

# The voice of Maria Dolens

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PEACE BELL FOUNDATION OF ROVERETO

## A light in Tripoli

**I**n an international context such as the present where “shadows” appear, distinctly prevalent in spite of ourselves, the appearance of a “light”, especially when unexpected, is an event not to be passed over in silence, although its resilience and duration over time still need to be verified.

On the southern shore of the Mediterranean a nation, characterized for Italy by a tormented past and today amongst other things by substantial and varied interests with regard to the economy and security, seems to be struggling to emerge from a decade of devastating internal conflicts and is now opting for a political solution capable of giving stability to its fragile institutional structure.

We are talking about Libya, where an ad interim government of national unity, entrusted to the care of a wealthy businessman, Prime Minister Dbeibah, has in recent days obtained the trust of the Parliament by a very large majority, meeting in Sirte, the hometown of Colonel Gaddafi.

The new executive has therefore been given the mandate to lead the country to “free and fair” elections, set for next December.

As a whole, the international community reacted very positively to the unexpected but welcome development with the United States, the European Union (obviously including Italy) and the United Nations unanimous in speaking of a “historic opportunity” for Libya, which may now see a concrete prospect of national reconciliation and confirmation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

More than one observer has been inclined to identify the recent change of tenant in the White House as an essential facilitating factor for the change of course in Tripoli.

In this regard, it cannot be excluded that President Biden’s approach to dialogue, associated with the Libyan expectation of upcoming, significant overseas economic investments, has induced the local political class to bury conflicts that seemed incurable.



A sign of the presence of unprecedented openings is represented by the announced entrustment to two women from the key ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense and, more generally, to the enhancement of a “pink” component which, in percentage terms, would not look bad in a European government.

Of course, the road leading to the December consultations is fraught with unknowns and obstacles. Beyond the traditional quarrels and unpredictability of Libyan tribal clan behavior, the future position of the Russian Federation and Turkey (not surprisingly silent today), who until just a few weeks ago were bitter rivals in the support given to the two “strong men” vying for power, respectively former Prime Minister Al-Serraj and General Haftar, weighs a lot in the international arena.

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Marcello Filotei (Editor)

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Enrolled at the ROC, an Italian association for journalists specializing in Communications n. 35952

#### DESIGN

OGP srl - Agenzia di pubblicità  
www.ogp.it

## HAPPENING AT THE UN

# All or nothing

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MULTILATERALISM AND DIPLOMACY FOR PEACE

**W**e woke up one day and were risking our lives, our everything - all together. It happened everywhere around the same time. Yet we had structured the planet with very evident demarcations: borders and sovereign states, each with its own police, army, rules, symbols. Things were quiet. Maybe a war every now and then, when it was really inevitable, almost always for humanitarian reasons.

Instead, it seems that viruses do not take borders into account. On closer inspection, the economy, the environment, the lack of food, weapons (by vocation) and the internet (by definition) also seem stateless. Fundamentally, if someone sneezes in Wuhan there is a risk that a girl from Ipanema, a similar girl in Madrid and grandparents from Bergamo will fall ill. In the meantime, the airlines are closing.

No politician, economist, artist, diplomat or banker could explain it more clearly than Covid: that when the problems are global, the solutions are also global. And to think that for years on April 24 the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy in favor of Peace.



Not that there haven't been any results so far, but perhaps the current crisis makes the need for each state to regain possession of the value of dialogue even more urgent, as Secretary General António Guterres has repeatedly emphasized. It is not just a question of "simply tackling global threats together", which wouldn't be too bad, but as added by the UN headquarters, "of seizing all the opportunities together, because today we have the opportunity to build inclusive economies and societies which are truly sustainable, with a greater awareness than in the recent past."

