

Leoluca Orlando

Leoluca Orlando (Palermo, 1 August 1947) is an Italian politician and university professor. Since 22 May 2012 he has exercised his fifth (non-consecutive) mandate as Mayor of Palermo and, since June 2016, also that of Mayor of the Metropolitan City of Palermo. He was regional Sicilian, national and European parliamentarian.

Studies and professional activity

Graduated in law, he studied at the University of Heidelberg in Germany and in England.

A lawyer, between the end of the 70s and the 80s he was a professor of regional public law at the University of Palermo.

Legal advisor to the president of the Sicilian Region Piersanti Mattarella from 1978 to 1980.

Political and administrative activity

After the killing of President Piersanti Mattarella by the mafia in January 1980, he decides to run for the City Council of Palermo, where he is elected within the Christian Democrats.

In 1984 he was deputy mayor for decentralization in the City Government led by Giuseppe Insalaco.

In the 1985 administrative elections he was re-elected municipal councilor and, subsequently, elected by the municipal council mayor of Palermo from 1985 to 1987 at the head of a "five-party" coalition similar to that of the national government at the time.

"Palermo's Spring"

In 1987 he gave life to an innovative administrative experience, first with a "five-colors" Government formed by a part of the Christian Democrats, the independent Left, the Greens, the Social Democrats and the Catholic civic list of "City for Man" and subsequently with the entry into Government of the Communist Party, giving life to the so-called "six-colors" Administration.

It is an experience, which will be remembered as the "Spring of Palermo", which makes a strong break with the political practices of the past, denouncing the danger posed by the mafia economy, through which the gangs and their political representatives exercise their power. For the first time the Municipality promotes a strong growth of the anti-mafia movement, engaging not only on the political and administrative level, but also on the cultural and social one. A symbolic moment of the synthesis between administrative action and cultural stimulus against the Mafia is the formal engagement of the Municipality as "Civil Part" at the first maxi trial against the gangs.

Opposed by a substantial part of his party and the political forces linked to the national "five-party" government, he resigned in 1990 to reapply for the municipal elections that year, where, despite the opposition of the national leaders of the Christian Democrats and in particular by Giulio Andreotti, he gets over 71,000 personal preferences. Despite this, he was not allowed to give life to a new municipal council and in 1991 he left the DC to found "La Rete" ("The Net") Movement.

The Movement for Democracy "The Net"

The main objective of the new movement was to bring the moral question back into Italian politics, thanks to the "transversality", that is, the participation of all the positive forces present in the various parties with a leadership group that included politicians from different political and cultural backgrounds. It aimed to give institutional representation and carry out political synthesis but also cultural leaven in reference to the legality of human rights.

As a candidate of the new movement, Orlando was elected deputy to the Sicilian Regional Assembly in 1991, and to the National Parliament in 1992 in colleges in Northern, Central and Southern Italy.

Direct election as Mayor. Palermo's Renaissance

In 1993, in the first direct elections of mayors ever held in Italy, he was elected mayor of Palermo in the first round with 75% of the votes, and initiated a series of reforms to remove the economic interests of the clans from the Municipality. In particular, he completed the process of dismissing the awarding of contracts for maintenance to companies suspected of belonging to mafia families, a process that he had already started during the first syndication encountering various difficulties linked to the limited executive powers of the mayors before their direct election.

Furthermore, it gives impetus to a complex civic renewal project which, through a wide range of programs aimed at promoting a new culture of legality, also and above all in the cultural and educational sphere, contributes incisively to freeing the city from cultural hegemony of the mafia, in a process that has become known as the "Palermo Renaissance".

In 1994 he was elected member of the European Parliament within which he carried out an action for a greater role of the Mediterranean in the European Union and for the adoption of a common action program for the fight against organized crime, which is inspired by the new Italian regulations and the experience of Palermo.

In the administrative elections of November 1997 he was confirmed mayor of Palermo with 58% of the votes, for his second four-year term (the last consecutive, according to the Sicilian electoral law).

In addition to continuing the overall action of renewal of the administrative action, that period is marked by the work for the new urban planning that definitively closes the period of the so-called "sack of Palermo", which will lead to the approval of a detailed executive plan for the historic center which is based on the enhancement of the existing building heritage and creates obstacles to speculation; the foundations are also laid, with the use of European funding, for the construction of a city tram network to serve the suburbs.

In May 1999 he joined the party of the "Democrats" founded by Romano Prodi

2001 Sicilian elections, engagement in National and European parliament since 2006 to 2012. International activities

In December 2000 he resigned from the office of Mayor to be able to compete in the regional elections of June 2001, in which he obtained about one million votes that led him to be the leader of the minority in the Sicilian parliament.

In the same period, he carries out a vast international activity to promote the culture of legality for the fight against crime and corruption, also carrying out consultancy activities for the governments of Colombia, Georgia and Mexico and holding various conferences in American, African, Asian and European countries. In April 2006 he was elected to the National Parliament in various districts of the north, center and south, within the Italia dei Valori party, of which he became the national political spokesperson.

From October 2006 to April 2008 he was President of the bicameral Commission of the Italian Parliament for regional issues.

In 2008 he was re-elected to the National Parliament on the Italia dei Valori list and from March 2009 to July 2012 he was President of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry in the health field.

In June 2009 he was elected as Member of the European Parliament in the Sicily-Sardinia college in the Italia dei Valori list, but he renounced his seat to remain in the national parliament.

Since 2012, fourth and fifth mandates as Mayor. CultureS, mobility and rights

In May 2012 he was elected Mayor of Palermo with about 73% of the votes, reconfirmed in 2017. In June 2016, following the entry into force of the new regional legislation, he also became Mayor of the Metropolitan City of Palermo.

