

CONFERENCE ON THE COMMONS AND SHARED ADMINISTRATION IN SANTA COLOMA DE GRAMENET

Joaquín Tornos Mas
Tenured Professor of Administrative Law
Universitat de Barcelona

On 24 February 2017, a participative conference on the commons and shared administration was held at the Singuerlín Library in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (province of Barcelona). The opening and closing sessions were led by the Mayor of Santa Coloma de Gramenet Núria Parlon. The first part of the event counted on the participation of Professor Joaquín Tornos, Tenured Professor of Administrative Law and member of the Instituto de Derecho Público at the University of Barcelona; Professor Gregorio Arena, Tenured Professor of Administrative Law at the University of Trento and President of Labsus, and the Head of the Office for Citizen Participation at the Genoa City Council Gigliola Vicenzo. The three speakers presented the Italian experience in the shared administration of the commons based on the activities of Labsus, the foundation promoting this initiative in Italy.

This introduction to the matter was followed by a presentation of the first citizens' pact: "Ciudad accessible, Ciudad de todos" (A city that is accessible is a city for all). This presentation was carried out by the Director of Participation and Transparency at the Santa Coloma City Council Isuku Palau, and Javier Rojano, from the Center for People with Physical Disabilities.

The closing session counted on the intervention of the Mayor of Esparreguera Eduard Rivas; the Governance and Economy Deputy Mayor at the Gavà City Council Jordi Tort; the Councillor of Culture and Proximity at the Sant Boi de Llobregat City Council José Manuel Gonzalez Labrador, and the Deputy Mayor of Badalona José Téllez. The round table was moderated by Tomás Font, Tenured Professor of Administrative Law at the University of Barcelona.

The commons are those tangible and intangible assets whose enrichment is beneficial for all the citizenship and whose loss makes us all poorer. The Italian experience with the shared administration of common goods aims to foster the participation of active citizens in the care, regeneration and maintenance of these goods. Shared administration aims to contribute to a new period of development of citizen participation: this participation is not only expected in the decision-making process and in the monitoring stage but also in the implementation of what is decided. As mentioned in the 2016 Labsus Annual Report, shared administration is a message to all citizens aiming to "persuade you into participating in the protection of the place where you live because the quality of the tangible and intangible assets surrounding you determines your quality of life. Delegations are over. Italy is in need of active, responsible and supportive citizens".

This call for action has been very successful throughout the whole country. The Labsus Foundation (*Laboratory for Subsidiarity*), led by Gregorio Arena, has been working hard to institutionalize this process and give it strength and stability. Several municipal regulations have been adopted (to date, more than 110) to lay down a definition of “the commons”, “active citizens” and, particularly, the “collaboration agreements”, the real instrument for shaping this new process of active participation. Citizens and public authorities join their efforts in a specific project thus generating social capital and recovering the citizenship’s enthusiasm for and confidence in the public goods.

The Italian speakers presented this undoubtedly successful model that has already been applied in the management of public places, schools, abandoned buildings and so on. The conference allowed the participants to learn first-hand about this experience and ended with an interesting public debate and commitment by the participating public authorities to work together in order to introduce it in our system.