

**INTERVENTION OF
PROF. MASSIMO CANEVA**

**Sapienza University of Rome
President AESI**



Dear Rector,

Excellencies

Colleagues,

Dear Students,

I am very glad to be here today in this University that I visited ten years ago for the first time. When I arrived in Sarajevo I was a witness of a tragedy consequence of the destruction of the war. The city was full of ruins. I also visited other Universities and Cities of Bosnia Herzegovina, Mostar, Banja Luka, Pale. I was a witness of your sufferance, but also of your courage and your hope to start a new future for your Universities and your Country.

One of the basic challenges for the XXI Century is international peace and security in the light of the new world balance and respecting the human rights. Today, there are problems that can only be solved by action at the global level. Universities and Young People can be an important actor of this action. New strategic thinking is required, especially from the new generations, to approach global issues and advance “global public goods respecting human rights”.



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Consequently, international communities and Young People must become protagonists of a new strategy of globalisation of peace promoting human rights.

Such a strategy must include the collaborative efforts of all actors of peace : diplomats, International Organizations, Young People in the common goal of development of a strong humanitarian culture of solidarity capable of understanding local needs and providing quick and efficient support to the solutions that are at once professional and respectful of human dignity.

In this context, the university assumes a central position and particular importance. First of all, because the university must be the main place where to educate and to promote in the new generations the achievement of human rights which are the basic elements to spread in the society the development of a real culture of respect of human being and solidarity. And when University forgets this task, its mandate in the society is destroyed.

Moreover, the university has a role to give to their students the capability to understand the importance of dedicating their professional skills in promoting democracy, respected of human rights, peace to serve the society. The emergency situations are more and more involving us and let us understand what a mature and developed society is able to give in terms of human, scientific and organising mobilisation.

The central position of the university and how the Young People understanding and practice human rights doesn't mean a sort of elicited action even if it could seem like this. What we could like to point out is, on the contrary, that only the enlargement of human mind through the scientific research, enriched with the personal experience on promoting values and human dignity in the society, can foster a more careful analysis of the problems and broad-minded approach to the human being and his needs. This university methodology is useful instrument to stimulate the co operation between people and between individuals.

The traditional “*academic collaboration*” is distinct from the “*university cooperation for peace and development promoting human rights*” understood as a strategy of action aimed to build a more developed and peaceful society.

When we speak about *university cooperation of Young People* promoting understanding and practicing peace and human rights, especially in crisis situations, we don't refer only to the exchange of researchers and students - which is usually the objective of traditional forms of academic collaboration -



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although this kind of activity may be very useful. University cooperation promoted by Young People implies a more general strategy based on both analysis and action, of training and research in the field, of cooperation among the academy and civil institutions, diplomats and international organizations, volunteers and peace forces, in order to provide support in both the prevention and solution of crisis.

I would like to conclude my presentation with some words of John Paul II. When he visited Sarajevo on 13 April 1997 he said :

“It cannot be forgotten that Sarajevo has become the symbol of the suffering of the whole of Europe. Europe took part in it as a witness. But we must ask ourselves: was it always a fully responsible witness? This question cannot be avoided. Statesmen, politicians, military men, scholars and people of culture must try to give an answer. The hope of all people of good will is that what Sarajevo symbolizes will remain confined to the twentieth century, and that its tragedies will not be repeated in the Millennium about to begin.”

Continuing with John Paul II in the Message for Peace 1997

“The truth is that one cannot remain a prisoner of the past, for individuals and peoples need a sort of "healing of memories", so that past evils will not come back again. This does not mean forgetting past events; it means re-examining them with a new attitude and learning precisely from the experience of suffering that only love can build up, whereas hatred produces devastation and ruin.

A correct reading of history will make it easier to accept and appreciate the social, cultural and religious differences between individuals, groups and peoples.

This is the first step towards reconciliation, since respect for differences is an inherently necessary condition for genuine relationships between individuals and between groups.”

To conclude, I would like assure you all my support and participation to your challenge that is, at the same time, our common challenge for understanding and practice of human rights for a better future of democracy and peace.