more widely the Sustainable Development Goals at local and regional level by promoting it at the Committee of the Regions: i.e. at the forum "Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation" in Brussels the 4th and 5th February next year organized jointly by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions.

Of course the difficulties of the historical moment we are living represent huge challenges such as the contradictions we face. I choose to mention only one case: global hunger in 2017 has returned to grow for the third year in a row, reaching today 821 million persons. On the other hand, we register about two billion overweight people with 672 million obese adults. Some die of hunger, some eat too much. A third of the production of food is wasted: a figure of \$ 860 billion a year, about 1.3 billion tons of food are thrown away before arriving on our table, with serious environmental as well as economic damage. Yet, a quarter of that same wasted food would be enough to feed the more than 821 million people who suffer from hunger, while also reducing pollution and waste of environmental resources.

The present, with these contradictory data, pushes us to look at reality with authentic and founded pessimism. But the Venice Declaration tells us that an alternative way is possible, starting from the family and our cities and regions, accepting the circular economy as a model of saving, combating waste, with a pact of honesty between producers and consumers. The new sustainable and inclusive city is based on modern technologies, on education and training, on safety, on circular economy, on the attention to be given to the family as agent of development with a society responsive to its needs. It is a choice of hope and courage. A North African proverb says that the difference between the desert and a flower garden is not water, but man. It is up to us to choose between working for the flower garden or facing the abandonment of a desert. And the Venice Declaration and its signatories have chosen the commitment of hope, the will to contribute in the common effort to guarantee everyone, starting from the most vulnerable, decent living conditions.