During this mandate, the process of relaunching the historic center resumes, in which an extensive plan of pedestrianization and projects to restore livability and usability is launched and a program for public

transport and soft mobility is also relaunched, especially to and from the suburbs with the inauguration of the tramway network and the planning of its extension for about 40 km. In addition, all shared mobility programs such as car sharing and bike sharing are launched and strengthened.

Other pivotal points of the action are technological and infrastructural innovation with a broad program of digitization of the Administration and with a program of modernization and energy efficiency of the public lighting network.

Characterizing element of the Administration in this period is the initiative, also conducted on a national and international level, for the recognition of the rights of migrants and the human rights of all of which are examples the birth of the "Council of Cultures", a representative body of all the national communities living in Palermo, the organization of "Palermo Pride", the largest demonstration for gender rights in the Mediterranean and, in 2015, the adoption of the Charter of Palermo.

The "Chart of Palermo"

In 2015, he organized an international meeting in Palermo entitled "I am a person. From migration as suffering to mobility as a right", which was attended by jurists, public administrators and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The "Charter of Palermo" emerged from the meeting, a document that places the theme of international human mobility as an inalienable human right at the center of the political debate.

The "Global Parliament of Mayors"

In September 2016 he was one of the founders of the "Global Parliament of Mayors", a non-governmental organization based in the Netherlands, which includes over 50 cities from all continents. The objective of the GPM is to strengthen the role of cities and local governance in the international arena and in relations with national governments, international institutions and the stakeholders of civil society and business. Leoluca Orlando has been a member of the Executive Committee since the organization was founded.

Publications

- Notes on coordination, Palermo, Montaina graphic arts, 1970
- Contribution to the study of administrative coordination, Milan, A. Giuffrè, 1974
- Organic Theory and Apparatus State, with Sergio Agrifoglio, Palermo-Sao Paulo, Ila Palma, 1979
- A model of local government. The experience of Baden Wurttemberg, Palermo, Tip. Priulla, 1979.
- Building a network of solidarity for a new policy, S. Giovanni Valdarno, Acli, 1990. Crisis of the city, crisis of politics, Florence, Tuscan Center of Political Documentation, 1990. Palermo, Milan, A. Mondadori, 1990
- Another page. Palermo diary, Palermo-Sao Paulo-Rome, Ila Palma-Associated editions, 1993
- Fighting the Mafia and renewing Sicilian culture, New York, Encounter books, 2001
- Ich sollte der Nächste sein. Ein Politiker im Fadenkreuz der Mafia, Freiburg, Herder Verlag, 2002
- Hacia una cultura de la legalidad-La experiencia siciliana, Pontificia Universidad catolica del Peru, 2003
- Fighting the Mafia and renewing Sicilian culture - • الصقلية النفاة ونجدد المافيا محاربة, Beirut, Foundation pour la Paix, 2004
- Der sizilianische Karren, Amman Verlag, Zurich, 2004; Taschenbuch, Fischer Verlag, 2006
- Hacia una cultura de la legalidad-La experiencia siciliana, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana México, D.F, March 2005
- Leoluca Orlando erzählt: Die Mafia, by Pippo Battaglia Herder Verlag, September 2008
- Leoluca Orlando tells the mafia, by Pippo Battaglia, Turin, UTET, 2007
- Time of the Elephant, University Press, 2020

Honors and Awards

Italian honors

- Silver star for sporting merit, 2010
- Gold star for sporting merit, 2014

Foreign honors

- Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit (Spain), 1998
- Honorary Mayor of the city of Palermo, in the District of Huila (Colombia), 1998
- Knight of the Order of St. Nicholas (Georgia), 2013
- Grand Cross of the Order of Merit (Germany), 2020

He has received various international honors and awards

- Honorary degree in German philosophy awarded by the Universität Trier - University of Trier
- Honorary citizenships of Chengdu (China), of Los Angeles County (USA), of the city of Düsseldorf (Germany) and of Montpellier (France)
- Title of honorary professor of the Solkan-Saba Orbeliani University of Tbilisi (Georgia)
- Received the "Keys to the city" from the Mayor of Medellin (Colombia), as recognition "for his commitment to the fight against illegality through civil commitment and the construction of the culture of legality", 2018
- Goethe Medaille of the Goethe-Institut for "the contribution to the spread of the German language in the world and for the contribution to international cultural relations", (Germany) 1999
- European Civic Prize, awarded by the Group of Democratic and Liberal Parties of the European Parliament "for its commitment to fighting crime", 2000
- Bayard Rustin Award of the American Federation of Teachers "for bringing to Palermo the freedom of an orderly civil society and for its willingness to share the "lessons of Palermo" with other countries facing similar threats to democracy and human rights", (USA) 2000
- Pushkin Prize in Saint Petersburg for his commitment to making Palermo "world center of theatrical culture", (Russia) 2001
- "Konrad Adenauer" Prize, (Germany) 2008
- "Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award" by the Global Parliament of Mayors, "for his tireless endeavour to defend migrant rights and create a safer city by fighting organized crime", 2017
- Heinrich Heine Award, awarded by the city of Düsseldorf "to personalities who through their work spread the idea that all people belong to the same group: humanity." He is the first Italian to receive this award, (Germany) 2018
- Freedom from fear Award "of the Roosevelt Foundation of Middelburg and of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute of New York, conferred by the Dutch royals, (United States - Netherlands) 2020
- Potsdam Europäische Kultur Preis "for the results achieved in his life in the fight against the mafia and racism through culture", (Germany) 2020
- North-South Prize of the Council of Europe for his commitment to the defense of human rights, conferred by the President of the Republic, (Portugal) 2020
- President of Cinemed, Montpellier International Mediterranean Film Festival, (France) since 2019