

**10th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians
on the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law (CAP –ICC)**

40th Annual Forum of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)

16 – 17 November 2018, Verkhovna Rada, Kyiv, Ukraine

Dear Colleagues,

It is an honour for me to take the floor before such a distinguished assembly.

I'd like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude in particular to PGA, *Parliamentarian for Global Action*, for promoting this event and for inviting me as a representative of the Italian Parliament to address issues of the greatest importance.

I also want to pay tribute to the Ukrainian Parliament, the *Verkhovna Rada*, for the generous hospitality and the great support.

This is my first visit to Kiev and I am very impressed by the beauty and charm of this city, whose ancient and more recent history bears witness to its fundamental geopolitical significance in the region.

Let me also mention that this week the Foreign Affairs Committee of Italy's Lower House, of which I am proud to be a member, hosted a meeting with the Chairwoman of the Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Committee, Madam Hopko, thus confirming the strong and constructive friendship between the Parliaments of Ukraine and Italy.

With regard to the title of this conference, I'd like to quote our Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Guglielmo Picchi, who was in The Hague in July this year to attend to commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Undersecretary Picchi confirmed the great value that our Country attaches to the ICC (*Italy was the fourth country to ratify the Treaty, with law no. 232 of 20 July 1999*) - also as founding Country that hosted of the signing ceremony which, as is known, was held in Rome 20 years ago - and pointed out how the different nature of contemporary conflicts has produced an increase in the number of war crimes and crimes against humanity. "In this context, the ICC makes a fundamental contribution towards maintaining international peace and security and towards protecting and promoting human rights."

Let me recall here the leading role played by Italy ever since the establishment of the ICC, which has been furthered by the three Italian judges sitting on the Court and through the Vice Presidency of the Assembly of the States Parties from 2014 to 2017. Ours is a staunch support that will continue in order to promote the Court's universality and uphold its independence.

Italy has hosted the Rome Diplomatic Conference in 1998, and we are very honoured by the acknowledgements that the ICC Rome Statute of 17 July 1998 received from prominent academics and the Secretary-General of the UN, who praised it as the most innovative and significant global treaty after the San Francisco Charter that established the United Nations.

Since then, the existence of the International Criminal Court has made it possible for individuals, anyone and anywhere, to be put on trial for especially atrocious crimes against humanity.

In July 2018, the Mayor of Rome and the Vice-President of the European Parliament Fabio Massimo Castaldo hosted a conference to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute, which highlighted a number of actions for our new Italian Parliament, especially in the area of domestic implementation of the crimes provided for in the Statute.

While the Italian Parliament has unanimously adopted in 2012 a law on cooperation with the ICC (just a few days before the Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians organized by PGA on the premises of the Italian Parliament itself!), we continuously work in order to fully adapt our legal system to the substantive norms of International Criminal Law.

This commitment is based on the central position of human rights in Italy's policies and actions, both at the national and international levels, as is also enshrined in its Constitution: Italy's action is founded on and anchored in the principles of universality, indivisibility and interdependence of Human Rights. Respecting Human Rights is pivotal to international peace and security, conflict prevention, sustainable development, peace and reconciliation, and to building stable and inclusive societies.

Thanks to its efforts, Italy succeeded, with 180 votes out of 189, in becoming a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2019-2021.

Against this backdrop, Italian parliamentary best practices include the establishment, in both Houses, of parliamentary bodies specifically in charge of human rights. While we are here, the Senate is in the process of electing the chairperson of its Human Rights Special Committee, while at the Chamber of Deputies the Foreign Affairs Committee will soon establish a Sub-Committee on human rights. Both bodies will act as an *ombudsman* in support of victims and human rights defenders. Furthermore, Italy is committed in the current legislative term to establishing also a national institution on human rights under the Paris Principles, adopted in 1991.

Coming back to our discussion, Italy has already enacted legislation in the areas of genocide - in line with the 1948 Convention for the prevention and elimination of the crime of genocide - and of war crimes.

Every country must actively promote legislation on crimes against humanity in order not to become a safe haven for fugitives from international justice and suspected international criminals. Another area of reform ought to focus on the crime of aggression following the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute, adopted in 2010. Italy is among the States Parties who are currently actively working on the ratification of the amendments on the crime of aggression. On 3 February 2015 and again this year, on 17th July, my colleague Senator Alberto Airola, member of the current Italian ruling party M5S (5-Star-Movement), submitted draft legislation for the ratification of the Kampala Amendments in the Senate of Italy.

On 18 July 2018, both the Minister for Foreign Affairs Moavero Milanesi and the Minister of Justice Bonafede reaffirmed Italy's strong leadership in promoting an effective and universal system against impunity, centered around the Rome Statute and the Hague Court. Together with our colleagues Parliamentarians from all regions of the world, the Italian Parliament is ready to play a significant part in advancing the promotion and protection of human rights through a stronger ICC, as well as an enhanced cooperation amongst States to bring to justice perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

Hon. Emilio Carelli, MP (Italy)