

Dear Mr. Mayor of Trieste,

We respectfully ask you to review the recent decision to abolish the roles of director of Trieste Museums and Libraries.

Our appeal has been inspired by the desire to safeguard the role and prestige of the cultural institutions that have been a constituent part of Trieste's history for over two hundred years. In fact, the Civic Library, a veritable historical memory of the city, was built in 1793 and the first museums were established in the mid-19th century. These institutions have been consolidated thanks to support from various public administrations but also due to the innovative activity they have carried out which has increased their ability to attract resources, collections and works by private individuals.

Libraries and museums are therefore not dusty and static containers of paintings, books or objects, but to all intents and purposes centres of study and continuous research that require qualified guides.

The director of these cultural and scientific institutes must ensure in accordance with the general guidelines of the Municipal Administration the implementation, as well as the management and care of the collections, the economic and financial planning of the institute, the organisation of personnel and safety. These tasks can be challenging and require administrative skills and above all high levels of cultural qualifications that have been put to the test to achieve the main objective: research and creation of events that contribute to the history of the city and contribute to a reading of its evolution.

For this reason, we learned with consternation that the role of director of museums and civic libraries in Trieste was abolished on 1 July. Today the management of all the museums has been transferred to a Municipal Administration official who does not have a specific background in this area and who already deals with Tourism Promotion and Cultural and Sports Events. The Library Service, which until a few years ago had its own director and was firmly and correctly in the Culture Area, has been merged with School and Education, sharing the official.

We understand that the choice may have been motivated by the growing budgetary difficulties of the Municipal Administration. Without the intention of detracting from the quality of the internal staff, it is quite clear that qualifications and access routes to the positions of managing official and managing director are very different. And if the internal staff respond directly to the Municipal Board for their activity, the director of the museums moves from following the general indications of the Municipal Board in defining the cultural policy proposals, to being under the closer scrutiny of the Municipal Council. There is a fundamental element of autonomy which is the prerogative of every research activity and of culture in general.

With the measures adopted there is a risk of an impoverishment of the role of museums and libraries, destined to have a negative impact on their appeal also as an element of tourism promotion.

For this reason, Mr. Mayor, we appeal to your continuing willingness to listen to the citizens to review the decision to abolish the directors, safeguarding the autonomy and the historical roots of our cultural institutions that represent a wealth that the Trieste community feels its own.

first signatories and proponents

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following 213 signatures

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