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The virus has exacerbated vulnerabilities and social inequalities

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To some it seems obvious, to others less so, Maria Dolens repeats it every night, a hundred times. Yet when things go wrong, not only because of the pandemic, instead of teaming up, everyone thinks of themselves. On one side of the ocean someone yells "America first" and on the other there is always someone who answers "us too". The problem is that it doesn't even work under normal conditions, let alone in a crisis like the one we are experiencing.

With the pandemic we have plunged into a health and economic abyss that had not been seen for almost a century. The impact will be particularly strong in the years to come and the effects risk undermining the progress made in areas such as poverty, food security, gender equality and sustainable development.

The virus has aggravated social inequalities and usually this is reason enough to make us stop listening to others. But the same Covid has highlighted that the systems we depend on are highly interdependent. If we continue to advance in no particular order, and at very different speeds, not only will we be unable to face the consequences of the health emergency, but we won't be able to face the climate crisis, the illegality in cyberspace or the risks of nuclear proliferation either.

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We have the opportunity to build inclusive and truly sustainable economies and societies

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The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, has stressed that the pandemic is shaking “the foundations of our societies and exposing the vulnerabilities of the most fragile countries”. It is clear that the virus exacerbates existing conflicts and generates new geopolitical tensions and above all it reminds us that Peace, democracy and prosperity must be constantly nurtured.

Essentially, there is a need for a network in which the UN and its agencies, international financial institutions, regional organizations and individual countries collaborate more effectively and with ever stronger ties. We need to build an

inclusive system that draws on key contributions from civil society, businesses, foundations, the research community, local authorities, cities and regional governments. An attitude such as this, argues Guterres, “will help lead to effective multilateralism with the mechanisms it needs to make global governance work where it is needed.”

The virus is a disaster, but at least it could leave us with the knowledge that nobody can save themselves alone. And perhaps a “neutral” place, such as Colle di Miravalle, could be the ideal place to reconnect the threads of dialogue between countries that need to clarify different bilateral issues. Multilateralism is conquered gradually.

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## Conferences at the Bell

**T**he foundation online meetings are back again in April. Following the three conferences in March, the first two entrusted to the historian Armando Vadagnini, and the third held by Roberto Ronca, curator of the exhibition «Human Crossing | Footprints of Culture and Peace », two more webinars are scheduled for 13 and 27 April, always on a Tuesday, always at 5.30 pm. In the first Alessandro Martinelli, former

advisor on the Foundation Board will address the theme «Under the same sky. The Bell of the Fallen and the dialogue between religions ». In the second the photographer Paolo Aldi will focus on «The Bell of the Fallen and photography. Documentation and information ». All meetings are moderated by Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President. For information on how to participate, consult the website [www.fondazioneoperacampana.it](http://www.fondazioneoperacampana.it).

## HAPPENING AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

# An ongoing challenge

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In a joint statement to mark UN International Women's Day, German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth Franziska Giffey and Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić have highlighted the 10th anniversary of the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, since it was opened for signature in Istanbul in 2011.

Significant progress has been achieved to stop such violence, with 34 countries having acceded so far to the Convention, and also because successful monitoring in half of these countries has led to much cooperation and sharing of best practices. But obstacles and chal-

lenges – from increased calls to domestic violence hotlines during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, to political movements against the Convention based on false interpretations of its goals – must be faced with determination.

Minister Giffey and Secretary General Pejčinović Burić set forth the goal for the next 10 years – and preferably sooner – that all 47 Council of Europe member states accede to the Convention.

Violence against women is a structural and global phenomenon that knows no social, economic or national boundaries. It is a serious violation of human rights and remains widely unsanctioned. Every day in Europe, women are psychologically and physically abused in the "safety" of their own homes, stalked, harassed, raped, mutilated, forced by their

family to enter into marriage, or sterilised against their will. The examples of violence against women are endless, its victims countless.

The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty that equips countries to prevent violence against women. Its comprehensive set of provisions spans far-ranging preventive and protective measures as well as a number of obligations to ensure an adequate criminal justice response to such serious violations of human rights. The convention sets up a monitoring mechanism to assess the level of implementation by its parties. This monitoring mechanism consists of two pillars: the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), an independent expert body, and the Committee of the Parties, a political body composed of official representatives of the Parties to the convention.

