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The map of corruption in Italy explained by Raffaele Cantone

Corruption is widespread throughout Italy and represents one of the greatest obstacles to its growth, not only in civil terms but also in social and economic ones. Identifying the areas most exposed to corruption – with specific relation to different regional features – and drafting an Italian map of bribery is an essential tool to fight it. Yet, it is not just a matter of legislative and judicial actions to implement but a battle to carry on in a cultural and social context too. Raffaele Cantone, president of the Italian anti-corruption agency and veteran in the battle against “camorra” - assisted by Alberto Faustini, editor in chief of the local newspaper “Trentino” -, describes all main features of the geography of corruption in Italy.

“Mafia or, better, mafias have a structural relationship with politics both at national or at local level - explains Cantone -, so corruption is a traditional tool used by organised criminality. The map of corruption is influenced by such a phenomenon, in the past mostly concentrated in the South but recently diffused along all the country”. In Cantone analysis, mafias experimented a big change during last decades, passing from a “military” and illegal activities to “normal” entrepreneurial business, making stronger their corruption practices and at the same time moving their attention to northern Italy, where for a long time mafias were supposed to not exist. “Yet mafias – adds Cantone – have a strong ability to update and re-invent themselves, always finding ever more sophisticated tools to carry on their business. In addition, not only mafias approach politics, but sometimes it happens also viceversa”.

With relation to public tender, Cantone jokes: “nowadays who is involved in public contract, should be better to hire performing lawyers rather than skilled engineers”. And concerning relationship between public administration and enterprises, Cantone has very clear ideas. “Executives in public administration cannot stand life-long in charge of the same position, they have to be moved to different sector of competences in order to avoid “monopoly tendencies”. Moreover, an help to fight corruption can come also from the so-called “whistleblowing”, that is anonymous information provided on disloyal and corrupted public employees”.

Nevertheless, businessmen have the right to approach public administration but that process has to be regulated. The idea of Carlo Calenda (Minister for the Economic Development, also speaker at the Festival the same day) of “tracing” businessmen having meeting at the Ministry it goes in the right direction, in Cantone opinion. “Even lobbying activities do not represent a danger or a threat – adds Cantone - if they are transparent and regulated”. Finally - after admonishing the audience that “there is no territory that can be considered mafia-proof” - Cantone kids about himself: “Someone thinks I am an hero, but I am not. I am just an hard-worker”.

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