



Città di Palermo

Leoluca Orlando was born in Palermo in 1947, is married and has two daughters. A lawyer and Professor of Regional Public Law at the University of Palermo.

He studied and lived for some years in Heidelberg, in the Federal Republic of Germany

He worked as international consultant for OECD in Paris

From 1978 to 1980, as legal advisor to Piersanti Mattarella, President of the Sicilian Region, killed by the Mafia in 1980.

Political activity

In 1980 he was elected City Councillor for the Christian Democratic Party and in 1985 became Mayor of Palermo. During his five-year administration, Orlando headed a city government made up of movements and parties of the political Left, which constituted a severe break with the political practices of the past. In the same period, which became known as the “Palermo Spring”, he denounced the peril represented by the mafioso economy, the channel through which the Mafia families exercised their power with the complicity of public officials, and promoted a substantial growth of the antimafia movement within the local society.

In 1990 Leoluca Orlando ran as top candidate for the Christian Democratic Party in the elections for the city government and, though boycotted by national leaders of his own party, he was elected with the largest number of votes (71,000) among all candidates. His efforts to renew his party from within met however an ever increasing resistance, and in 1991 he left it and found the Movement for Democracy “La Rete” (“The Network”).

The main aim of the new political movement was to bring moral issues back into Italian politics through the so-called “transversality” (“multipartisanship”), i.e., the participation of all the positive forces of the various political parties in the struggle toward the creation of a more democratic society. As a candidate of this new movement, he was elected to the Sicilian Regional Parliament in 1991 and to the Italian National Parliament in 1992.

In 1993, in the first direct mayoral elections ever held in Italy, he was elected Mayor of Palermo with 75% of the votes, and immediately got under way some reform to banish the economic interest of organized crime from the Municipality. Specifically, he brought to conclusion the process of rescinding all the contracts for the maintenance of public facilities that the City had assigned to companies suspected of belonging to the Mafia families. He had already started this process during his first term of office, but his action had been hampered by the fact that at that time the mayors were subject to the control and the veto power of political forces often conditioned by organized crime.

Moreover, he gave impulse to a new multi-faceted project of civic renewal which, through a variety of programs including cultural and school-based initiatives for the promotion of a new culture of lawfulness, has effectively contributed to free the citizens from the cultural hegemony of the Mafia in a process which has become known as “The Palermo Renaissance”.

In 1994 he was elected Deputy to the European Parliament, where he was Vice President of the Committee for the entry of Malta into the European Union; member of the Committee for Public Liberties and Home Affairs; member of the Committee for Regional Politics; and substitute member of the Committee for Safety and Disarmament. He also worked extensively in favor of the Mediterranean playing a more important role in the European Union, and for the adoption of a EU project against organized crime which was inspired by newly adopted Italian antimafia legislation as well as by the Sicilian experience.

On the mayoral direct elections of November 1997, Orlando was confirmed Mayor of Palermo with 58.57% of the total poll for a second (and last, according to the Italian electoral law) four-year term .

In May 1999 he joined “The Democrats”, a political party founded by Romano Prodi.

In December 2000 he resigned from his office as mayor in order to run for the regional elections of June 2001, where he received about one million votes and was elected member of the Sicilian Parliament and minority leader.

In April 2006 he is elected deputy of the National Parliament.

Since July 2006 he is the speaker of the Italia dei Valori’s party

From October 25th 2006 till April 2008 he has been the President of the parliamentary Commission of the Italian Parliament for regional affairs.

In May 2008 he is re-elected deputy of the Italian Parliament.

From March 2009 to July 2012 he has been the President of the parliamentary Commission of inquiry in sanity’s field in the Italian Parliament

In June 2009 he is elected deputy of the European Parliament.

In November 2009 he is elected vice –President of ELDR party (European Liberal Democratic and Reform) during the Congress in Barcelona.

In November 2011 he is confirmed vice –President of ELDR party (European Liberal Democratic and Reform) during the Congress of Palermo

In May 2012 he becomes again Mayor of Palermo with 74% of the votes .

In March 2015 he presented the Charter of Palermo – From migration as suffering to mobility as an inalienable human right – “I am a person”

Since June 7th 2016 he has been nominated Mayor of Metropolitan City of Palermo, which includes 82 Sicilian municipalities

In June 2017 he becomes again Mayor of Palermo, elected in the first round of elections.

Honours and awards and commissions

In 1994, for his participation in the German film “Gezählte Tage” (“Just a Few Days”) he was awarded the Fernsehen Film Preis (Television Film Prize) as the best actor of the film which won the first prize that year. He has participated in numerous other films abroad, among others, the Film “A Sicilian Odyssey” by Jenna Maria Constantine, which won the first prize at the International Film Festival in New York in 2009

From June 1998 to January 2001 he was President of the Car-Free Cities Club, the European alliance of the cities that seek to promote a sustainable urban mobility.

In September 1998 he was conferred the Civil Merit Grand Cross by King Juan Carlos of Spain.

In March 1999, in Weimar (Germany), he was awarded the Goethe-Medaille by the Goethe Institute “for his commitment to the pursuit of a more just and humane society and his contribution to the spreading and promotion of German, Italian and Sicilian culture.”

In November 1999 he was conferred the freedom of the city of Chengdu, in the Republic of China.

In December 1999 he was appointed President of the newly created non profit organization “The Sicilian Renaissance Institute”.