Given COVID-19 and the rise of violence against women, the convention is needed now more than ever before.

Italy ratified the Istanbul Convention on 10 September 2013 and was among the first state parties for which it entered into force on 1 August 2014.

Giuseppe Zaffuto, spokesperson for the Council of Europe in Italy.

## Turkey abandons its agreement

Protests are taking place in major Turkish cities following the decision by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to withdraw the country from the Istanbul Convention, of which the government of Ankara is the first signatory. Thousands of women demonstrated shouting slogans against femicide, which in the last year is believed to have caused at least three hundred victims. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinov-

ićBurić, called the news "devastating", while the High Representative for Foreign Policy of the European Union Josep Borrell expressed regret and "misunderstanding at the decision of the Turkish government". "Countries should work to strengthen and renew commitments to end violence against women and demand accountability from those responsible for abuse, not reject international treaties written to protect them," commented US president Joe Biden.

HUMAN CROSSING | FOOTPRINTS OF CULTURE AND PEACE

# The mark we leave

FROM 17 APRIL ON DISPLAY ON THE COLLE DI MIRAVALLE

**T**he mark we leave does not depend on the direction we take but on the view we have of the world. After all, "if you go round and round staring at your tail, it is useless to offer you horizons", as Maria Luisa Spaziani summed up with a pleasant harshness granted only to poets. And so maybe we have to go to unknown places, with the verses of the masters in our pockets, not so much to follow in their footsteps, but to try to find what they were looking for. Artists do it by vocation, by necessity, by culture, history, tradition but more than anything else because they can't do without it. They deal with the path of mankind and seek the meaning of things. This is why the Foundation concerns itself with them and promotes exhibitions such as "Human crossing", which reflects precisely on the imprint, on the mark it leaves: "Footprints of culture and Peace".

The inauguration is scheduled for April 17, the works can be admired until May 17. "Covid permitting" is now almost superfluous to write, but what the virus cannot prevent will be the online dissemination of the contents of the exhibition, which will be ensured even in the event of new closures. In fact, during the installation the organizers will have the opportunity to create multimedia content every day with interviews, in-depth videos on the authors, photos, texts and live streaming which will testify the progress of the work,

illustrate the details of the exhibition and the philosophy that animates it. Everything will be available on the website and on the social networks of the Foundation and the International Association of Plastic Arts Italy (Aiapi), which is collaborating in the event.

Pablo Caviedes and Giulio Orioli, the two artists chosen by the curator Roberto Ronca, will accompany us on this journey with completely different narrative airs and intentions, but with a focus on the same subject: the path of the human being.

By moving we change territories, cultures, ways of thinking, in short, we evolve. Sometimes we even arrive on the moon wearing boots that leave a shallow footprint, but which

in the absence of wind becomes indelible and remains there. Man's task seems to be to transform the environment, yet this does not happen only with technical-industrial thinking, but above all through the development of culture.

"The meaning of things lies in knowledge itself and the only knowledge that helps progress is that which is shared. The movement is twofold: what is imported is at the same time exported from another place; and if the mind is a non-place that lives only when it grows, it is the exchange that can keep it alive", explains Ronca. "The human being - he continues - grows only in a virtuous circle of exchange of experiences, cultures, minds, life. What does all this lead to? The search for Peace, the ultimate goal of the cultured man".

This is also why Maria Dolens invites us to experiment with new paths, to look ahead, to venture on unexplored paths. Seneca has been saying this for two thousand years: "If one follows in the footsteps of another, he finds nothing. Indeed he does not even seek."



## THE POPE IN IRAQ

# From tolerance to dialogue

**W**hen we don't like someone at best we say we are tolerant. As if "tolerating" were a virtue. Just ignoring it would be a step forward. From there we could start on that long journey towards dialogue that passes through knowledge.

