

The Charter of Humanitarian Citizenship

1. The *Charter of the European Humanitarian citizenship* that I have had the honor to present to the Europa Forum Rome 2004 which is on the Motto “*Challenge to change*” of our President Mahendra Amarasuriya. The Europa *Forum* of Bucharest 2007 has decided to make the Charter reality, throughout 123 Districts of Europe.

The Charter answers a question that is in the mind of so many Lions of the world. What lionism does today’s world need? There is need of lionism that knows how to conjugate, in an admirable synthesis, humanitarian help to human rights. The new humanitarian service to all the “citizens of the world” means, indeed, the promotion of human rights and liberty.

Humanitarian citizenship expresses, then, a new and original method of action. I mean that the philosophy of the Charter subtends, the philosophy of the Nobel Prize of economics, the Indian Amarthia Sen, in his last book entitled “Development as Freedom.” This could be the frontier of the Lions in the future. In fact on the badge of every Lion there is an *L*, which stands for *Liberty*. Liberty from the need and from violence, in respect of fundamental human rights.

2. What is the meaning of the Charter?

I remember it was the action of the Non Governmental Organizations of the United Nations and not of government to internationalize the protection of human rights. Humanitarian citizen means that humanitarian charity represents only the first step in the “*rights of citizenship*,” but it doesn’t exhaust the duties of humanitarian citizenship, because the humanitarian citizenship consists, in first place, in the promotion of the fundamental human rights and the liberty of all the people of the world.

Humanitarian citizenship means that we believe in a world, in which no citizen will have to ask for charity anymore which will have the natural rights. Humanitarian citizenship means that we have to help them today to not ask help tomorrow.

Humanitarian citizenship means to develop a spirit of great understanding among all the peoples of the world and, that is, to give voice to the Message that our Founder, Melvin Jones, wrote for all the Men of good will in 1917, after the first World War. Humanitarian citizenship means to be a citizen of Europe to become, then, a citizen of the world, of a world without chains and without frontiers, without wars and without hunger or famine.

3. In New Delhi we have approved, on the *Board*, a New Mission of Association which says: *The Association promotes international understanding through Lions clubs.*” I want to remember the dialogue between the Great Master of *nineteenth-century music* Johannes Strauss and Emperor Francesco Giuseppe. The Master tells the Emperor: "Emperor your empire won't end." But the Emperor answers: "My empire will end, but your music, won't end, because music unites people in the sign of mutual understanding, empires don't."

4. We must remember what Rudyard Kipling said: *“East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.”* But the Lions must rediscover the words that Kipling wrote after those better known: *“Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat; But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed, nor Birth. When two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth!”*

Those men are Lions, citizens of the world, in a new humanitarian citizenship.

Prof. Avv. Ermanno Bocchini
International Director 2007-2009