In April 2000 the group of democratic and liberal parties in the European Parliament awarded him the European Civic Prize “for his struggle against organized crime, and his engagement in favour of the civic renewal of his city”

In May 2000, he was granted the honorary citizenship of the Los Angeles County, in the USA.

In July 2000, at Philadelphia (USA), the American Federation of Teachers conferred on him the Bayard Rustin Human Rights Award “for bringing the freedom of orderly civic society to Palermo, and for sharing the ‘lessons of Palermo’ with citizens and governments in societies that are struggling with similar threats to democracy and human rights”.

In September 2000, the city of Palermo in Colombia appointed Orlando Honorary Mayor for life “for having made the city come out of isolation and having set it on its way to economic and social development by facilitating various funding measures by the international community”.

In October 2001, he was appointed honorary professor of the Solkan-Saba Orbeliani University of Tbilisi, in the Republic of Georgia.

In the same month, he was conferred the Pushkin Prize 2001 “for his outstanding achievements in the promotion of culture” in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Since 2002 he is the national President of FIDAF (Italian Federation of American Football)

In March 2002 he was awarded with the “Legion de la libertad” by the cultural Institute “Ludwig von Mises” in Mexico City.

In November 2004 he obtained a degree honoris causa in German philosophy from the University of Trier.

In February 2005 he is awarded of the international prize “G. Pitre” from the International Department of Ethnological-History of the University of Palermo

In June 2005 he is awarded from the city of Münster Osnabrück of the Erich Maria Remarque peace prize

In November 2005 he is awarded from the city of Teramo of the national prize “Paolo Borsellino”.

Since 2005 he is Individual Member of Transparency International in Berlin.

In August 2006 he is awarded from the town of Corciano-Umbria of the national prize “L’Umbria nel cuore

In 2007 Founding member of ECFR-European Council on Foreign Relations

March 2008 he is awarded from the city of Göttingen (Deutscher Altphilologenverband) of the Humanismus prize

September 2008 he is awarded from the city of Cologne of the Konrad Adenauer prize

In October 2012 he was conferred the freedom of the city of Prizzi.

In March 2013 he has been awarded the Gold Medal of Merit by the ASILM (American Society of Italian Legions of Merit)

In November 2013 he is awarded from the city of Düsseldorf of the German Sustainability prize.

In December 2013 he is awarded by the President of Georgia, M. Saakashvili, with the Georgian Order of St. Nicholas.

In January 2014 he is elected President of the ANCI-Sicilia (The National Association of Italian Municipalities).

In January 2015 he is nominated National Responsible for Foreign Affairs, UE Relation and International Cooperation of ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities).

In September 2015 he is nominated in Bogotá Global Co-chair of UN-Habitat Safer Cities and in New York member of the Steering Committee of Strong Cities Network.

Since 2015 is President of steering committee of “Palermo Arabo-Normanna e le Cattedrali di Cefalù e Monreale” declared a world heritage site by Unesco.

In July 2016 he was granted the honorary citizenship of the City of Montpellier, in France.

Since January 2017 he has been re-elected President of FIDAF (Italian Federation of American Football) for the Olympic four -year term 2017-2020.

On the 3th of August 2017 is confirmed President of the ANCI-Sicilia (The National Association of Italian Municipalities).

Since September 2017 he is member of the Executive Committee of GPM (Global Parliament of Mayors).

In September 2017 he is awarded in Stavanger with the first Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award.

Since 2017 he is President of steering committee of Manifesta 12.

Since 2018 he is President of steering committee of Palermo Italian Capital of Culture 2018.

Since August 2018 is honorary member of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation.

In July 2018 in Berlin the German Arab Society awarded him with the Friedrich II von Hohenstaufen Prize for Living Friendship of Peoples and Integration of Nations, laudatory speech of Sigmar Gabriel.

In December 2018 in Duesseldorf is awarded with the Heinrich Heine Prize for his social activity and his literary activity in German language.

Selected publications

In addition to several scientific papers, Leoluca Orlando’s publications include the following monographic studies on legal subjects:

Contributo allo studio del coordinamento amministrativo (A Contribution to the Study of Administrative Coordination), Milano, 1974.

Teoria organica e Stato apparato (Organic Theory and State Apparatus), Palermo, 1979.

He is also the author of the following books dealing with politics and his own political commitment:

Palermo, Mondadori, Milano, 1990.

Fede e Politica (Faith and Politics), Marietti, Genova, 1992.

Fighting the Mafia and Renewing Sicilian Culture, Encounter Books, San Francisco, 2001.

Ich sollte der nächste sein, Herder Verlag, Freiburg, 2002.

Hacia una cultura de la legalidad-La experiencia siciliana, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2003.

Der sizilianische Karren, Ammann Verlag, Zürich, 2004.

Arabic edition of the book “*Fighting the mafia and renewing Sicilian culture*” edited by The Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace - Beirut, December 2004.

Hacia una cultura de la legalidad-La experiencia siciliana, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico D.F, March 2005.

Leoluca Orlando racconta la mafia, UTET, Torino, 2007.

Leoluca Orlando erzählt die Mafia, Herder Verlag, september 2008.

Ich sollte der nächste sein, Herder Verlag, Freiburg, new edition, 2010.

Sizilien für Handgepäck, Unionsverlag, 2012

Una rondine fa Primavera, Gruppo Ed. NovantaCento, Palermo, 2012

Il futuro è adesso – La Terza Repubblica e la Grande Rete, Melampo ed. Januar 2013