It takes time. The distance that separates tolerance from acceptance is great. Even the Catholic Church took a long time to take that path and it cannot be said that the path has been completed. However, the question is at the top of Pope Francis' agenda who on March 3, two days before leaving for his apostolic trip to Iraq, clarified the point of view of the Holy See: "I come as a pilgrim of Peace in search of fraternity, animated by the desire to pray together and walk together, also with brothers and sisters of other religious traditions, in the name of Father Abraham, who brings together Muslims, Jews and Christians in a single family".

Important words, like those of other Popes who have focused on the common origin of monotheisms in recent decades. By embracing those invitations, the Foundation promoted a composition competition, "Instruments of Peace", between 2008 and 2012 which asked participants to find a synthesis between Abrahamic cultures by putting verses from the Old Testament, Gospels and Koran to music.

In the case of Bergoglio, it can be said that what culminated with a visit to Iraq is a process that began right from the beginning of his pontificate.

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We are all in the same boat and we should row coordinated. Nobody can save themselves alone

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The aim has always been to strengthen "human fraternity", the way believers call dialogue and mutual understanding. However, it is certain that in recent years there has been an acceleration. In 2019, a visit to the Uni-

ted Arab Emirates led to the signing of the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Common Coexistence*, signed by Francis together with the great imam Al-Tayyeb of Al-Azhar. It was then Morocco's turn with the appeal for the city of Jerusalem signed together with King Mohammed VI. During the same period, the Pope also proposed the theme to countries such as Thailand and Japan.

The message is the same for everyone and has been repeatedly launched even during the 15 months of enforced immobility caused by the pandemic. An example is the prayer of March 27 last year in St. Peter's Square, during which Francis reiterated that we are all in the same boat and that we should row coordinated: no one can save themselves alone. On October 3, 2020, the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (All Brothers) systematized this thought. The invitation to social friendship is concrete and concerns every man and woman, believer or non-believer. The tool to use is dialogue. To be even more explicit, on 4 February Bergoglio participated, virtually, in the first World Day of Human Brotherhood announced by the United Nations and there he left no doubts: "Either we are brothers, if I may say so, or everything collapses. It is the frontier ... on which we must build; it is the challenge of our time". Tolerance is not enough.



IT HAPPENED TODAY

# Ninetieth flag at Colle



April 21, 2012: The ninetieth country raises its flag at Colle di Miravalle. Accession ceremony of the Republic of Mozambique in the presence of Ambassador Carla Elisa Luis Mucavi and Reggente Alberto Robol, Foundation President

April 27, 1924: Prince Umberto of Savoy in Rovereto to attend the laying of the first stone at the 'Bastione Malipiero' for the arrangement of the Bell of the Fallen



IT HAPPENED TODAY

# City of Peace



April 2, 1993: Opening ceremony of the sixth edition of the International City of Peace Tournament



April 10, 1966: The first tolls of Maria Dolens expected for Easter after the testing on April 8. From the newspapers of the time

To be continued on page 1...

It should be noted that, to date, consistent and well-equipped militias are stationed in Libya, at the service of the two aforementioned alignments whose withdrawal from the country - although foreseen by the agreements concluded - can only occur with the consent of Moscow and Ankara, probably granted not without due consideration.

All this will require our Bell, with respect for the universality that distinguishes it, to give its daily chimes a special "Mediterranean" imprint in this period.

As for the desired consolidation of the Libyan ad interim government, the next few months will be very important. Bearing in mind that a "derailment" of the democratic process could, unfortunately, occur at any moment (induced moreover, by external factors, such as the sudden escalation of Russian-American tensions), an initial path without stumbling blocks would constitute an adequate viaticum for crucial end-of-year deadlines.

Alongside others, but perhaps more than other countries, Italy is called upon to do everything in its power to keep a "light" on, of enormous importance both for the tortured Libyan people and for the unstable Mediterranean chessboard.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President

